Grandmaster Repertoire

Boris Avrukh

The Grünfeld Defence

VOLUME ONE

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QUALITY CHESS
The Grünfeld Defence
Volume One

By

Boris Avrukh

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Preface

After the great success of my first two Grandmaster Repertoire books (1.d4 for White), it was not long before the idea of writing about my favourite Black opening, the Grünfeld Defence, was discussed. Ironically this meant searching for an antidote to the line of the Fianchetto Variation on which I had worked so diligently in the second of my 1.d4 volumes. My solution to this problem can be found in Chapter 4 of the present book.

I would like to share the story of how I became a devotee of this great opening. After I moved to Israel in 1995 my opening repertoire was rather shaky, so during my first few months there I made a serious effort to improve it. Fortunately the Beer-Sheva Club and its manager Ilyahu Levant provided the best possible conditions for such work. My first coach in Israel was Mark Tseitlin, whom I continue to regard as something of a ‘Grünfeld guru’. I also received high quality support from Alex Huzman, a strong player who is best known for being the long-term coach of Boris Gelfand.

Ever since my first few lessons with Mark, I immediately understood that the Grünfeld was the opening for me. I was attracted by the combative and dynamic positions to which it leads, and relished the prospect of fighting for the initiative with the black pieces. It was especially helpful that all the strong players in my new club knew this opening well. Indeed, in the present work the reader will find plenty of references to the games of Mark Tseitlin, Alex Huzman, Alon Greenfeld, Victor Mikhalevski and Alex Finkel. At that time the influence of the computer was not so strong, and by analysing together we managed to discover a lot of interesting ideas. The Grünfeld has remained my first choice against 1.d4 for sixteen years (and counting!), whereas against 1.e4 I have changed quite a lot.

The Grünfeld is one of the most prominent openings at the highest level, with players such as Shirov, Svidler, Leko and Kamsky using it as their main weapon, while Anand, Carlsen, Topalov and Grischuk also employ it frequently. Let us not forget Garry Kasparov, who made huge contributions to Grünfeld theory from the late eighties until his retirement.

The recent Candidates matches paint a remarkable picture. Vladimir Kramnik refused even to allow Alexander Grischuk to play the Grünfeld (which is understandable given that one of Grischuk’s seconds was Peter Svidler), and opened all his white games with 1.£f3. Gata Kamsky played only the Grünfeld against 1.d4, and his main second Emil Sutovsky is one of the leading Grünfeld experts in the world. Two of Kamsky’s clashes with Boris Gelfand in the fashionable 4...g5 system can be found in Chapter 23. Of course Grischuk lost his vital last game in the final against Gelfand with the Grünfeld, but as we shall see, he did not play the line I recommend!

I have always enjoyed the Grünfeld from either side of the board, as the rich positions offer considerable scope for creativity and investigation for both sides. I hope that after reading this book the reader will share my enthusiasm!

Boris Avrukh,
Beer-Sheva, May 2011
Contents

Key to Symbols used & Bibliography 6

Early Deviations 1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6

1 Rare Third Moves 7
2 3.f3 13

Fianchetto Systems 1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 d5 4.cxd5 ♞xd5 5.e4 ♞b6

3 Rare Lines 37
4 5.b3 43
5 Rare Seventh Moves 50
6 7.♗b3 58
7 White exchanges on d5 67

Various 4th Moves 1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5

8 Rare Options 85
9 4.♗a4† 94
10 4.♗b3 104

Closed Variation 1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.e3 ♞g7

11 Various Fifth Moves 115
12 5.♗f3 127

1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♗f4

13 Sidelines 148
14 6.♗c1 157
15 5.e3 c5 – Introduction and Sidelines 172
16 7.♗c1 – Sidelines and 9.♗ge2 187
17 9.♗f3 203
1. d4 d5 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. g5

18 Sidelines 226
19 5. f4 242
20 5. h4 – Sidelines 255
21 7. e3 – Sidelines 259
22 8. b1 266
23 8. f3 275

1. d4 d5 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. f3 g7

24 Rare Fifth Moves 291

1. d4 d5 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. f3 g7 5. g5 e4

25 6. h4 296
26 6. cxd5 304

Russian System 1. d4 d5 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. f3 g7 5. b3 dxc4 6. xc4 0–0 7. e4 c6

27 Without 8. e2 317
28 8. e2 327

Variation Index 341
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
WB   with compensation
±?   with counterplay
?    unclear
→    with attack
↑    with initiative

?    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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Early Deviations

Rare Third Moves

Variation Index

1. d4  f6 2. c4

2...g6

A) 3. c2
B) 3. d5
C) 3. g5  e4 4. f4  c5
   C1) 5. d5
   C2) 5. c2

A) after 9... d4

B) note to 5.bxa6

C) note to 7.f3

White has lost control of the d4-square
1. d4 \( \text{d}f6 \) 2. c4 \( \text{g}6 

The starting point of our journey into the Grünfeld Defence. Why not start earlier? Sometimes you cannot cover everything; I am sure you will find this book heavy enough as it is. Besides, there should also be room for another book later on...

In this chapter we shall look at A) 3. \( \text{g}c2 \), B) 3. d5 and C) 3. \( \text{g}g5 \). Obviously there are many more possible moves, but some of them do not have any point and are not worth studying. And the rest we shall consider in the following chapters.

3. \( \text{h}4?! \)

This outlandish move has been championed by Simon Williams, who recently wrote an SOS article on the subject.

3... \( \text{c}5! \)

Black steers the game towards a position where the move h2-h4 is of limited value.

4. d5 b5

4... \( \text{e}6?! \) N also deserves attention, angling for an improved version of a Modern Benoni.

5. e4?! 

A bit too creative. Williams suggests the improvement 5. h5?! N \( \text{d}h5 \) 6. cxb5 \( \text{a}6 \) 7. e4 \( \text{d}6 \), reaching an unusual kind of Benko position which should be roughly equal.

5... \( \text{c}x \text{e}4 \) 6. h5 \( \text{w}a5+ \) 7. \( \text{d}d2 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 8. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{d}d6 \) 8... \( \text{f}5?! \) N is also good.

9. cxb5 \( \text{b}7 \) 10. hxg6 hxg6 11. \( \text{x}h8 \) 12. a4 \( \text{a}6 \) 13. \( \text{e}3 \)

This was Vinoth Kumar – Shivananda, New Delhi 2009. White’s play has been enterprising but ultimately unsound, and in this position both 13... \( \text{c}4 \) N and 13... \( \text{w}b4 \) N give Black some advantage.

A) 3. \( \text{w}c2 \)

Maybe not such a bad idea against the Grünfeld, but the problem is that White gets a poor version of the King’s Indian Defence, where he can have trouble fighting for the vital d4-square. Here is one illustrative example:

3... \( \text{g}7 \)

Certainly 3... \( \text{d}5 \) 4. cxd5 \( \text{x}d5 \) 5. e4 \( \text{b}6 \) 6. \( \text{f}3 \) is not such a bad version of the Anti-Grünfeld for White.

4. e4 0–0 5. \( \text{d}c3 \) d6 6. \( \text{c}e2 \) \( \text{c}6 \)

7. \( \text{e}3 \)

After 7. \( \text{f}3 \) Black has a pleasant choice between 7... \( \text{g}4 \) 8. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) and 7... \( \text{e}5 \), in both cases winning the battle for the d4-square.

7... \( \text{e}5 \) 8. dxe5

Obviously 8. d5 \( \text{d}4 \) couldn’t satisfy White either.

8... dxe5 9. \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{d}4 \)

White has lost the battle for the d4-square, and very soon finds herself in a clearly inferior position.

10. \( \text{x}d4 \)

10. \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{e}6 \)+

10... \( \text{xd}4 \) 11. c5 \( \text{w}7 \) 12. \( \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{x}c5 \)+

Chapter 1 – Rare Third Moves

B) 3.d5

When this chapter was almost ready, I was playing in a rapid tournament and my opponent managed to surprise me with this rare move. But after the game I did some work and came to the conclusion that the most promising response for Black is:

3...b5!

Playing in the spirit of the Benko Gambit is logical, since the dark-squared bishop can find a lot of activity on the long diagonal after White has advanced his d-pawn. That said, I believe there is nothing wrong with more classical play, for example: 3...c6 4.dxc6 cxd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 dxe4 7.dxe4 c6 8.d4 d6 9.e3 dxe4 10.dxe4 c6 With equal chances.

4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6

During the aforementioned game I was concerned about 5.b6N. However, Black is not forced to take this pawn and can try 5...c6 6.b3 b7 with interesting play.

5.e3 g7 6.d3 0–0 7.f3 b7 8.e2 axb5 9.xb5

5...c6 6.dxc6

If 6.dxc6 then Black develops with tempo: 6...exd5 7.xd5 a5 8.xc3 g7 9.d2 Peev – Radev, Bulgaria 1975. Here simply 9...xa6N 10.b3 0–0 11.g3 c6 12.g2 f6b8 13.b1 d5! offers Black tremendous compensation.

6.xc6 7.e3

Or 7.xc6 a6 8.g3 g7 9.g2 0–0 10.h3 Varga – Feher, Hungary 1998, and now the natural 10...e6N 11.e5 5.d1 c6 12.h4 g4 would give Black ample compensation for the pawn.

7.g7 8.f3

8.d3 0–0 9.f3 occurred in Alber – Banas, Germany 2000. Black now hurried with 9...xa6, but instead the more accurate 9...a5N 10.d2 a6 would have given him an excellent version of the Benko.

8...0–0 9.e2 f6a6 10.f6a6?!

Better is 10.0–0 but after, for example, 10...e4 Black still has great compensation.

9...xd5! 10.xd5 f6d5 11.xd5 c6 12.xc6 f6xc6 13.0–0 c7 14.d1 Spassov – Ribli, Camaguey 1974. As pointed out by Ribli in Chess Informant 17, 14...fb8 would have secured excellent compensation for Black.

10...a5!

An important nuance.

11.xc3 e4 12.0–0 xxc3 13.bxc3 a6f

Dzindzichashvili – Adorjan, Amsterdam 1978.
Quite a tricky move, especially taking into account that it’s a rarely seen continuation.

3...\textit{\textbf{e}}4

The most challenging reply. Certainly Black can continue with 3...\textit{\textbf{g}}7, but then he must be ready to play the King’s Indian, which is not in our plans, even though White’s set-up after 4.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 is generally considered quite harmless.

4.\textit{\textbf{f}}4 \textit{\textbf{c}}5

The text is logically connected with Black’s previous move and resembles Black’s play in a line of the Trompowsky (1.d4 \textit{\textbf{f}}6 2.\textit{\textbf{g}}5 \textit{\textbf{e}}4 3.\textit{\textbf{f}}4 \textit{\textbf{c}}5 etc.). Obviously after 4...\textit{\textbf{g}}7 5.f3 \textit{\textbf{f}}6 6.e4 we would get a strange version of the Sämisch King’s Indian, with White’s \textit{\textbf{f}}4 being an extra move.

We have reached the main crossroads in this line. At this point the most logical moves are \textit{\textbf{C1}} 5.d5 and \textit{\textbf{C2}} 5.\textit{\textbf{c}}2, but we shall take a quick look at a couple of other moves that White has tried:

If 5.\textit{\textbf{d}}2 then the response 5...\textit{\textbf{d}}xd2 6.\textit{\textbf{c}}xd2 \textit{\textbf{g}}7 is too compliant. After 7.d5 White has a reasonable game, with chances for an advantage. Instead Black should play 5...\textit{\textbf{a}}5! 6.\textit{\textbf{c}}2, transposing into line \textit{\textbf{C2}} below.

5.f3 \textit{\textbf{a}}5+ 6.\textit{\textbf{d}}2 \textit{\textbf{d}}xd2

This looks more natural than retreating, as after 6...\textit{\textbf{f}}6 7.d5 d6 8.e4 Black’s queen is somewhat misplaced on a5.

7.\textit{\textbf{d}}xd2 \textit{\textbf{b}}6 8.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 \textit{\textbf{g}}7 9.e3

In the event of 9.d5 \textit{\textbf{x}}xc3+ 10.bxc3 \textit{\textbf{f}}6 (also threatening the c4-pawn, by means of 11...\textit{\textbf{h}}4+) 11.\textit{\textbf{b}}3 d6, Black has an excellent position.

This position arose in Koops –Tesic, e-mail 2005, and now simplest for Black is:

9...\textit{\textbf{c}}6N 10.\textit{\textbf{e}}2 0–0

Obviously there is no advantage for White.

\textit{\textbf{C1}} 5.d5

5...\textit{\textbf{g}}7 6.\textit{\textbf{d}}2 \textit{\textbf{f}}6

Also not bad is 6...\textit{\textbf{a}}5 7.\textit{\textbf{c}}2 \textit{\textbf{f}}5.

7.e4 \textit{\textbf{d}}6

Finally the game has transposed to a King’s Indian type of position, but with White’s knight misplaced on d2.

8.\textit{\textbf{c}}2

As a consequence of the knight being on d2, White has to take time to defend the b2-pawn, because the natural 8.\textit{\textbf{g}}f3 would just lose this pawn to 8...\textit{\textbf{h}}5 followed by 9...\textit{\textbf{x}}b2.
Chapter 1 – Rare Third Moves

8...0–0 9.\texttt{gf3} e6 10.\texttt{d3}

If 10.\texttt{e2} then Black can obtain good play with 10...\texttt{h5}! 11.\texttt{g5} \texttt{f6} 12.\texttt{e3} \texttt{f5}.

10...\texttt{a6}

A useful move to insert before returning attention to the kingside; the threat of \ldots\texttt{b4} causes White to lose more time.

11.a3

In Straeter – Gross, Germany 1999, Black should now have played:

12.\texttt{g5} \texttt{f6} 13.\texttt{e3}

After 13.\texttt{h4} Black gets a good version of the King’s Indian with: 13...\texttt{e5}! (less clear is 13...\texttt{exd5} 14.cxd5

\texttt{f4} 15.0–0 \texttt{g5} 16.\texttt{g3} \texttt{xd3} 17.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{f5} 18.exf5 \texttt{xf5} 19.\texttt{b3}\texttt{f} 14.0–0 \texttt{we8} Black cannot be prevented from carrying out his main idea, the \ldots\texttt{f} advance, which will give him excellent play. However, 14...\texttt{f4}? is also worthy of consideration.

13...\texttt{e5}

Again I don’t see how White can stop the \ldots\texttt{f} advance; Black has great play.

C2) 5.\texttt{c2}

White’s best choice, according to theory.

5...\texttt{a5}\uparrow 6.\texttt{d2} \texttt{f5}

The justification for the previous move; White will have to spend some time if he wants to chase Black’s knight away from the centre. After 6...\texttt{f6} 7.d5 \texttt{d6} 8.e4 \texttt{g7} 9.\texttt{e2} followed by 10.\texttt{c3}, White is fighting for an opening advantage.

7.\texttt{f3}

The most natural reply. Another game saw:

7.\texttt{gf3}

Black should continue:

7...\texttt{g7}

In Speelman – Ehlvest, Reykjavik 1991, Black immediately went wrong with 7...\texttt{cx} and after 8.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{g7} 9.\texttt{b3}!
White was better.

8.d5
This position has occurred once in tournament practice, via a different move order, in the game Serafimov – Ignatenko, Russia 1996. I found the following natural improvement:

8...a6!N 9.a3
White can hardly allow 9.e3 b4 10.b3 (10.c1 is clearly inferior: 10...a4! 11.b3 d6 12.e2 dxa2! 13.c2 b4 14.d1 d7 Black remains with a healthy extra pawn.) 10...0-0 11.dxe6 dxe6 Black has a comfortable game, with excellent chances to take over the initiative.

9...0-0 10.e3 d2 11.d2

11...e5!
Black is probably better already, e.g.
12.dxe6 dxe6 13.0-0 e5 14.g3 d7

The idea of ...a4 is unpleasant for White.

7...d6 8.d5 g7 9.e5
A natural idea, White’s dark-squared bishop is transferred to c3, neutralizing the annoying pin along the e1-a5 diagonal. This position occurred in Barsov – Vareille, Val Thorens 1995. I found the following improvement:

9...0-0N 10.h3 e6
Black strikes in the centre, aiming to use his lead in development.

11.c3 d8 12.e4
Certainly 12.dxe6 dxe6 would allow Black to comfortably develop his queen’s knight to c6.

12...fxe4 13.fxe4 b5!
Black not only creates unpleasant tension in the centre, but also has the major threat of playing 14...b4, which would force White to give up his dark-squared bishop. In my opinion Black has good chances to take over the initiative.

Conclusion

White may be attracted to these rare third-move options because they make it problematic (or even impossible) for Black to continue in traditional Grünfeld style. However, by adopting a flexible approach, I believe that Black can obtain good chances. Against 3.c2 it is promising for Black to head into a King’s Indian in which White’s d4-pawn can quickly be targeted. I recommend meeting 3.d5 with the aggressive 3...b5!! when Black can expect to obtain compensation typical of the Benko Gambit. Finally 3.g5 can be met by an idea from the Trompowsky, 3...e4 followed by 4...c5, which assures Black of good play.
Early Deviations

3.f3

Variation Index

1.d4 .gf6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 d5 4.cxd5 6xd5 5.e4

5...6b6

A) 6.a4 14
B) 6.6c3 6g7 7.6e3 0–0 15
   B1) 8.6c1 15
   B2) 8.f4 6c6 9.d5 6a5! 10.6d4 e5! 11.6xe5 6xe5 12.fxe5 6h4†
       13.g3 6e7 14.6d4 6d8! 15.b4 6ac4 16
       B21) 16.6xc4 6xb4 17.6f3 6xc4 18.6e3 6e8!N 19
       B211) 19.6d1 20
       B212) 19.e6 20
       B213) 19.6c1 20
   B22) 16.6f3 21
B3) 8.6d2 6c6 9.0–0–0 f5 22
   B31) 10.6xf5 23
   B32) 10.h4 fxe4 11.h5 gxh5! 24
       B321) 12.d5 25
       B322) 12.6hx5 25
   B33) 10.e5 6b4 29
       B331) 11.6h6 30
       B332) 11.h4 6e6 30
           B3321) 12.6b1 31
           B3322) 12.h5 31
           B3323) 12.a3 32
       B333) 11.6h3 34
1. d4 d5 2. c4 g6 3. f3 d5

The response most in the spirit of the Grünfeld. Obviously 3...g7 4.e4 transposes to the Sämisch King’s Indian, while for those looking for an offbeat line, 3...c6 is an interesting alternative.

4. cxd5

4..c3 will be examined via the 3..c3 d5 4.f3 move order.

4...exd5 5.e4 b6

We shall look at A) 6.a4 and B) 6.c3, noting that 6.e3 g7 7.c3 is simply a transposition into line B.

A) 6.a4

This has occurred in a number of games. The idea is to undermine the position of Black’s b6-knight and make it vulnerable in the future struggle. However, White fails to achieve his goals, and meanwhile the weakness of the b4-square is significant.

6...a5 7.e3 g7 8.c3 0–0 9.e1

The alternative is absolutely harmless: 9.d2 c6 10.d5 (10.b5 b4! is also excellent for Black)

10...b4!N This is a natural improvement on the game Dumpor – Sarenac, Obrenovac 2004. The following line is a good illustration of how play may unfold: 11.e1 e6 12.b5 c6! 13.dxe6 xxe6 14.xd2 xxe6 15.xb6 cxb5 16.xxb5 f5! Black takes over the initiative.

9...c6!N

A strong improvement over 9...c6, after which 10.b3 is pretty unclear.

10.b5

This is evidently the move that Black was concerned about.

10...d7!

The key idea; it transpires that White has to worry about his a4-pawn. In fact, Black obtains good play as a result of his development advantage. Here is my brief analysis:
11.b3
A more aggressive try is 11.d5 \(\text{b}4\) 12.\(\text{xc}7\) (12.\(\text{xc}7\) is impossible in view of 12...\(\text{xb}5\) 13.\(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{xf}1\) 14.\(\text{xf}1\) \(\text{a}6\) and White loses) 12...\(\text{xa}4\) 13.\(\text{xa}8\) \(\text{xb}2\) 14.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xa}8\) Black clearly has the initiative.

11...\(\text{b}4\)
This move still works.

12.\(\text{f}4\)
After 12.\(\text{xc}7\) \(\text{c}8\) 13.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{xc}1\) 14.\(\text{xc}1\) \(\text{xb}5\) 15.\(\text{xb}5\) \(\text{xd}4\) Black certainly has nothing to worry about. Play may continue 16.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 17.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{d}6\) 18.0-0 \(\text{c}8\), when Black has some initiative.

12...e5! 13.dxe5
Clearly inferior is 13.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{xb}5\) 14.\(\text{xb}5\) \(\text{xe}5\) 15.dxe5 \(\text{g}5\)! and Black is better.

13...c6 14.d6 \(\text{e}6\)
Despite being a pawn down, Black's lead in development gives him great play. For instance:

15.\(\text{g}3\)
Or 15.\(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{xd}1\) 16.\(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{xb}3\) 17.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xa}4\) and the black a-pawn is very dangerous.

15...\(\text{e}7\) 16.f4 \text{ad}8 17.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{c}8\)
Black regains the pawn with dividends.

10.\(\text{d}4\)
Black need not fear 10.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{c}6\) 11.dxc6 \(\text{xc}6\) 12.\(\text{xd}8\) \(\text{xd}8\) 13.\(\text{xa}7\), as was played in Decsey - R. Horvath, Tapolca 1998, because he has a convincing answer in: 13...\(\text{a}4\)! 14.\(\text{xc}6\) (14.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{b}2\) 15.\(\text{xc}8\) \(\text{xc}8\) 16.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{d}4\) also leads to an initiative for Black) 14...\(\text{xc}6\) 15.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{c}3\)! 16.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{b}2\) White is in trouble, as Black is
threatening not only 17...£xa2, but also 17...£d1†.

10...c6 11.f4 £g4 12.£xg7 £xg7 13.£e2

13...£e5!

The best reply, since after 13...£f6 White can hope for a slight edge with 14.dxc6 bxc6 15.£f3, thanks to his superior queenside pawn structure.

14.£xg4 £h4† 15.g3 £xg4 16.£xg4
16.fxe5 would be an error, in view of 16...£xd1† 17.£xd1 £c4! and Black is already better.

16...£xg4 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.h3 £e6

19.£f3 exf4 20.gxf4 £fd8

The position was level in Goglidze - Spielmann, Moscow 1935; Black’s damaged pawn structure on the queenside is balanced by the vulnerability of White’s central pawns.

B2) 8.f4

A very sharp line. Black needs to know exactly how to respond, in order to avoid landing in an inferior position – as once happened to yours truly.

8...£c6 9.d5

The most challenging continuation. Black’s task is much easier after:

9.£f3 £g4 10.d5 £a5 11.£d4

Black has replied to 11.£e2 in three different ways, but not played what I consider the most natural continuation: 11...£ac4N 12.£c1 e6 13.dxe6 £xe6 Only Black can be better.

11...£xf3 12.gxf3
12...e6!
 Very simple and at the same time strong; the threat of ...\h4\# is most unpleasant for White.

13.\xg7
 I tried to improve White's play with 13.h4, but he still stands worse: 13...\xd4 14.\xd4 \c6! 15.\g1 (or 15.\d2 \exd5 16.\exd5 \e7\# 17.\f2 \ead8 and Black is clearly better) 15...\exd5 16.0-0-0 \f6 17.\g5 \xg5 18.hxg5 \dxe4 19.\xe4 \g7\# Black is a pawn up and ready to meet 20.\f6 with 20...h5!.

13...\h4\#!
 With this intermediate move, Black takes over the initiative.

14.\e2 \xg7 15.\d4 \g8 16.\e3?
 Not the best place for the king, but it is difficult to offer White any good advice – he probably has to just give up the f4-pawn.

We have been following Y. Popov – Elizarov, Tula 2007, and now Black should have played:
16...\ad8N
 It's hard to believe White can hold out for long.

9...\da5!
 The critical move. Retreating with 9...\b8 gives White reasonable chances to fight for an opening advantage after 10.a4!. For example: 10.c6 11.a5 \d67 12.e5 \exd5 13.\xd5 \c6

14.\f3 \db8 15.\b5\# Rabar – Cruz, Rio de Janeiro 1952.

10.\d4
 Clearly worse is 10.\f3 \g4, transposing to the note to White's 9th move above.

10...e5!
 I am really inspired by this move, and believe that it is Black's clearest route to equality, although 10...\g4 is a decent alternative.

11.\xe5
 White has a couple of other possibilities:

The attempt to win a piece by 11.\xb6? \xb6 12.b4 obviously fails to 12...\xf4 13.\c2 \h4\# and Black wins.

11.fxe5 c6!
 Black has only played this once, but I have come to the conclusion that it is his best continuation.

12.d6
 An unfortunate decision. I examined White's stronger options:
a) 12.\f3 \cxd5 13.\c5 allows a very nice idea: 13...\c6! (13...\e8 14.\b5 \d7 15.\xb6 a\xb6 16.\xd7 \xd7 is sufficient for equality) 14.\xf8 \xf8 15.\exd5 (15.\xd5 \xe5 16.a2 \xf3\# 17.\xf3 a\xb2 18.\b1 \g7 is also promising for Black) 15...\xe5
16.\texttt{\textit{xe2}} \texttt{\textit{g4}} 17.\texttt{\textit{d2}} Black has excellent compensation.

b) 12.e6 fxe6 13.\texttt{\textit{exg7}} \texttt{\textit{xg7}} 14.\texttt{\textit{d4}}+ \texttt{\textit{xf6}} 15.\texttt{\textit{xf6}}+ \texttt{\textit{exf6}} 16.\texttt{\textit{dxc6}} \texttt{\textit{ac6}} With equality.

12...\texttt{\textit{ac4}} 13.\texttt{\textit{f3}} \texttt{\textit{g4}}

Very simple and strong; Black is going to regain the e5-pawn, after which the d6-pawn becomes weak. In the following encounter Black easily achieved an advantage:

14.\texttt{\textit{xc4}} \texttt{\textit{xc4}} 15.\texttt{\textit{b3}} \texttt{\textit{xf3}} 16.\texttt{\textit{gxf3}} \texttt{\textit{c5}}


11...\texttt{\textit{xe5}} 12.\texttt{\textit{f3}} \texttt{\textit{g4}} 17.\texttt{\textit{d2}} \texttt{\textit{f2}}

White is lacking worthy alternatives, for example:

14.\texttt{\textit{f3}} \texttt{\textit{g4}} 15.\texttt{\textit{b3}} f5+ Black seizes the initiative.

14.b3 \texttt{\textit{xe5}} 15.\texttt{\textit{c1}} occurred in Dokhoian – Krasenkov, USSR 1986, and now Black should play: 15...f5!N 16.\texttt{\textit{f3}} \texttt{\textit{e7}} 17.e5 \texttt{\textit{xd8}}! White's centre is vulnerable, with Black threatening 18...\texttt{\textit{e6}} or 18...\texttt{\textit{c6}}. White’s best is 18.\texttt{\textit{c2}} \texttt{\textit{xd5}} 19.\texttt{\textit{xd5}} \texttt{\textit{xd5}} 20.\texttt{\textit{xc7}} \texttt{\textit{d7}} 21.\texttt{\textit{c4}} \texttt{\textit{xc4}} 22.\texttt{\textit{xc4}} \texttt{\textit{c6}} 23.0–0 \texttt{\textit{ad8}}, but Black is clearly in control.

12...\texttt{\textit{h4}}+!

A very important intermediate check that forces White to advance his g-pawn, weakening his position and depriving him of the possibility of recapturing with the g-pawn in the event of an exchange on the f3-square.

12...\texttt{\textit{c7}} 13.\texttt{\textit{f3}} \texttt{\textit{g4}} 14.\texttt{\textit{d4}} \texttt{\textit{xf3}} 15.gxf3 \texttt{\textit{c5}} was played in Gajewski – Gruszko, Warsaw 2008, and now White missed the very strong:

16.d6! \texttt{\textit{h4}}+ (or 16...\texttt{\textit{cxd4}} 17.\texttt{\textit{dxe7}} \texttt{\textit{e8}} 18.\texttt{\textit{d5}} \texttt{\textit{dx5}} 19.\texttt{\textit{exd5}} \texttt{\textit{xe7}} 20.\texttt{\textit{f4}}) 17.\texttt{\textit{f2}} \texttt{\textit{f4}} 18.\texttt{\textit{g3}} \texttt{\textit{e3}}+ 19.\texttt{\textit{e2}} \texttt{\textit{ac4}} 20.\texttt{\textit{f4}}! \texttt{\textit{d2}}+ 21.\texttt{\textit{f2}} Such a huge pawn mass in the centre secures White’s advantage.

14...\texttt{\textit{d8}}!

Unless you are familiar with the theory, this is not an easy move to find. When I met this position for the first time I reacted with the more natural-looking 14...\texttt{\textit{c5}}? but my opponent demonstrated that this is a serious error: 15.d6! cxd4 16.\texttt{\textit{dxe7}} \texttt{\textit{e8}} 17.\texttt{\textit{d5}}! \texttt{\textit{xd5}} 18.\texttt{\textit{exd5}} \texttt{\textit{xe7}} 19.b4 The point of White’s play. 19...\texttt{\textit{f5}} (relatively better is 19...\texttt{\textit{exe5}}+ but White still has a clear advantage after 20.\texttt{\textit{f2}} \texttt{\textit{f5}} 21.\texttt{\textit{f3}} \texttt{\textit{xd5}} 22.\texttt{\textit{bxa5}}) 20.\texttt{\textit{f3}} \texttt{\textit{e4}} 21.\texttt{\textit{f2}} \texttt{\textit{e8}} 22.\texttt{\textit{d6}} \texttt{\textit{ee8}} 23.\texttt{\textit{bxa5}} \texttt{\textit{c2}}+ 24.\texttt{\textit{e2}} d3 25.\texttt{\textit{d4}}! White had a decisive advantage in Sakalauskas – Avrukh, Bled (ol) 2002.
15\textbf{.b4}  
White's only way of fighting for the advantage, as otherwise Black would continue with 15...\texttt{\&}c6, regaining the e5-pawn.

15...\texttt{\&}ac4  
Black has an interesting alternative:  
15...\texttt{\&}c6?! 16.\texttt{\&}c5  
The point behind White's 15th move.  
16...\texttt{\&}g5  
This trick allows Black to avoid losing material, as Black's knight is untouchable in view of the mate on d2.

17.\texttt{\&}f3 \texttt{\&}h5 18.\texttt{\&}e2 \texttt{\&}xe5 19.0-0  
Obviously 19.\texttt{\&}xc7? is impossible because of 19...\texttt{\&}xf3\# 20.\texttt{\&}xf3 \texttt{\&}xf3 21.\texttt{\&}xd8\# \texttt{\&}g7 and White loses.

A very complicated position has arisen, which I would evaluate as balanced.

White now chooses between \texttt{B21)} 16.\texttt{\&}xc4 and \texttt{B22)} 16.\texttt{\&}f3.

\texttt{B21) 16.\texttt{\&}xc4 \texttt{\&}xb4 17.\texttt{\&}f3}  
Absolutely harmless is 17.\texttt{\&}ge2 \texttt{\&}xc4 18.0-0. Moskalenko – Fracnik, Belgrade 1988, continued 18...\texttt{\&}xd4\# 19.\texttt{\&}xd4 c6 20.e6 fxe6 21.\texttt{\&}xe6 \texttt{\&}xe6 22.dxe6 \texttt{\&}d3 and Black was clearly better.

17...\texttt{\&}xc4 18.\texttt{\&}e3  
White should avoid the queen swap; Black is absolutely fine after both 18.\texttt{\&}b1 \texttt{\&}xd4 19.\texttt{\&}xd4 c6! and 18.\texttt{\&}xc4 \texttt{\&}xc4 19.\texttt{\&}b1 \texttt{\&}e8.
18...\texttt{e}8!N

In my opinion this is a very important novelty. Previously Black has suffered after: 18...c6 19...\texttt{cl} (19.e6 fxe6 20...\texttt{e}5 also looks scary. Although 20...\texttt{b}4 21.0-0 \texttt{c}4 eventually led to a draw in Kaidanov – Peng Xiaomin, Seattle 2001, I wouldn’t be surprised if White could improve his play.) 19...\texttt{g}4 20...\texttt{d}2 \texttt{b}4 21.0-0 This position is very dangerous position for Black, as shown by 21...\texttt{x}d5 22.exd5 \texttt{x}d5 23...\texttt{x}d5 \texttt{x}d5 24...\texttt{e}4± Mamedyarov – Shirov, Baku (rapid) 2009.

The position after 18...\texttt{e}8! is extremely complicated. I investigated B211) 19...\texttt{d}1, the critical B212) 19...e6 and also the natural B213) 19...\texttt{cl}.

\textbf{B211) 19...\texttt{d}1 \texttt{g}4 20.e6 \texttt{x}f3}

It is essential to eliminate this knight.

21.exf7+ \texttt{xf7} 22...\texttt{xf3}+ \texttt{g}7 23...\texttt{f}1 \texttt{d}7

Black is slightly better, thanks to his control over the key e5-square.

\textbf{B212) 19...e6}

20...\texttt{f}4 is strongly met by: 20...\texttt{c}5! 21...\texttt{h}6 \texttt{d}xe4 22...\texttt{f}4 \texttt{f}5! 23...\texttt{d}3 24...\texttt{e}2 \texttt{d}7 25...\texttt{d}1 \texttt{c}5! 26.e6 \texttt{xe}6! (26...fxe6 27...\texttt{e}5 probably leads to perpetual check) 27.dxe6 \texttt{x}e6 28...\texttt{e}5 \texttt{e}4 29...\texttt{x}e4 \texttt{x}e4 30...\texttt{d}3 \texttt{d}8± Despite the material being balanced, Black’s chances are much higher, due to the poor coordination of the white pieces.

20...\texttt{h}6 \texttt{x}e5! This is the key idea. In the event of 21...\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{xe}5 the white king comes under attack and Black takes over the initiative.

20...\texttt{a}6!
It is important to keep the white king in the centre, and this is clearly much stronger than 20...\texttt{Wb}4_+\texttt{21.\texttt{Wc}d2 \texttt{a}xe5 22.\texttt{a}xe5 \texttt{a}xe5 23.\texttt{a}xc7, with a double-edged position.}\texttt{21.\texttt{Wc}3}\nonumber

Other moves are not dangerous for Black either:
\texttt{21.\texttt{Wd}4 c6! 22.d6 (after 22.\texttt{a}c3 Black has 22...\texttt{c}5_+ and the e5-pawn falls) 22...\texttt{a}xe5 23.\texttt{a}xe5 \texttt{a}5_+ Black ends up with an extra pawn.}\nonumber

21.\texttt{a}xc7 \texttt{a}xe5 and Black takes over the initiative, for instance: 22.\texttt{a}c3 \texttt{d}6 23.\texttt{b}5 \texttt{b}4_+ 24.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{xf}3_+ 25.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{f}5_+\nonumber

21...\texttt{b}6
A very strong idea; Black prepares to activate his knight by ...\texttt{e}c5.\nonumber

22.\texttt{Wc}6
This looks threatening, but Black is ready with a nice retort.

22...\texttt{Wd}3 23.\texttt{a}f2\nonumber

\texttt{23...\texttt{xf}3_+! 24.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{a}xe5_+ 25.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{xc}6 26.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{b}7_+ 27.\texttt{a}xc7 \texttt{xd}5_+}
Black is a healthy pawn up.\nonumber

\texttt{B22) 16.\texttt{a}f3 \texttt{g}4}
The following sequence of moves is more or less forced.

17.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{xf}3 18.0-0 \texttt{xb}4\nonumber

19.\texttt{e}6
This is the most challenging move. White has also tried:
19.\texttt{xf}3?! \texttt{xc}4 20.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{d}7!
White's initiative has been slowed down, and Black has the better chances.
21.\texttt{xf}4 \texttt{f}8
White has no good answer to Black's primitive idea of ...\texttt{ae}8 followed by the capture of the e5-pawn.
22.\texttt{b}1?! \texttt{ae}8 23.\texttt{b}5
Probably White realized only now that 23.\texttt{xb}7 was not really a threat, as after 23...\texttt{xe}5 24.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{f}5 25.\texttt{xf}5 \texttt{a}6 followed by 26...\texttt{xf}5, Black will win material.
23...\texttt{a}6 24.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{xa}2 25.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{xe}5
Black had achieved a decisive advantage in Moskalenko – Konguvel, Barcelona 2004.

19...\texttt{fx}e6 20.\texttt{xf}3
White tried 20.\texttt{f}6? in Fodor – Katsuhara, Budapest 2005, but it is just bad. The easiest solution for Black is 20...\texttt{c}5_+ 21.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{f}8 22.\texttt{xe}6_+ \texttt{g}7 and White loses one of his minor pieces.
According to my database, seven games have reached this position. White has to force a draw by perpetual check:

22.\textit{\&}e6+  
Or 22.f7+ \textit{\&}h8 23.f6+.

22...\textit{\&}h8 23.f6+=

B3) 8.\textit{\&}d2

8...\textit{\&}c6 9.0–0–0  
This is clearly White's first choice. We shall just take a brief look at the alternatives:

9.d5?! This advance is premature, and only helps Black to seize the initiative: 9...\textit{\&}e5  
10.\textit{\&}g5 (10.b3 e6 is also good for Black)  
10...c6 11.\textit{\&}d1 cxd5 12.exd5 \textit{\&}f5 Black's lead in development gave him a clear advantage in Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Bled 1931.

9.\textit{\&}d1 e5  
Another possibility is 9...f5, but the text easily solves Black's problems and is more thematic.

10.d5 \textit{\&}d4 11.\textit{\&}b5  
This gets rid of the central black knight, but Black's development advantage gives him good play.  
Another option is: 11.\textit{\&}d3 f5N (more ambitious than 11...c6, which was good enough for equality in Simon – Temi, Cannes 1996) 12.\textit{\&}e2 fxe4 13.\textit{\&}xe4 \textit{\&}c4  
14.\textit{\&}c1 \textit{\&}xe3 15.\textit{\&}xe3 \textit{\&}d6 16.0–0 \textit{\&}d7  
Black's chances are slightly better, thanks to his strong knight on d4.

11...\textit{\&}xb5 12.\textit{\&}xb5

12...f5! 13.\textit{\&}d3 fxe4 14.\textit{\&}xe4  
14.fxe4 runs into the unpleasant 14...\textit{\&}g4!.  
14...f5 15.\textit{\&}xf5 gxf5 16.b3  
We have been following Scekic – Bercys, New York (rapid) 2004. Black should now have opted for:  
16...\textit{\&}h4†!N 17.\textit{\&}f2 \textit{\&}f6 18.\textit{\&}e2 \textit{\&}fd8†

9...f5
The current fashion in this position. More common is 9...e5, which leads to a very complicated battle after 10.d5 \(\text{\textit{d}}4\) 11.f4.

We shall take a look at B31) 10.exf5, before turning to the main alternatives, B32) 10.h4 and B33) 10.e5.

**B31) 10.exf5 \(\text{\textit{xf}}5\) 11.h4**

This has been played only once, but my main reason for sharing this line with the readers is to show some of Black’s ideas in this kind of position.

11...\(\text{\textit{b}}4!\)

The game Perez Lopez – Navarro Cia, Barcelona 2000, saw 11...e5 12.d5 \(\text{\textit{d}}4\) 13.g4 with unclear play.

12.g4

The key point of Black’s novelty can be seen in the following line: 12.h5 \(\text{\textit{d}}5\) 13.g4 \(\text{\textit{x}}a2\) 14.gxf5 \(\text{\textit{a}}1\) 15.\(\text{\textit{b}}1\) c5 Black has a devastating attack.

12...\(\text{\textit{e}}6\) 13.\(\text{\textit{b}}1\) \(\text{\textit{c}}4\) 14.\(\text{\textit{x}}c4\)

No better is 14.\(\text{\textit{c}}1\) \(\text{\textit{e}}3\) 15.\(\text{\textit{c}}3\) \(\text{\textit{d}}7\) and Black is already threatening 16...\(\text{\textit{xa}}2\).

14...\(\text{\textit{x}}c4\) 15.a3

This is necessary, as after 15.h5 \(\text{\textit{d}}3\) 16.\(\text{\textit{c}}1\) c5 Black’s attack is decisive.

15...a5

Since the game Motylev – Svidler, Wijk aan Zee 2007 (see the note to Black’s 13th move in B333), this idea has become quite thematic in this line. Instead 15...\(\text{\textit{d}}5\) 16.\(\text{\textit{x}}d5\) \(\text{\textit{xd}}5\) 17.h5 would lead to double-edged play.

16.h5 \(\text{\textit{d}}7\)

Black is doing well.

**B32) 10.h4**

A very aggressive approach, leading to highly interesting play, although it seems to me that Black manages to keep everything under control.

10...\(\text{\textit{f}}4\) 11.h5
This pawn sacrifice is the idea behind White's 10th move.

11...gxh5!
It is essential to keep the h-file half closed. After 11...e5 12.d5 c4 13.hxg6 hxg6 14.fxe4 White has an almost perfect score.

White generally chooses between B321) 12.d5 and B322) 12.bxh5, although there are a couple of less serious options:

12.h6?! has been played twice, but I think it is a blunder, since Black can simply grab the central pawn: 12...fxd4N 13.g5 (Black's point is that 13...fxd4 runs into 13...hxh6†—+) 13...e5 14.xg7† xg7 15.xg7† xg7 16.xe4 f5 17.xh5 xe4 18.fxe4 ad8† White has absolutely no compensation for being a pawn down.

11.g4 This surprising continuation was first employed by Dutch Grandmaster Stellwagen in 2008, but we shall follow a later correspondence game, in which White was convincingly punished: 11...f5 12.d5 (after 13.h5 g4 14.f2 xh8 Black is also better) 13.xg7 14.g5 d7 15.d5 f2! This nice tactical trick clarifies the situation. 16.e2 xe2 17.xe2 e5 18.xb6 f1=wb 19.xf1 xf1† 20.xf1 axb6 21.ge2 hxh8 Black had a big advantage, which was easily converted in Wojtyra – Staf, e-mail 2009.

B321) 12.d5
This leads to very concrete play.

12...e5 13.h6 dxc4!
This is much stronger than 13...f7? 14.xg7 xg7 15.xh5, which gave White a serious initiative in Sakaev – Timofeev, Istanbul 2003.

14.g5 f7

A remarkable position. At first sight it looks as if White has a serious initiative, due to the exposed black king. However, Black's position is like a coiled spring, and in a very short time he manages to develop his pieces and even create significant threats against the white king.

15.xc4
Another line is: 15.h4 d6! (but not 15...xb2? 16.f4! and Black ends up losing the knight on b2, Rodshtein – Sanikidze, Chalkidiki 2003) 16.xg7 xg7 17.xh5 d7! 18.xe4 wb4! 19.ed2 c5 20.xc4 (or 20.d1 d6 21.ed4 f5 22.ed2 e3†) 20...xc4 21.dd4 d6 22.d4 f5+ Black is winning material and he went on to win the game in Aleskerov – Sanikidze, Istanbul 2005. I have to say that Black's play in this game was most impressive; all his moves from 15...d6 onwards were simply the best.

15.dxc4 16.d4
White tried 16.xe4? in Meessen – Peschlow, Germany 2006, but Black could just grab an important pawn: 16...xb2N 17.d2 (or 17.d4 c5) 17...c4 18.d4 d6 Black has a winning position.

White's best option is 16.xg7, which has not been played, but is recommended by Ftacnik.
A logical continuation is then: 16...\textit{d}d6 17.\textit{x}xh5 \textit{ex}f3 18.gxf3 (after 18.\textit{xf}3 \textit{g}4 Black is clearly better) 18...\textit{f}8 Ftacnik evaluates this position as unclear. It is true that White has a certain amount of compensation following 19.\textit{e}g2 \textit{f}5 20.\textit{d}d4 \textit{g}6 21.\textit{h}2, but after 21...\textit{f}6 I prefer Black's position, due to his strong bishop. It should be noted that White cannot take the pawn back, as after 22.\textit{xc}7? \textit{d}6 Black has too many threats (such as ...e5, ...c8 and ...\textit{f}4†).

16...\textit{d}d6

With this natural 'human' move, Black's queen enters the play with great effect. However, the computer indicates an even better move for Black: 16...\textit{xb}2!N 17.\textit{xb}2 (or 17.\textit{xe}4 \textit{d}3† 18.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}5! 19.\textit{xd}3 e6 and Black is clearly better) 17...c5! The nice point of the sacrifice. 18.\textit{xe}4 \textit{b}6† 19.\textit{a}1 \textit{x}xh6 Black has a considerable advantage.

17.\textit{xe}g7

After 17.\textit{x}xh5 Black quickly develops a decisive attack: 17...\textit{b}4! 18.\textit{d}1 \textit{c}5 19.\textit{e}2 \textit{ex}f3 20.gxf3 \textit{e}5† 21.\textit{dc}3 \textit{xf}3 Black won easily in Gubajdullin – Belov, Moscow 2009.

17...\textit{xe}g7 18.\textit{exe}5 \textit{f}4† 19.\textit{b}1?! \textit{f}5

Black's last piece comes into play with decisive effect.

\textbf{20.\textit{fx}e}4 \textit{g}4 21.\textit{ge}2

\textbf{21...\textit{d}d2! 0–1}

Mamedyarov – Kurnosov, Moscow 2009.

B322) 12.\textit{x}xh5

12.\textit{f}5 13.\textit{g}5

White's first choice according to theory, but I would like to mention a couple of other options:

13.\textit{h}6 Essentially the situation is the same as we saw with 12.\textit{h}6! above, and here too Black can capture the central pawn with great effect:
13...\textit{\textsubscript{W}}xd4!N This novelty was pointed out by Krasenkow in \textit{ChessBase Magazine} 120.

14.\textit{\textsubscript{W}}xd4 (or 14.\textit{\textsubscript{W}}g5 \textit{\textsubscript{W}}f6+) 14...\textit{\textsubscript{W}}xd4 15.\textit{\textsubscript{A}}xf8 \textit{\textsubscript{B}}xf8 Black is clearly better.

13.\textit{\textsubscript{D}}d5
This looks quite interesting, but Black can keep everything under control.

13...\textit{\textsubscript{A}}g6!
Much stronger than 13...\textit{\textsubscript{D}}e5 14.\textit{\textsubscript{D}}d4, when White is fighting for an advantage.

14.\textit{\textsubscript{A}}h6
An understandable attempt, as after 14.\textit{\textsubscript{D}}h3 you don't have to be a grandmaster to find the following series of moves: 14...\textit{\textsubscript{D}}e5 15.fxe4 \textit{\textsubscript{D}}ec4 16.\textit{\textsubscript{A}}xc4 \textit{\textsubscript{D}}xc4 17.\textit{\textsubscript{W}}e2 \textit{\textsubscript{D}}xe3 18.\textit{\textsubscript{W}}xe3 \textit{\textsubscript{W}}d6+ Black has a pleasant game, thanks to his bishop pair.

14...\textit{\textsubscript{A}}xh5
Now we have a more or less forced line.

15.\textit{\textsubscript{A}}xg7 \textit{\textsubscript{A}}xg7 16.\textit{\textsubscript{W}}g5+ \textit{\textsubscript{A}}g6 17.dxc6 \textit{\textsubscript{B}}c8 18.\textit{\textsubscript{W}}xe7+  

13...\textit{\textsubscript{A}}g6
Black clearly has the better chances.  

18...\textit{\textsubscript{A}}g8!N
This improves on 18...\textit{\textsubscript{B}}f7 19.\textit{\textsubscript{W}}e5+ \textit{\textsubscript{A}}g8 20.\textit{\textsubscript{D}}xe4, which was rather unclear in Hillarp Persson – Howell, Jersey 2005.

19.\textit{\textsubscript{D}}xe4
I don't see any ideas for White after 19.cxb7 \textit{\textsubscript{W}}xb7 20.\textit{\textsubscript{W}}e6+ \textit{\textsubscript{B}}f7 21.fxe4 \textit{\textsubscript{D}}b8 22.b3 c5 followed by 23...\textit{\textsubscript{B}}e7.

19...\textit{\textsubscript{B}}xc6
Black comfortably parries all of White's tries, and remains the exchange up.

20.\textit{\textsubscript{A}}h3
White does not get anywhere with: 20.\textit{\textsubscript{D}}f6+ \textit{\textsubscript{W}}h8 21.g4 (or 21.\textit{\textsubscript{D}}d7 \textit{\textsubscript{D}}f5 22.g4 \textit{\textsubscript{F}}d5 23.\textit{\textsubscript{B}}xd5 \textit{\textsubscript{D}}xd5 24.\textit{\textsubscript{B}}e5+ \textit{\textsubscript{D}}g8+ 21...\textit{\textsubscript{B}}f7 22.\textit{\textsubscript{B}}e5 \textit{\textsubscript{B}}f8 The discovered checks are not dangerous, and so Black has the advantage.

20...\textit{\textsubscript{A}}xe4!
The simplest way; eliminating the knight leaves White short of active ideas.

21.\textit{\textsubscript{W}}xe4 \textit{\textsubscript{B}}f5 22.\textit{\textsubscript{B}}xc6 \textit{\textsubscript{B}}ad8
Black clearly has the better chances.

14.\textit{\textsubscript{A}}e2
This is nearly always played, but White has also tried the fairly natural:
14. \( \text{Nxe4} \) e5 15.d5
Definitely more challenging than 15.dxe5 
\( \text{Wxd2+} \) 16.\( \text{Nxd2} \) \( \text{Nxe5} \), when Black has no
problems.
15...\( \text{Nxd4} \) 16.\( \text{Nc3} \) c6 17.dxc6

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

17...\( \text{Wc7}! \)
A great concept! Black needs the open c-file
much more than he needs the pawn.
If 17...\( \text{bxc6}?! \) then White would be very
happy to continue 18.\( \text{Nxd3} \) with an
advantage.

18.\( \text{cxb7} \)
Now 18.\( \text{Nxd3} \) is well met by: 18.\( \text{Wxc6} \)
19.\( \text{Nxe6} \) \( \text{hxe6} \) 20.\( \text{Wd3} \) \( \text{g7} \) Black's pieces
feel quite comfortable behind his strong
central knight.

18...\( \text{Nab8}! \)
Another fine move; it's important for Black
to keep his queen on the c-file.

19.\( \text{f4}?! \)
After 19.\( \text{Nc3} \) \( \text{Exb7} \) 20.\( \text{Ge2} \) \( \text{Nc4} \) Black
develops a serious initiative on the
queenside.

19...\( \text{Nfd8}! \) 20.\( \text{fxe5} \) \( \text{Nxe6} \)
Now Black wins the exchange.

21.\( \text{We2} \) \( \text{Exd1+} \) 22.\( \text{Wxd1} \) \( \text{Nxd5} \) 23.\( \text{Nxd5} \)
Right now White has three pawns for the
exchange, but not for long.

23...\( \text{Nxe5} \) 24.\( \text{Nc6} \) \( \text{Nxc3} \) 25.\( \text{Nxb3+} \)
We have been following Vallejo Pons –
Navara, Wijk aan Zee 2009. Here Black
could have decided the game on the spot
with the simple:

25...\( \text{Nh7} \) 26.\( \text{Wxc3} \) \( \text{Nc6} \) 27.\( \text{Wxc7} \) \( \text{Nxc7} \)
28.\( \text{Nc3} \) \( \text{Nxa2} \) –

14...\( \text{e5} \)
Nobody has tried 14...\( \text{exf3} \) here; after
15.\( \text{Nxf3} \) e5 16.d5 (16.dxe5 \( \text{Wxd2+} \) 17.\( \text{Nxd2} \)
\( \text{Nh8}! \) is great for Black) 16...\( \text{Nc4} \) we reach
a position that is examined in the following
note.

15.d5 \( \text{Nc4} \)
The alternative 15...\( \text{exf3} \) keeps an extra
pawn, but helps White's development: 16.\( \text{Nxf3} \)
\( \text{Nc4} \) I think White can improve here with
17.\( \text{Nh4}! \) which was suggested by Golod in
ChessBase Magazine 81. White's position seems
promising, for instance 17...\( \text{Nh6} \) 18.\( \text{Nxe6} \) \( \text{fxe6} \)
19.\( \text{Nc3} \) allows him a long-term initiative.

16.\( \text{fxe4} \) c6

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

Black must attack White's centre; this
move also helps to open some lines on the
queenside.

17.\( \text{dxc6} \)
White has also played:
17.\( \text{Nf3} \) cxd5 18.\( \text{exd5} \)
It looks risky for White to open the diagonal
for Black's light-squared bishop.
There is a reasonable alternative in: 18.\( \text{Nxe5} \)
White has definite compensation for the pawn, but only enough for equality.

18...\textit{c}8 19.\textit{c}xe5!

The plausible 19.\textit{c}xd4 would run into:
19...\textit{g}xg5! 20.\textit{c}c6 (20.\textit{f}xg5 exd4 gives Black a decisive initiative) 20...\textit{f}4! Black is much better.

19...\textit{c}xe2+ 20.\textit{c}xe2 \textit{e}8 21.\textit{h}xg6

21...\textit{xc}3+! 22.bxc3 \textit{g}xg5 23.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}2 24.\textit{h}h4 \textit{e}5

Black could try 24...\textit{xc}3? 25.d6 \textit{d}7 26.\textit{d}d3 \textit{e}5 27.\textit{d}d2 \textit{f}f7, and White still has a bit of work to do to secure the draw.

25.\textit{f}3 \textit{xd}5=

A draw was soon agreed in Thaler - Winge, corr. 2006.

19.\textit{g}3N

This improvement was suggested by Krasenkow in \textit{ChessBase Magazine} 118. Laznicka has twice played:
19.\textit{g}3?! \textit{d}4

A natural improvement over 19...\textit{ad}8, which led to an unclear position in Laznicka - Krasenkow, Ostrava 2007: 20.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}4 21.\textit{d}d3 \textit{xf}3 22.\textit{xf}3 \textit{e}8 23.\textit{b}b1 \textit{xf}3 24.\textit{g}1= 20.\textit{h}5 \textit{hx}h5 21.\textit{hx}h5 \textit{ac}8

Black takes over the initiative.

22.\textit{b}1?

This allows an elegant combination. White's best try was: 22.\textit{h}6 \textit{g}6 23.\textit{xe}6 \textit{hx}5 24.\textit{xe}5 25.\textit{e}8 \textit{f}8 Black is slightly better, but White has good chances of saving the game.

22...\textit{xc}3 23.bxc3 \textit{a}4!

The point of the sacrifice; Black now develops a decisive attack.

24.\textit{xd}4 exd4

White was already defenceless against Black's
attack in Laznicka – Ponomariov, Carlsbad 2007. I believe that as a result of this game 19.\textit{Wg3}?! will not find any followers in the future.

19...\textit{Ac8}

I prefer this to 19...\textit{Cd4} 20.\textit{Bf3} \textit{Cxe2}† 21.\textit{Wxe2} with an unclear game, as pointed out by Krasenkow.

20.\textit{Cc4}

Other possibilities:

20.\textit{Df3}? is a serious inaccuracy that allows Black to seize the initiative on the queenside: 20...\textit{Cb4} 21.\textit{Bb1} \textit{Cc3} Black has a clear advantage.

20.\textit{Bb1} is a more important alternative: 20...\textit{Cd4} 21.\textit{Df3} \textit{Cc4} (after 21...\textit{Cc3}?! 22.bxc3 \textit{Dxe4}† 23.\textit{Dd3} I don’t see any good way for Black to continue) 22.\textit{Bxd4} exd4 23.\textit{Bxd4} \textit{Wb6} Black has fine long-term compensation for the pawn, thanks to his dark-squared bishop.

20...\textit{Cd8}

20...\textit{Ec7}?! is also worth considering.

21.\textit{Df3} \textit{Ec7} 22.\textit{Bxf8}† \textit{Bxf8} 23.\textit{Df3} \textit{Dd4} 24.\textit{Bb1} \textit{Wb4}

Black is by no means worse, due to his strong knight on d4.

\textbf{B33) 10.e5}

In my opinion this is the critical continuation. Black's dark-squared bishop is cut off from play for a long time, but on the other hand, Black is able to seize control over the light squares in the centre.

10...\textit{Db4}

We have arrived at an important crossroads for White; his options are B331) 11.\textit{Bh6}, B332) 11.\textit{h4} and B333) 11.\textit{Dh3}.

\textbf{B331) 11.\textit{Bh6}}
This leads to very concrete play, as White intends to launch a direct offensive on the black king after swapping dark-squared bishops.

11...\textit{e}6 12.\textit{b}1

White has also tried:
12.\textit{x}g7 \textit{x}g7 13.\textit{bl}

13...\textit{f}4?!\textit{N}

I like this very natural idea. In practice Black has played: 13...c5 14.dxc5 \textit{a}4! 15.\textit{ge}2 (15.\textit{xa}4? loses to 15...\textit{xa}2\textit{t} 16.\textit{c}1 \textit{a}5) 15...\textit{xd}2 16.\textit{xd}2 \textit{e}ad8 17.\textit{d}4 \textit{xc}5


14.g4!

White would be in trouble if he did not have this resource.
14...\textit{a}5 15.\textit{h}3 \textit{d}6\textit{d}5

Black has very comfortable play.

12.\textit{x}h6 13.\textit{x}h6

13...\textit{d}7?!\textit{N}

I believe that this is a serious improvement over 13...\textit{d}6\textit{d}5, as played in Dracic – Kokol, Nova Gorica 2008. White could have responded with the natural 14.\textit{h}3\textit{N}, when the threat of \textit{g}5 would force Black onto the defensive.

14.\textit{h}3

After 14.a3 \textit{d}4\textit{d}5 15.\textit{ge}2 \textit{a}4\textit{t} Black's initiative develops quite smoothly.

14...\textit{xa}2!\textit{N}

This move sets off some fireworks on the board.

15.\textit{g}5 \textit{xc}3\textit{t} 16.bxc3 \textit{f}7

The only defence against White's threat, but entirely adequate.

17.\textit{xf}7 \textit{a}4 18.\textit{d}2 \textit{xf}7

Black is the exchange for a pawn down, but it is obvious that he has more than enough compensation.

B332) 11.h4

This aggressive thrust looks very natural. Black has to react quickly, because the further advance of the h-pawn might cause serious damage.
11...\textit{e}6

Black attacks the a-pawn. White can defend it by B3321) 12.\textit{b}1, ignore the threat with B3322) 12.h5 or move it with B3323) 12.a3.

B3321) 12.\textit{b}1

12...f4N

Sacrificing this pawn to clear the f5-square for the bishop is often a tempting idea in this variation, but this particular position is one of the few occasions that it actually works. In Kowzan – Jurek, Wysowa 2003, Black played very passively: 12...\textit{d}4\textit{d}5 13.\textit{h}3 \textit{xe}3 14.\textit{xe}3 \textit{d}5 15.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 16.h5±

13.\textit{xf}4 c5!

All Black's pieces are brought into play, even the dark-squared bishop.

14.dxc5

It is dangerous for White to play: 14.\textit{ge}2 \textit{f}5! 15.\textit{e}4 \textit{d}5 16.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}7 17.dxc5 (after 17.\textit{xe}3 \textit{ad}8 18.\textit{e}1 \textit{a}4 19.b3 \textit{xc}3† 20.\textit{xc}3 \textit{d}5= Black retains an initiative) 17...\textit{a}4 18.\textit{b}5 \textit{xc}5 Black has good compensation for the pawn.

14...\textit{e}6\textit{d}5
15...\texttt{\textbackslash wd7}!N
An important improvement, as otherwise the whole line is somewhat dangerous for Black. The e8-square should be kept free for the king, so I don't like 15...\texttt{\textbackslash we8} 16.\texttt{\textbackslash de2} \texttt{\textbackslash f4}, as in Av. Bykhovsky - Dub, Tel Aviv 2002. White could then play: 17.\texttt{\textbackslash c3N} \texttt{\textbackslash b3} 18.\texttt{\textbackslash e1} \texttt{\textbackslash d8} 19.g4! White has a serious initiative, while Black is lacking in activity.

16.\texttt{\textbackslash de2}
White needs this move in order to shelter his king. Obviously 16.\texttt{\textbackslash xg7}? runs into 16...\texttt{\textbackslash we6}† and Black remains with a healthy extra pawn after the exchange of queens.

16...\texttt{\textbackslash b3} 17.\texttt{\textbackslash xg7}
17.\texttt{\textbackslash e1} is too slow, although Black has to find the strong response: 17...\texttt{\textbackslash d5}! 18.\texttt{\textbackslash xg7} \texttt{\textbackslash xg7} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash h6}† \texttt{\textbackslash f7} 20.\texttt{\textbackslash h7}† \texttt{\textbackslash e8} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash xg6}† \texttt{\textbackslash d8} White's king is much more vulnerable than his black counterpart.

17...\texttt{\textbackslash xg7} 18.\texttt{\textbackslash h6}† \texttt{\textbackslash f7}

19.d5!
White's best continuation. After 19.\texttt{\textbackslash h7}?! \texttt{\textbackslash e8} 20.\texttt{\textbackslash xg6}† \texttt{\textbackslash d8} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash h6} \texttt{\textbackslash e8} Black is better, due to the vulnerable white king.

19...\texttt{\textbackslash a4} 20.\texttt{\textbackslash h7}† \texttt{\textbackslash e8} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash c3} \texttt{\textbackslash a1}†

Clearly worse is 21...\texttt{\textbackslash f4}† 22.\texttt{\textbackslash d2} \texttt{\textbackslash xd5}, as after 23.e6! Black is under serious pressure.

22.\texttt{\textbackslash b1} \texttt{\textbackslash a2}!
Black must certainly avoid 22...\texttt{\textbackslash xd1}?
23.\texttt{\textbackslash b5}† \texttt{\textbackslash d8} 24.\texttt{\textbackslash g7}† and White wins.

23.\texttt{\textbackslash c2} \texttt{\textbackslash a4}

The following variation now seems forced.

24.\texttt{\textbackslash b5}† \texttt{\textbackslash d8} 25.\texttt{\textbackslash xa4} \texttt{\textbackslash xb1}† 26.\texttt{\textbackslash xb1} \texttt{\textbackslash xa4}† 27.\texttt{b3} \texttt{\textbackslash b5}
The struggle should end in a draw, for example:

28.\texttt{\textbackslash be1} \texttt{\textbackslash c5}† 29.\texttt{\textbackslash b2} \texttt{\textbackslash f2}† 30.\texttt{\textbackslash b1} \texttt{\textbackslash b6} 31.\texttt{\textbackslash b2}= B3323) 12.a3
This move is the latest fashion, having been played twice by Israeli Grandmaster Evgeny Postny.

12...\textit{\textordf wastewater}tJa2↑

This looks like Black’s best option. After 12...a5 White can even accept the piece sacrifice by: 13.axb4 (13.h5?! is also possible. I am not sure what Black should do.) 13...xb4 14.\textit{\textordf wastewater}b1. In Postny – Howell, Kallithea 2009, Black failed to obtain enough compensation: 14...\textit{\textordf wastewater}a1 15.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xb4 c5 16.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xc5 \textit{\textordf wastewater}d5 17.\textit{\textordf wastewater}d2 \textit{\textordf wastewater}a5 18.\textit{\textordf wastewater}c1±

13.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xa2 \textit{\textordf wastewater}xa2 14.h5

14...\textit{\textordf wastewater}b3?!N

This natural move is my attempt to improve on the game Postny – Gopal, Calcutta 2009, which went 14...c5 15.dxc5 \textit{\textordf wastewater}b3. I believe that White now missed a good opportunity to sacrifice the exchange with 16.f4! \textit{\textordf wastewater}xd1 17.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xd1. I really don’t like Black’s position. In particular I am worried that h5-h6 will leave Black’s dark-squared bishop out of play for a long time to come.

15.hxg6 hxg6 16.\textit{\textordf wastewater}e1

I also examined an exchange sacrifice here, but it doesn’t look dangerous for Black: 16.\textit{\textordf wastewater}h3 \textit{\textordf wastewater}xd1 17.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xd1 (or 17.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xd1 \textit{\textordf wastewater}e8! 18.\textit{\textordf wastewater}f4 e6 followed by ...\textit{\textordf wastewater}d8, ...c5 or ...\textit{\textordf wastewater}d5) 17...\textit{\textordf wastewater}e6 18.\textit{\textordf wastewater}f4 \textit{\textordf wastewater}f7! Black is ready to meet 19.g4 with 19...\textit{\textordf wastewater}h8! 20.\textit{\textordf wastewater}g1 \textit{\textordf wastewater}h6, with advantage.

16...c5 17.\textit{\textordf wastewater}e2

The white knight is heading for the c3-square. Instead 17.dxc5?! favours Black: 17...\textit{\textordf wastewater}xd2↑ 18.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xd2 \textit{\textordf wastewater}c8↑

17...\textit{\textordf wastewater}c8 18.\textit{\textordf wastewater}b1

18.\textit{\textordf wastewater}h6? fails to 18...\textit{\textordf wastewater}xd4↑ 19.\textit{\textordf wastewater}b1 \textit{\textordf wastewater}c4! 20.\textit{\textordf wastewater}g5 \textit{\textordf wastewater}b6 and Black has a winning attack.

18...\textit{\textordf wastewater}f7 19.\textit{\textordf wastewater}c3

After 19.\textit{\textordf wastewater}f4 \textit{\textordf wastewater}xd4 20.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xd4 \textit{\textordf wastewater}c4 21.\textit{\textordf wastewater}f2 (21.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xc4 \textit{\textordf wastewater}xc4?) 21...g5! Black takes over the initiative.

19...\textit{\textordf wastewater}xd4 20.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xd4

20...\textit{\textordf wastewater}d7!

Not only preparing ...\textit{\textordf wastewater}fd8, but in the right circumstances the queen may transfer to e6 in order to create threats against the white king.

21.\textit{\textordf wastewater}h4 \textit{\textordf wastewater}c4

I prefer this to 21...\textit{\textordf wastewater}e6 22.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xb6! axb6 23.\textit{\textordf wastewater}b5 \textit{\textordf wastewater}c7 24.f4, when Black has a problem with his dark-squared bishop.

22.\textit{\textordf wastewater}xc4
This is probably necessary, as after 22...\texttt{Wg5} it's Black who strikes first: 22...\texttt{Qxa3}† 23.bxa3 \texttt{Qe6} White is in trouble.

\textbf{22...\texttt{Bxc4}}

Finally we have reached a balanced position, where Black's activity compensates for his temporarily passive dark-squared bishop. Here is an illustrative line:

\textbf{23.\texttt{Qe1} \texttt{Qd8}}

23...\texttt{Qe6}?

\textbf{24.\texttt{Qh7}}

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

24...\texttt{f4}!

The only move, but good enough to maintain the balance.

\textbf{25.\texttt{Qxf4} \texttt{Qf5} 26.\texttt{Qf5} \texttt{gxf5} 27.\texttt{Qxa7} \texttt{Qxe5}}

\textbf{28.\texttt{Qc2} \texttt{f4}}

Threatening 29...\texttt{Qg6}†.

\textbf{29.\texttt{Qh4} \texttt{Qg6}† 30.\texttt{Qb3} \texttt{Qc6} 31.\texttt{Qe1} \texttt{Qf7}† 32.\texttt{Qc2} \texttt{Qg6}†=}

\texttt{B333) 11.\texttt{Qh3}}

In my opinion this is the most serious continuation.

\textbf{11...\texttt{Qe6} 12.\texttt{Qb1}}

The main move according to theory. White has also tried:

\textbf{12.a3 \texttt{Qa2}†}

I had found this idea and intended to offer it as a novelty, but before I could do so, it appeared in a game.

\textbf{13.\texttt{Qxa2} \texttt{Qxa2}}

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

14.\texttt{Qh6}

I also analysed other moves here:

\textbf{14.\texttt{Qf4} \texttt{Qd5}†! Black has a good game.}

\textbf{14.\texttt{Qc2} \texttt{Qd5} 15.\texttt{Qf4} (or 15.\texttt{Qd3} \texttt{Qc4} 16.\texttt{Qc3} \texttt{Qxf1} 17.\texttt{Qxf1} c6 with equal play) 15...\texttt{Qb3} 16.\texttt{Qd3} \texttt{Qfd8}= Black shouldn't experience any problems once the queens come off.}

\textbf{14...\texttt{Qd7} 15.\texttt{Qxg7} \texttt{Qxg7} 16.\texttt{Qc2} \texttt{Qg8}}

White was threatening to trap the bishop with 17.b3.
17.\( \texttt{Qe4} \) \( \texttt{Qd5} \) 18.\( \texttt{Qxd5} \) \( \texttt{Wxd5} \) 19.\( \texttt{Wc5} \) \( \texttt{Wxc5} \)
20.\( \texttt{dxc5} \) \( \texttt{Wfd8} \)

Black had the better endgame in the game Vitiugov – Wang Yue, Ningbo (rapid) 2010.

12...\( \texttt{Wd7} \)

12...\( \texttt{Oc4} \) was played in Av. Bykhovsky – Golod, Tel Aviv 2001, but it is inaccurate:
13.\( \texttt{Qxc4!N} \) \( \texttt{Qxc4} \) 14.b3 \( \texttt{Wf7} \) 15.\( \texttt{Wf6} \) White clearly holds the initiative.

13.\( \texttt{Qf4} \)

This tricky move is stronger than 15.\( \texttt{d5} \) \( \texttt{Wxe5} \)
16.\( \texttt{axb4}?! \) \( \texttt{axb4} \) 17.\( \texttt{b5} \) \( \texttt{a5} \) 18.\( \texttt{xb6} \) \( \texttt{cxb6} \)
19.\( \texttt{Wb4} \) \( \texttt{Wfa8} \), which was good for Black in Motylev – Svidler, Wijk aan Zee 2007.

15...\( \texttt{c6} \)

After 15...\( \texttt{Wc8}?! \) White can accept the piece sacrifice: 16.\( \texttt{axb4} \) \( \texttt{axb4} \) 17.\( \texttt{Qce2} \) Black doesn’t have the same coordination as in Motylev – Svidler, and White is clearly better here.

16.\( \texttt{d5} \) \( \texttt{Wxe5} \)

16...\( \texttt{cxb5} \) 17.\( \texttt{xb6} \) \( \texttt{xe5} \) is just a transposition.

17.\( \texttt{xb6} \) \( \texttt{cxb5} \) 18.\( \texttt{He1} \) \( \texttt{Wf6} \)

19.\( \texttt{Wd4}! \)

Black’s extra pawn is absolutely irrelevant, and meanwhile his pieces are badly coordinated.

19.\( \texttt{axb4}?! \) would be a serious mistake:
19...\( \texttt{axb4} \) 20.\( \texttt{Qce2} \) \( \texttt{Wd6} \)! White is facing a dangerous attack.

19.\( \texttt{Qxd4} \) 20.\( \texttt{Wxd4} \) \( \texttt{Qa6} \) 21.\( \texttt{d6}! \) \( \texttt{Wxd6} \)?

Black had to try: 21...\( \texttt{exd6} \) 22.\( \texttt{Qf5} \) \( \texttt{Qxd5} \) 23.\( \texttt{Wxd6} \) \( \texttt{Qf7} \) 24.\( \texttt{Qxb5} \) \( \texttt{Qc7} \) 25.\( \texttt{Qxc7} \) \( \texttt{Wxc7} \) 26.\( \texttt{h4} \)! White is not even obliged to regain the pawn. Black’s position remains unpleasant.

22.\( \texttt{Qcd5} \) \( \texttt{Qxd5} \) 23.\( \texttt{Qxd5} \)

White had a winning attack in Bitan – Vokarev, Bhubaneswar 2010.

14.\( \texttt{h4} \)
I also examined: 14.\xf6xe6 \xf6xe6 15.a3 (not 15.h4? \xf6xe5\textcopyright) 15...a5 16.f4 c5 17.e1 \xf6d5 18.\xf6xd5 \xf6xd5 19.dxc5 \xf6e4\textcopyright 20.ea2 \xf6xd1 21.\xf6xd1 \xf6xe3 22.cx\textbf{b}6 \xf6xf4 23.\xf6d5\textcopyright \xf6h8 24.\xf6xb7 \xf6d8 25.\xf6c7 \xf6d4 26.\xf6b7 \xf6e5 27.\xf6c3 \xf6e4 28.\xf6c8 \xf6d4= Of course this line is not all forced, but it is a good illustration of the possibilities in the position.

14...\xf7
Black has no time for 14...\xf6c4 15.\xf6xc4 \xf6xc4, since after 16.b3 \xf7f7 17.\xf6a4\textcopyright he is facing concrete problems.

We shall now follow the game Salem – So, Olongapo City 2010, which reached this position via a different move order.

15.e6 \xf6c6 16.\xf6e2 c5! 17.e6 \xf6xe6 18.dxc5 \xf6xc3 19.bxc3

19...\xf6a4!
The key move; Black seizes the initiative.

20.\xf6xd8\textcopyright 21.\xf6xd8\textcopyright \xf6f7 22.\xf6b8\textcopyright
No better is: 22.cx\textbf{b}4 \xf6xa2\textcopyright 23.\xf6c1 \xf6d5!
Despite his material advantage, White is in a difficult situation.

22...\xf6f8 23.\xf6e6\textcopyright \xf6g8 24.cx\textbf{b}4 \xf6b4\textcopyright 25.\xf6c2 \xf6d5
Black has a powerful attack.

Conclusion

I heartily recommend 3...d5 as a suitably combative response to 3.f3. Black must expect to be subjected to a rather scary-looking kingside attack in several lines in this chapter, but provided he is well-prepared, I believe he can face such attacks with confidence and obtain ample counter-chances on the queenside.

In the main line of 4.cx\textbf{d}5 \xf6xd5 5.e4 \xf6b6 6.\xf6c3 \xf6g7 7.\xf6e3 0–0 8.\xf6d2 \xf6c6 9.0–0–0 I have decided to advocate the fashionable 9...f5 thrust. This has scored well up to now, and I see no reason why it should not continue to do so.
Fianchetto Systems

Rare Lines

Variation Index

1.d4 \( \underline{\text{\&}}f6 \) 2.c4 g6 3.g3

3...c6

A) 4.d5
B) 4.\( \underline{\text{\&}} \)g2 d5
   B1) 5.b3
   B2) 5.\( \underline{\text{\&}} \)b3
   B3) 5.\( \underline{\text{\&}} \)a4

38 39 39 40 41

A) after 7.\( \underline{\text{\&}} \)g2
   7...\( \underline{\text{\&}} \)a5!

B1) after 6.bxc4
   6...e5!

B2) after 9.\( \underline{\text{\&}} \)xd5
   9...\( \underline{\text{\&}} \)c6!
This continuation really caused me a headache, especially taking into account that I recommended this system for White in my earlier book, *Grandmaster Repertoire - 1.d4 Volume Two*. Finally I came to the decision to offer readers the very solid system featuring the moves ...c6 and ...d5. Some of my friends advised me to give another system, where Black plays ...d5 without ...c6, and recaptures on d5 with his knight. There were many interesting ideas played in this line at the latest Olympiad, but I still adhere to the view that White has good chances of a slight advantage.

3...c6

It is essential to play this move straight away, because if Black delays it for a single move, White will get the chance to play 5.e4.

White's fundamental decision when facing ...c6 and ...d5 is whether to exchange pawns on d5. The lines with an early exchange will be covered in Chapter 7, after we first deal with various other options. In this chapter we examine A) 4.d5 and B) 4.g2, before turning to 4.f3 in Chapters 4 to 6.

**A) 4.d5**

White unequivocally prevents Black playing ...d5. However the text has obvious drawbacks; it uses an important tempo and it opens up the long diagonal, allowing Black to become very active.

4...cxd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e3 g7 7.g2 w5!

A key move, which disrupts White's normal development. After 7...0-0 8.f3 White completes his development and can even fight for the advantage in a complex game.

8.d2

This looks a bit awkward, but White faces some difficulties after the natural:

8.e4 g4!

9.ge2N

White cannot play 9.f3? in view of the tactical blow 9.xe4 and the white position collapses: 10.fxg4 (or 10.wa4† 
xa4 11.xa4 d7!→) 10.xc3 11.wd2
Wc5 Black had a decisive advantage in Graf – Yandemirov, Omsk 1996.
9.Wb3 runs into 9...Qa6! and Black intends ...Qc5 next, while the b7-pawn is untouchable: 10.Wxb?? Qb8 11.Qc6t Qd7 12.Qc4 Qb5 13.Qd4 Qb4–

9...Qxe2 10.Qxe2
White's problem is that 10.Wxe2 can be met by: 10...Qxd5! 11.Wb5t Qxb5 12.Qxb5 Qb4! 13.0-0 Q8a6 Black remains with an extra pawn.

10...Qbd7
With the white king on e2, there is no doubt that Black has a very good position.

8...0-0 9.e3
White has problems completing his development, as the vulnerability of his d-pawn renders moves like 9.Qf3 and 9.Qh3 impossible. He has also tried:

9.e4 Qbd7 10.Qge2 Qe5 11.0-0 Qg4 12.Qe3 (or 12.f3 Qd7 13.Qc1 Wb6 and Black has the initiative) 12...Qc4 13.Qc1 Qfc8 White was in trouble in Psakhis – Veingold, Tallinn 1983.

9.Qb3 as usual allows Black to get his knight to c5 with tempo: 9...Qa6 10.Qf3 Qd7 11.0-0 Qc5 12.Qc2 Qfc8 Black was better in Korchnoi – Yandemirov, Saratov 2006.

9...Qbd7 10.Qge2 Qe5 11.0-0 Qc4

Black's play is logical and simple.

12.Qc1 Qg4 13.Wb3 Qfc8 14.Qd4 Qd7 15.Qd1 Qab8 16.h3
We have been following Korchnoi – Geller, Moscow 1971, and now Black should have played:

16...Qc5N
With ...b5 coming next, Black has a fine game.

B) 4.Qg2 d5

White now has many options, and we shall look at B1) 5.b3, B2) 5.Qb3 and B3) 5.Qa4.

The most common moves, 5.Qf3 and 5.cxd5, are covered in the following chapters, while 5.Qd2 Qg7 6.Qgf3 0-0 7.0-0 transposes to Chapter 5.

B1) 5.b3

Not the most popular move here, but it has nevertheless been employed in almost fifty games.

5...Qxc4!
Black seizes the chance to take advantage of White's slightly unusual move order. After 5...Qg7 White can play either 6.Qf3 or
6...b2 0–0 7...f3, both of which transpose to Chapter 4.

6...bxc4 e5!
A fantastic idea! It is not often in the Grünfeld that Black creates the option of developing his dark-squared bishop on the a3-f8 diagonal.

Initially my intention was to suggest: 6...c5
7...f3 (after 7.d5...xd5! White cannot capture the knight, as he would then lose material to 8...g7) 7...g7 8...b2...b6 9...b3...e4 10.e3
0–0 11.0–0...c6 Play has transposed into line B2 in Chapter 4.

7...f3?!
I think White would be better off playing 7.d5...xd5 8.cxd5...b4+ and now sacrificing a pawn with: 9...d2...xd5 10...b3...xd2+ 11...xd2 White has reasonable compensation, but he is not really fighting for an advantage.

7...exd4 8...xd4...xd4 9...xd4...g7
10...d2
White should have preferred to play 10...b2, although 10...fd7 is still excellent for Black.

10...fd7 11.e3

This was played in Schiller – Siefring, e-mail 2003. There was no reason for Black refraining from the following:

11...c5N 12...b5...xa1 13...c7+...d8
14...xa8...a6

With his knight stuck on a8, White is in a very dangerous situation.

B2) 5...b3...g7 6...c3

This looks very tempting, since it would appear that Black has to decide what to do about the attack on his d5-pawn. Instead 6...f3 0–0 7.0–0 would transpose to Chapter 6.
It transpires that Black is not obliged to make an immediate decision about the d5-pawn, but can temporarily sacrifice it.

7.cxd5
Obviously 7.\textit{f3} \textit{b6} 8.0-0 is another transposition to Chapter 6.

7...cxd5 8.\textit{x}d5 \textit{x}d5 9.\textit{x}d5

9...\textit{c6}!
This is an important moment; Black must make use of his lead in development by playing actively. Hurrying to regain the pawn is not so good: 9...\textit{xd}4 10.\textit{h6}! \textit{a5}+ 11.\textit{f1} \textit{g7} 12.\textit{xg7} \textit{xf7} 13.\textit{xb7} White ends up winning a pawn, and Black's compensation is questionable, Carnevali - A. Fernandez, Piriapolis 1987.

10.\textit{xc6}
White cannot play 10.\textit{f3?} in view of 10...\textit{a5} 11.\textit{b5} \textit{a6} and he loses a piece.

10...\textit{bxc6} 11.\textit{f3}
I also examined 11.\textit{e3}. Black has the strong response: 11...\textit{c5}! 12.\textit{xc5} \textit{a5}+ 13.\textit{d2} \textit{xc5} 14.\textit{c1} \textit{f5} White faces a hard time, with so much open space for the black bishops.

11...\textit{h3} 12.\textit{g5}

In Almeida Saenz – Ruiz Gonzalez, Mexico 1996, White tried the ugly 12.\textit{g1}; Black should simply have replied 12...\textit{g4} with the better chances.

12...\textit{g2} 13.\textit{g1} \textit{d5} 14.\textit{d3} \textit{b6}
Black's develops his initiative with natural moves.

15.\textit{f3} \textit{fd8} 16.\textit{f1} \textit{c5}+
White was in trouble in Kalinin – Gobet, Thessaloniki (ol) 1988.

This unexpected queen sortie is not as strange as it looks at first sight, and it has been employed by such opening experts as Grischuk and Tkachiev. The idea of the move is obvious; White wants to force Black to clarify the situation with the d5-pawn, and after the obvious 5...\textit{xc4} White will obtain a spatial superiority in the centre.

5...\textit{fd7}?!?
This seems to be an easy way to equalize; Black's idea is simply to maintain the d5-pawn.

6.\textit{xd5} \textit{b6} 7.\textit{xd1}
The alternative is:
7.\textit{b}3 \textit{cxd}5 8.\textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}6

This symmetrical position is pretty harmless, as shown in the following encounter:

9.e3

I also briefly examined other continuations:

9.\textit{d}f3 \textit{g}7 10.0–0 \textit{g}4 11.\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}3 \textit{xf}3!

12.\textit{\textcolor{red}{x}}f3 e6 Black has a comfortable game.

9.\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}x\textit{d}5?! \textit{\textcolor{red}{x}}d4 10.\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}3 \textit{g}7 White’s pieces lack coordination.

9...\textit{g}7 10.\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}e2 e6 11.0–0 0–0 12.\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}d}1 \textit{d}7=

The position is level, Bocharov – Sturua, Abu Dhabi 2009.

7...\textit{cxd}5 8.\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}3 \textit{g}7 9.0–0 0–0 10.b3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}6

11.\textit{\textcolor{red}{b}}2 \textit{f}5

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[->] (1,1) -- (2,2);
\draw[->] (2,2) -- (3,3);
\draw[->] (3,3) -- (4,4);
\draw[->] (4,4) -- (5,5);
\draw[->] (5,5) -- (6,6);
\draw[->] (6,6) -- (7,7);
\draw[->] (7,7) -- (8,8);
\draw[->] (8,8) -- (1,1);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Black develops simply and logically.

12.b3?!

This is already a slight inaccuracy; 12.e3 would keep the position balanced.

12...\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}7 13.\textit{\textcolor{red}{h}}2 \textit{e}4!

Black starts to take over the initiative.

14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{b}d}2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}d8 15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}5 \textit{xe}5 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{xe}4 \textit{xd}4

17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{x}d}4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{xe}4 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{xb}6 axb}6 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{x}d}7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{xd}7

20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{xe}4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{d}2}=

Black clearly had the better endgame in Grachev – Khismatullin, Dagomys 2010.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Black should not be unduly concerned about the early deviations for White that we have looked at in this chapter. The best White can expect to achieve is a transposition to the main lines covered in the following chapters, while in some lines, such as B1) 5.b3 dxc4! 6.bxc4 e5!, Black can even seize the initiative at a very early stage.
Variation Index

1. d4 \( \text{d6} \) 2. c4 g6 3. g3 c6 4. \( \text{f3} \) d5 5. b3 \( \text{g7} \) 6. \( \text{g2} \)

6...0–0

A) 7. \( \text{b2} \)

B) 7.0–0 dxc4 8. bxc4 c5
   B1) 9. e3
   B2) 9. \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{b6} \) 10. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{e4} \) 11. e3 \( \text{c6} \) 12. \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{d6} \)
      B21) 13. \( \text{d2} \)
      B22) 13. \( \text{xc6} \)

A) after 12. \( \text{xg7} \)

B1) after 11. \( \text{e2} \)

B22) after 19. \( \text{b3} \)

12... \( \text{e3}! \)

11... \( \text{xd4N} \)

19... \( \text{b4N} \)
1. d4 d5 2. c4 g6 3. g3 c6 4. d3 d5 5. b3

This is the line that I recommended for White in Grandmaster Repertoire – 1.d4 Volume Two. Since then, theory has developed considerably, and Black has found some interesting new ideas.

5... g7 6. g2

White can also play 6. b2 0–0 7. g2, which is examined in line A.

6... 0–0

Another possible move order is: 6... dxc4 7. bxc4 c5 8. b2 b6 9. b3 e4 10. e3 0–0 11. 0–0 Play has transposed to line B2.

White now chooses between A) 7. b2 and B) 7. 0–0.

A) 7. b2

White's aim is to avoid problems on the long diagonal, but I have nevertheless found an interesting counter for Black.

7... dxc4 8. bxc4 c5!

9. d5

This is White's only independent try, made possible by the early development of his queen's bishop. Otherwise 9. 0–0 is just a transposition to B2.

9... e6

Black's only sensible idea is to undermine the white centre as quickly as possible.

10. c3

I also analysed:

10. h4

This attempt to hold the centre allows Black serious counterplay.

10... exd5 11. cxd5

A1... g5! 12. f3 xd5

Black may also go for a queen swap:

12... xd5 13. xd5 xd5 14. xg7 xg7 15. xg5 b4 16. a3 b8c6 With his healthy queenside majority, Black cannot be worse.

13. xg7 xg7 14. 0–0

White has a certain amount of compensation for the pawn, due to the slightly exposed black king, but I prefer Black's position.

14... h6 15. h4

15. xg5 is worse: 15... b4! 16. a3 hx5 17. axb4 xd1 18. xd1 cxb4 19. e4 a5 20. xb4 d8! White is in trouble.

15... c6 16. hxg5 hgxg5 17. xd2

Regaining the pawn does not solve White's problems: 17. xg5 xg5 18. xd5 (after 18. xd5? h8! it is slightly surprising that Black's attack is already winning) 18... xd5 19. b4 20. c3 xd5 21. xd5 e6 White will have to fight to draw this endgame.
White does not have full compensation for the pawn.

10...exd5 11.\texttt{Qxd5}

Of course 11.cxd5? \texttt{Qxd5} just leaves Black with an extra pawn.

11...\texttt{Qxd5} 12.\texttt{Qxg7}

This constitutes one of the most challenging ideas against the white set-up. There are now a couple of ways for White to support his d-pawn: B1) 9.e3 and B2) 9.\texttt{b2}.

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

\textbf{B1) 9.e3} \texttt{Qc6} 10.\texttt{b2} \texttt{Wb6!}

11.\texttt{We2}

Other options are:

11.\texttt{Wc1} cxd4 N

This is an improvement on: 11...\texttt{f5} 12.\texttt{Qbd2} \texttt{Qd7} 13.\texttt{Qb3} \texttt{Qb4?!} 14.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc2} 15.\texttt{Wxb2} \texttt{Qxc5} 16.\texttt{Qxc5} \texttt{Wxc5} 17.\texttt{Qd4+} White had the better chances in Badea – Manolache, Baile Tusnad 2005.

12.\texttt{Qxd4}

Black has no problems after 12.exd4 \texttt{Qf5} 13.\texttt{Qbd2} \texttt{Qac8}.

12...\texttt{Qd7?!} 13.\texttt{Qd2}

13.\texttt{Qc3} \texttt{Qac8} looks great for Black, since the c4-pawn becomes a serious target.

13...\texttt{Qac8}

White might obtain a slight pull after immediate simplifications: 13...\texttt{Qxd4} 14.\texttt{Qxd4} \texttt{Qc7} 15.\texttt{Wxa3} \texttt{Qc6} 16.\texttt{Qxc6} bxc6 17.\texttt{Qab1+}

14.\texttt{Qb1} \texttt{Wg6}

14...\texttt{Qc7?!} 15.\texttt{Qc3} \texttt{Qxd4} 16.exd4 b6 also looks reasonable for Black.

15.\texttt{Qc3} \texttt{Qxd4} 16.exd4
Black has a comfortable game after 16.\texttt{\textit{axd4 \textit{c6}}, as he manages to neutralize the pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal.

16...\texttt{\textit{b5}!}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image}
\end{center}

Black has a good game.

11.\texttt{\textit{wb3}}

This has occurred only once, in Maslov – Zaper, Kastela 2005. I have found a convincing continuation for Black:

11...\texttt{\textit{\textit{a5N 12.\textit{xb6 axb6 13.\textit{bd2 \textit{d8!}}} This is a very accurate move; the more natural 13...\texttt{\textit{f5 allows 14.d5 e6 15.\textit{ac1, with a complex game.}}}}}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image}
\end{center}

14.\texttt{\textit{fc1}}

I also analysed:

14.d5 e6 15.e4 (15.dxe6 \texttt{\textit{xe6 is clearly better for Black}) 15...\texttt{\textit{xe4 (or 15...\textit{exd5 16.exd5 b5! 17.cxb5 \textit{xd5? and Black is at least equal) 16.\texttt{xg7 \textit{xd2 17.f6 \textit{xf3}}}})

18.\texttt{\textit{xf3 \textit{d6 Despite the two bishops providing some compensation, White is fighting to equalize.

14.ef e8 Black will continue with \texttt{\textit{d6 with good play.

14...\texttt{\textit{f5 15.b3 \textit{d7}}

Black has decent play against the white pawns.

11...\texttt{\textit{xd4N}}

An important improvement. Black found himself under pressure after: 11...\texttt{\textit{e4 12.\textit{ac3! xc3 13.xc3 cxd4 14.exd4 (14.\texttt{\textit{xd4 may be more accurate) 14...\textit{xd4 15.\texttt{\textit{xd4 xd4 16.\textit{ab1\textit{f Kempinski – Dolmatov, Istanbul 2003.}}}}}

12.\texttt{\textit{xd4}}

12.\texttt{\textit{xd4 is well met by: 12...\texttt{\textit{g4! 13.f3 d7 Provoking f2-f3 significantly reduces the pressure on the h1-a8 diagonal. 14.a3 \textit{ac8 15.eb1 \textit{a6 16.\textit{fd1 fd8 Black has the more comfortable position.}}}}}

12...\texttt{\textit{g4 13.d5}}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image}
\end{center}

13.\texttt{\textit{xf3}}

If Black prefers not to simplify, then 13...\texttt{\textit{a5 14.a3 e6? makes sense.}}

14.\texttt{\textit{xf3 d4 15.\textit{xd4 xd4 16.\textit{d2 d7}}}}
Chapter 4 – 5.b3

17.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{Bac1}}} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{e}5}$

The game is fairly level, for instance:

18.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{Bfd1}}} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{Bac8}}}$ 19.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{e}4} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{b}2!}$ 20.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{b}1} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xe}2}$ 21.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xe}2} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{b}6}$

The only way to fight for an advantage.

12..\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{d}6}

B2) 9.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{b}2} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{b}6}$

White has two options here, B21) 13.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{d}2} and B22) 13.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xc}6}.

B21) 13.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{d}2} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xd}4}$

Black failed to equalize in a recent game: 13...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{e}6} 14.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xc}6}! $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xc}6}$ 15.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xc}5} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xc}5}$ 16.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{d}4} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{a}5}$ 17.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xc}6} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{c}7}$ 18.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xe}7} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xe}7}$ 19.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{c}3}$ $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{g}8}$ 20.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{a}5} Black did not have enough for the pawn in Giri – R.H. Nielsen, Amsterdam 2010.

14.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xd}4}

10.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{b}3}

Against 10.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{c}1} Black can equalize with natural moves: 10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xd}4} 11.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xd}4} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{c}6}$ 12.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xc}6} (I also examined 12.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{d}1} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{d}7}$ 13.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{a}3} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{fd}8}$ 14.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{b}1} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{a}6}$ with equality) 12...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xc}6} 13.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{d}2} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{e}6}$ (13...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{f}5}!? deserves attention) 14.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{b}1} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{a}6}$ 15.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{a}3} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{fe}8}$ 16.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{b}3} 17.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{d}7} 17.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{c}2} Goldin – Yandemirov, Elista 1995. Now the simple 17..\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{e}5}N 18.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{c}1} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{ad}8}$ would be fine for Black.

10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{d}4}

A popular alternative is 10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{fd}7}, but after the strong 11.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{c}3}! White has pressure.

11.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{e}3}

After 11.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{c}3} 12.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xc}3} Calotescu – Gara, Kiskunhalas 1995, Black can play very simply: 12...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xd}4}N 13.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xb}6} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xb}6} 14.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xd}4} (after 14.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xd}4}?! $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{a}4}$! White is in trouble) 14...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{c}6} 15.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xe}7} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{xe}7}$ 16.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{fb}1} $\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{a}6}$ Black is even slightly better in the endgame.

11...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{c}6} 12.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{B}}\textbf{e}5}
14...\textit{\textit{f}e6}

Here I found the interesting 14...\textit{\textit{f}5}!N, after which play may continue: 15.\textit{\textit{x}xc6} \textit{bxc6} 16.\textit{\textit{x}xb6} \textit{axb6} 17.\textit{\textit{x}xc6} \textit{\textit{f}a7} Black has sacrificed a pawn, but his pieces are so active that White cannot hold onto the extra pawn. 18.\textit{\textit{f}c3} \textit{\textit{d}d6} 19.\textit{\textit{f}c1} \textit{\textit{e}c7} 20.\textit{\textit{b}b5} \textit{\textit{e}6} 21.\textit{\textit{e}e5} \textit{\textit{f}c8}=

15.\textit{\textit{f}c1}

I checked a couple of other moves:

15.\textit{\textit{f}e1} \textit{\textit{x}e5} (15...\textit{\textit{f}xe5} 16.\textit{\textit{d}xe5} \textit{\textit{f}f5}! is also worth considering) 16.\textit{\textit{d}xe5} \textit{\textit{x}xc4}! The easiest route to equality. 17.\textit{\textit{x}xc4} \textit{\textit{x}xc4} 18.\textit{\textit{w}xc4} \textit{\textit{w}xb2} 19.\textit{\textit{a}ab1} \textit{\textit{w}d2} 20.\textit{\textit{f}ed1} \textit{\textit{ac8}}=

15.\textit{\textit{x}xc6} \textit{\textit{b}xc6} 16.\textit{\textit{d}xc6} (after 16.\textit{\textit{w}xb6} \textit{axb6} 17.\textit{\textit{d}xc6} \textit{\textit{f}e8}! Black will regain the pawn with dividends) 16...\textit{\textit{w}xc6} 17.\textit{\textit{d}5} \textit{\textit{f}b8}! 18.\textit{\textit{d}xc6} \textit{\textit{xb3}} 19.\textit{\textit{a}xb3} \textit{\textit{a}a4} 20.\textit{\textit{a}a6} \textit{\textit{f}f8} Black has the better chances.

A draw was now agreed in Jakovenko – Svidler, Dagomys 2010, although Black might have played on for a bit.

18.\textit{\textit{x}xe5} 19.\textit{\textit{x}xc4} \textit{\textit{w}xc4} 20.\textit{\textit{a}a3}

White clearly has compensation for the pawn, but it may still take some effort to secure the draw.

15...\textit{\textit{f}c8} 16.\textit{\textit{w}xb6}

White has tried 16.\textit{c5}, but it's quite harmless: 16...\textit{\textit{a}a4}! Black keeps everything under control. 18.bxa7 \textit{\textit{e}xa7} 19.\textit{\textit{d}d4} This was Zhou Weiqi – Ding Liren, Danzhou 2010, now simply 19...\textit{\textit{x}xe5} 20.\textit{\textit{d}xe5} \textit{\textit{c}c2} gives Black the more pleasant position.

16...\textit{\textit{a}xb6} 17.\textit{\textit{f}4} \textit{\textit{f}xe5}

This was my recommendation in Grandmaster Repertoire – 1.d4 Volume Two.

13...\textit{\textit{b}xc6} 14.\textit{\textit{d}xc5}

Taking the pawn by 14.\textit{\textit{w}xb6} \textit{axb6} 15.\textit{\textit{x}xc6} is clearly worse for White.

15...\textit{\textit{x}xc4}! This exchange sacrifice gives Black a powerful initiative, for example: 16.\textit{\textit{a}xa8} \textit{\textit{a}xb2}
Chapter 4 – 5.b3

17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{e}4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{cxd4}}} 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{exd4}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}d4}}} 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a}4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{w}4N}}} (worse is 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{d}2}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}6}}} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{f}e}1}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{c}3\texttt{f}}} 19...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{d}8}}} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}3}}} 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{c}1}}} f5 Black has strong pressure.

14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}c}5}} 15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{g}x}g7}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{g}x}g7}} 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{d}2}}} 

In my earlier book I stopped at this position, considering it slightly favourable for White. However, it was tested at the recent Olympiad:

16...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{e}6}}} 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}c1}}

A serious alternative is 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}4}}}, when Black should react with: 17...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{f}c}8}} (after 17...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{d}xc}4}} 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{f}c}1}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}6}}} 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}c}5}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}a}4}} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}c}6}±} White retains some pressure) 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{f}c}1}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}8}}} 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}3}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{e}5}}} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}a}7}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{c}4}}} 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}5}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}8}}} (also possible is 21...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{d}5}}} 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{d}c}6}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}c}6}} 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}c}6} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}2}}} and Black has enough compensation for the pawn) 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}c}6}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}7}}} 23.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}5}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}2}} The draw is obvious.

17...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}b}8}} 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{d}3}}} 

Black has no problems after: 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{c}3}+}} f6 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}3}}} (or 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{c}2}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{f}c}8}} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}1}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}4=}}} 19...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}c}4}} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}5}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}4}}} 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}a}7}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}7=}}}

18...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{f}c}8}} 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}3}}} 

This occurred in Laznicka – Svidler, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010, and now I found the following improvement:

19...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}4N}}} In the game, Black faced real problems after: 19...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}3}}} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}5}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{b}5}}} 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{e}4}}}!

20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{d}4}+}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{g}8}}} 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}a}7}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{c}4}}} 22.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{c}5}} 

22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}4} c5} 23.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{h}4} f6} 24.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{h}3}?!} is an interesting attempt, but Black can maintain equality: 24...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{x}h}3} 25.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{x}c}4} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{b}5}} 26.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}1} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}6}} 27.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}5} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{c}5}} 28.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}5} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{d}3=} }

22...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{f}6}}} 23.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{c}2}} 

I have been unable to find any way for White to pose serious problems:

23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}6}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{c}5}}} 24.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}5} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{f}7}} 25.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}6} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{b}2}}} 26.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}4} \textit{\texttt{c}8}} 27.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{b}3} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}6}}} 28.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}4} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{c}4}} 29.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}4} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}a}2=}

23...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}5}} 24.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}5} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}3}!} 25.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{c}3} \textit{\texttt{b}1+}} 26.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}b}1} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{b}1} 27.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{c}2}} \textit{\texttt{a}3} 28.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{d}2} \textit{\texttt{c}4}} 29.\textit{\texttt{h}4} 

Also completely equal is 29.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{d}7} \textit{\texttt{f}7=} .

29...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{f}7=} }

\textbf{Conclusion}

If White opts for 5.b3, then 7...dxc4 8.bxc4 c5 is a challenging way for Black to increase his pressure down the a1-h8 diagonal, even when White tries to neutralize this pressure with 7.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{b}2}}. Throughout this chapter I have faced the somewhat tricky task of fighting against my own recommendations from \textit{Grandmaster Repertoire – 1.d4 Volume Two}. A particular case is B22) 13.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}c}6}, which I had assessed as favourable to White. However, in the light of my analysis of the recent game Laznicka – Svidler, I now feel that this line is entirely satisfactory for Black.
Chapter 5

Fianchetto Systems

Rare Seventh Moves

Variation Index

1. d4 \( \text{\textdagger} \) 2. c4 g6 3. g3 c6 4. \( \text{\textdagger} \) g2 d5 5. \( \text{\textdagger} \) f3 \( \text{\textdagger} \) g7 6.0–0

6...0–0

A) 7. \( \text{\textdagger} \) a4
B) 7. \( \text{\textdagger} \) bd2
C) 7. \( \text{\textdagger} \) c3 dxc4
   C1) 8.e4
   C2) 8.a4
   C3) 8.\( \text{\textdagger} \) e5

A) after 10.\( \text{\textdagger} \) f4

B) note to 12.\( \text{\textdagger} \) b3

C3) note to 9.f4
Chapter 5 - Rare Seventh Moves

1.d4 ¤f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6 4.¤g2 d5 5.¤f3 ¤g7 6.0-0 0-0

Black has a serious alternative in 6...dxc4, but I have always preferred to castle here.

We shall examine A) 7.¤a4, B) 7.¤bd2 and C) 7.¤c3 in this chapter. Of the other seventh moves, 7.b3 transposes to the previous chapter, while 7.¤b3 and 7.cxd5 are covered in the following two chapters.

A) 7.¤a4

When one of my students mentioned this move, I was surprised to discover that it has occurred in almost a hundred games. After checking all the options, the one I like most is:

7...¤fd7!?

This somewhat resembles the variation with 5.¤a4 ¤fd7 that we covered as line B3 in Chapter 3.

8.¤c2

The most challenging move. Other options are:


8.¤a3?! results in a loss of time: 8...¤b6 9.¤c2 ¤f5 10.c3 ¤e4! With his knight having gone to a3, White is unable to attack this bishop. 11.c5 ¤6d7 12.¤f4 b6 13.cxb6 xb6 14.¤e3 c5 The opening had clearly turned out in Black's favour in Grigorian - Sveshnikov, Moscow 1973.

8...¤b6 9.c5 ¤6d7 10.¤f4

I believe that Black should now take the opportunity to undermine the white c-pawn.

10...b6N

In Sargissian - Volokitin, Germany 2008, Black carried out the natural ...e5 break, but failed to equalize: 10...¢e8 11.¤bd2 e5 12.dxe5 xe5 13.¤xe5 xe5 14.¤xe5 xe5 15.e4 dxe4 16.¤c3! e7 17.¤xe4 White has an initiative.

11.cxb6 axb6 12.¤c3 f6 13.ac1 ¤f5 14.b3 bd7

The position is unclear.

B) 7.¤bd2

This is not a particularly dangerous system, but it is quite playable and Black must know exactly how to react.

7...¤f5
8.b3

White has several alternatives:

8.e3 seems to me in the spirit of this line, but I rather like the black side of this recent example: 8...\(\text{bd7}\) 9.\(\text{We2}\) \(\text{Wa5}\) 10.\(\text{De1}\) \(\text{Ac8}\) 11.a3 \(\text{Wa6}\) 12.h3 c5! Black had easily solved his opening problems, and soon took over the initiative. 13.g4 \(\text{Ge6}\) 14.g5?! \(\text{Nh5}\) 15.cxd5 \(\text{We2}\) 16.\(\text{xe2}\) \(\text{xd5}\) Kurajica – Efimenko, Sarajevo 2010.

8.\(\text{Wb3}\) is not uncommon, but after 8...\(\text{Wb6}\) White has a poor version of the \(\text{Wb3}\)-line (see Chapter 6), since the knight is clearly misplaced on \(\text{d2}\). For example: 9.\(\text{xb6}\) axb6 10.b3 \(\text{Ge4}\) (this is fine, but Black could also consider the more active 10...b5!?) 11.\(\text{bd2}\) \(\text{Ed8}\) 12.\(\text{fd1}\) \(\text{xd2}\) 13.\(\text{xd2}\) \(\text{xc4}\) 14.\(\text{xc4}\) b5 15.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{e6}\) 16.\(\text{bd2}\) \(\text{a6}\) \(\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}\) Orso – Barczay, Kecskemet 1979.

8.\(\text{Ge4}\) \(\text{Ge6}\) The bishop is quite well placed on \(\text{e6}\), whereas the white knight is a bit misplaced: 9.b3 a5 10.b2 a4 11.e3 This was Hough – Khachiyan, Pasadena 2008, and now I like 11...\(\text{a5N}\) 12.a3 \(\text{Ge8}\) 13.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{bd7}\), and Black may even play ...b5 next.

8...\(\text{Ge4}\) 9.a3 \(\text{Wa5}\)!
13.\textit{\underline{\text{\textsl{\texttt{E}}f}c\textsl{\texttt{l}}} \text{\textdescent}}

Other moves:
The typical 13.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}h}3 can be met by: 13...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}xf}3
14.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}xf}3 \text{dxc}4 15.\text{bxc}4 \text{e}5 Black has a very
comfortable game.
13.\text{cxd}5 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}xd}5?} (there is also nothing
wrong with 13...\text{cxd}5=) 14.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{F}}d}1 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}h}5
15.\text{\underline{\texttt{A}}d}2 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}e}8 16.\text{\underline{\texttt{A}}}d1 Bolbochan – Darga,
Moscow 1956. Now the simple 16...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}b}6N
17.\textit{\underline{\texttt{A}}h}3 \text{e}6 would give Black a very sound
position.
13...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}fe}8 14.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}c}3 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}a}6
This is a nice square for the black queen.
15.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}f1 \text{dxc}4 16.\text{bxc}4
P. Nikolic – Dorfman, Germany 2003, was
agreed drawn here, but play could have
continued with the simple and strong:
16...\text{e}5!
Black has good play.
10.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}el} 11.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}xd}2
Or 11.\text{\underline{\texttt{A}}}xd2 \text{\underline{\texttt{A}}d}7 12.e4 \text{dxe}4 13.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}xe}4
\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}xe}1 14.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{F}}xe}1 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}xe}4 (14...a}5?!) 15.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xe}4 \text{e}6
16.\text{\underline{\texttt{A}}}e2 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}f}6 with equality, Byrne – Gligoric,
Lugano 1970.
11...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}xd}2 12.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xd}2 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}d}8
It is hard to believe that White can fight for
the advantage without queens.
13.e3 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}a}6 14.\text{cxd}5 \text{cxd}5 15.\text{\underline{\texttt{A}}}a3
Forintos – Soos, Polanica Zdroj 1968, and
now just:
15...\text{e}6\textsl{\textdescent} 16.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}fc}1 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}ac}8 17.\text{h}3
Or 17.\text{\underline{\texttt{A}}}c4 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}f}8.
17...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}f}8=\textsl{\textdescent}
10.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}cl} 11.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}d}7 11.\text{\underline{\texttt{A}}}d1
White has also tried 11.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xe}4 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}xe}4 12.\text{\underline{\texttt{A}}}h}3,
but after 12...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xf}3! 13.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xf}3 \text{e}6 Black has no
problems. Indeed, White must be careful to
avoid being worse, for example: 14.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}}c}2 \text{dxc}4
15.\text{bxc}4 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}b}6 16.\text{a}4 \text{c}5 Black was already
better in Gyorkos – Groszpeter, Zalakaros
2005.
11...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}h}6 12.e3 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}ac}8
13.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xe}4
13.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}h}4 does not cause Black any problems,
as he can just reply 13...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}g}4.
13...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xe}4 14.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}}d}2
14.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}c}3 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}a}6 15.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}e}5 is more ambitious, but
Black is still doing fine: 15...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{F}}d}8 16.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xe}4
dxe4 17.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xd}7 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xd}7 18.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}c}2 \text{f}5 The game is
balanced.
14...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}xd}2 15.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xd}2 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xg}2 16.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xg}2 \text{f}7
Without queens, the position is equal,
Averkin – Gufeld, Moscow 1969.
10...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}d}7 11.\text{b}4
After 11.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}c}1 I like 11...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}fc}8\textsl{\textdescent} 12.b4 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}}d}8
13.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}b}3 Todorovic – Rodriguez Cespedes,
Malaga 1987, and now Black should continue
with: 13...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}df}6\textsl{\textdescent} 14.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{F}}d}1 \text{a}5 (or 14...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xd}2
15.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xd}2 \text{a}5) Black gets exactly what he was
wanting, counterplay on the queenside.
11...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}}d}8
I prefer this calm retreat to 11...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}a}6, where
the black queen can be a bit vulnerable. Play
may continue: 12.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}c}1 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}h}6 (12...\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}b}6 13.\text{c}5
\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}a}4 14.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}a}1 looks dubious for Black) 13.e3
\text{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xd}2 14.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xd}2 \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}d}3 15.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}b}3! \textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xf}1 16.\text{\underline{\texttt{A}}}xf1
\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}b}6 17.\text{\underline{\texttt{A}}}xd}5 \text{cxd}5 18.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}xd}5 \text{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}f}6 Kir. Georgiev
– Ftacnik, Varna 1987, and after 19.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}g}2\textsl{\textdescent}
\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}ac}8 20.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{A}}}c}4 White has good compensation
for the exchange.
12.\textit{\underline{\text{\texttt{W}}}b}3
Other possibilities are:
12.\texttt{bcl} b5?! 13.\texttt{cxd5} cxd5 14.a4
Neither 14.\texttt{Qe5} \texttt{Qb6} nor 14.\texttt{Qh4} \texttt{Qb6} 15.\texttt{Qxf5} gxf5 give Black any problems.

Black begins concrete play on the queenside.

14...a5!N
In this way, Black can even fight for the advantage; after 14...\texttt{bxa4} 15.\texttt{Wxa4} \texttt{Qb6} 16.\texttt{Qa6} \texttt{Qd7} Black had equalized in Tseshkovsky – Dvoretsky, Leningrad 1974.

15.axb5
Black obtains real pressure after 15.bxa5 \texttt{Qxa5} 16.axb5 \texttt{Qxb5}.

15...axb4 16.\texttt{Qb3} \texttt{Qa5}! 17.\texttt{Qxd5} \texttt{Qb6}
White is even slightly better after: 17...\texttt{Qa2}?! 18.\texttt{Qb3} \texttt{Qxb3} 19.\texttt{Qxb3} \texttt{Qa2} 20.\texttt{Qa1} \texttt{Qd6} 21.\texttt{Qfd2} \texttt{Qxb5} 22.\texttt{Qc4}!

18.\texttt{Qb3} \texttt{Qxb5?}
White will have to show some accuracy in order to hold the balance.

12.a4 \texttt{Qb6}?!N

Black starts concrete play on the queenside.

There is a solid alternative in: 12...\texttt{Qdf6} 13.\texttt{Qb3} \texttt{Qd7} 14.\texttt{Qfd1} \texttt{Qh3} 15.\texttt{cxd5} \texttt{Qxg2} 16.\texttt{Qxg2} \texttt{Qxd5} 17.\texttt{Qxd5} \texttt{cxd5} With equality, Saidy – Gligoric, Los Angeles 1974.

13.\texttt{Qb3}
White cannot go for: 13.a5 \texttt{Qxb4} 14.\texttt{Qa3} \texttt{Qc3=}

13...c5! 14.\texttt{Qxc5} Qdxc5 15.\texttt{Qa3} \texttt{Qxb2} 16.\texttt{Qxb2} a5 17.b5 \texttt{Qf4}=
Black has a very sound position.

12.c5
It is hard to believe that this is a good idea. As White has released the tension in the centre, Black should start play on the queenside: 12...\texttt{b6}?! (only 12...\texttt{Qxd2} has been played here) 13.\texttt{Qc1} \texttt{bxc5} 14.\texttt{Qxc5} (14.\texttt{Qxc5} \texttt{Qb8} is excellent for Black) 14...e5 15.\texttt{Qh4} \texttt{Qxd2} 16.\texttt{Qxd2} \texttt{Qg4} 17.h3 \texttt{Qe6} (or 17...\texttt{Qh5}?) 18.f4 exf4 19.\texttt{Qxg7} \texttt{Qxg7} 20.\texttt{Qxf4} \texttt{Qf6} The position is unclear.

12.\texttt{Qb6}

13.\texttt{Qd7} 14.a4
White has also tried: 14...\texttt{xd1} 15...\texttt{d2} c7 16.e3 e5 (this is very natural, but first playing 16...\texttt{ad8} is also worth considering) 17.dxe5 \texttt{xe5} 18.e4 dxe4 19...\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xe4} 20...\texttt{xe4} \texttt{f6} Black had reached comfortable equality in Ruck – Gonzalez Zamora, Koszeg 1996.

Taking the c-pawn makes a lot of sense once White has developed his queen’s knight to c3; regaining the pawn will not be straightforward, and moreover...b5-b4 can be a useful resource for Black. White now chooses from C1) 8.e4, C2) 8.a4 and C3) 8...\texttt{e5}.

C1) 8.e4 b5

This ensures that White will not get the pawn back in the immediate future. In my opinion, Black has good chances of fighting for the advantage from this position.

9...\texttt{e1}

Other options are:

9...\texttt{e2}

White is aiming to place his rook on d1, but before he can do so, Black creates concrete play on the queenside: 9...b4 10...\texttt{a4}

10...\texttt{a5}N

10...\texttt{a6} 11...\texttt{c5} \texttt{b5} has been played in a couple of games, but I believe that White could now obtain decent play for the pawn with: 12.a4N bxa3 13...\texttt{xa3} c3 14...\texttt{d3} cxb2 15...\texttt{xb2}N

11...\texttt{c5} \texttt{d7} 12...\texttt{xc4}

12...\texttt{xc7} \texttt{xd7} leaves White without much compensation.

12...\texttt{xc5} 13...\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 14.dxc5 \texttt{d7}
It is clear that it is Black who is fighting for the advantage.

9.e5 REDENTIALS 10.a4 (9.e4 Van Gool – Rendboe, Maastricht 2010, is best met with 10..a6 followed by ...b6) 10...b4 11.e5 a5 12.e1 a6 13.db5 c6 14.e2 e5 15.fc1 Aleksić – Dinic, Nis 1995. Black should now play 15...d5 with a clear edge; he need not fear 16.e6 because 16...f5! is a strong reply.

9...a6 10.e5 b7 11.a4 b4 12.b1N

An obvious improvement on the game Bagaturov – Jojua, Izmir 2003: 12.a2? b3 13.a3 b4 14.e4 White cannot do much against the knight coming to c2, so he tries an exchange sacrifice. 14.cc2 15.e3 xa1 16.xa1 e4 17.e5 xe3 18.e5xe3 Here Black missed the strong: 18...a6!N 19.a3 (or 19.de2 xe5+) 19...c5!

12...e8 13.xc4 xd4 14.h6

White's last move weakened the b4-square, so the black knight immediately heads in that direction.

9.e4

Other attempts also fall short:

9.a5 REDENTIALS 10.a4 db4 11.a2 Sinan – A. Young, Internet 2010, and here Black can play, for example: 11...xa2 12.xa2 db5! 13.e3 db5 14.e2 d8 15.d5 16.db4 I do not see any compensation for the pawn.

9.e5 is well met by: 9...d4! 10.f4 db4 11.h3 xe5 12.xe5 b6† 13.h2 a5 14.e2 d8† Heinatz – Dirn, Germany 1998.

9.h3 REDENTIALS 10.e4 has occurred twice, and in both games Black exchanged knights, but I believe he should prefer: 10...db4N 11.e3 d3 12.b3 db6†
9...\(\text{b4}\) 10.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{a6}\)
10...\(\text{e8}\) is also worth considering.

11.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 12.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 13.\(\text{dxex}\) \(\text{a5}\)\(\text{f}\)

C3) 8.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{g4}\)

An idea that we have already seen after 9.\(\text{e5}\)
in C2 above.

9.\(\text{f4}\)
The main alternative is:
9.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 10.\(\text{h3}\)
10.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 11.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 12.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{c6}\)
13.\(\text{c3}\) 13...\(\text{ac8}\) 14.\(\text{g2}\) Deutsch - Kwatschewsky, Austria 1994. White has managed to regain the pawn, but the price has been high, and the black pieces are now much better coordinated. I believe that Black could now increase his pressure with:
14...\(\text{ed8N}\) 15.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{f5}\) 16.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{a5}\)\(\text{f}\)
10.\(\text{e3}\)
White has some compensation, but it's hardly enough, and I definitely prefer Black. Here is one example of how play may go:
11...\(\text{d7}\) 12.\(\text{h2}\) \(\text{a6}\) 13.\(\text{a3}\)
Preventing \(\text{b4-d3}\).
13...\(\text{c7}\) 14.\(\text{e4}\)
Now I like the simple:

14.\(\text{dd5}\)\(\text{N}\)
This allows White to exchange his knight for this bishop, but only at the cost of weakening the d4-pawn.
15.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{c8}\) 16.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 17.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{d8}\)
Black has the advantage.

9...\(\text{a6}\)!
Although 9...\(\text{axe5}\) is more popular, I see no reason for rushing to exchange, as White is short of useful moves.

10.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 11.\(\text{fxe}\) \(\text{b4}\)\(\text{N}\)
This is an improvement on: 11...\(\text{c5}\)!! This move increases the power of White's light-squared bishop and is rarely a good idea in this line. 12.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xb3}\) 13.a\(\text{xb3}\) \(\text{b4}\) 14.\(\text{a3}\) White had decent compensation for the pawn in I. Schneider - Karpatchev, Bad Woerishofen 2009.

12.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{e6}\) 13.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{d3}\)
Black retains the better chances.

Conclusion

Both 7.\(\text{a4}\) and 7.\(\text{bd2}\) can be categorized as solid, but not too dangerous, and Black can expect to equalize quite comfortably. By contrast, the more aggressive 7.\(\text{c3}\) offers a pawn sacrifice, which I recommend Black to accept. Although White gets a certain amount of compensation in various lines, in none of them is it really enough.
Fianchetto Systems

7.\textit{\textsf{b3}}

Variation Index

1. d4 f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 c6 4. g2 d5 5. \textit{\textsf{\textbf{f3}}} g7 6.0-0 0-0 7. \textit{\textsf{\textbf{b3}}}

7...\textit{\textsf{b6}}

A) 8. c5
B) 8. \textit{\textsf{x}}\textit{\textsf{b6}}
C) 8. \textit{\textsf{c3}} \textit{\textsf{d8}}
   C1) 9. cxd5
   C2) 9. \textit{\textsf{f4}}
   C3) 9. \textit{\textsf{a3}}
   C4) 9. \textit{\textsf{d1}}
   C5) 9. h3
   C6) 9. c5

A) after 14. \textit{\textsf{e1}}?
C3) after 11. \textit{\textsf{a3}}
C6) after 17. \textit{\textsf{a4}}
1. d4  ♙f6 2. c4  g6 3. g3  c6 4.  ♘g2  d5 5.  ♙f3  ♙g7 6. 0-0 0-0 7.  ♘b3
Quite a popular line at GM-level.

7...  ♘b6

This is a thematic response to White’s queen sortie in positions with a Slav pawn structure, and it works well for Black here. White’s options are: the premature A) 8. c5, B) 8.  ♘xb6 and C) 8.  ♘c3.

A) 8. c5  ♘xb3 9. axb3
I have developed a useful ‘rule’ for this pawn structure: if Black manages to stop White’s dangerous idea of b4-b5, then he will have absolutely no problems.

9...  ♙a6
Stopping White’s only idea. Black will now prepare to advance his e-pawn, which should give him chances to fight for the initiative.

10.  ♗c3  ♘d7 11.  ♙a4
After 11. e4  dxe4 12.  ♘xe4 Teske – Balinov, Graz 1996, simplest is the calm 12...  ♘f6N 13.  ♘c3  ♘b4 and only Black can be better.

11... e5 12. e3  ♘c7 13.  ♗d2  e4

14.  ♘e1?
The closed pawn structure makes the position fairly drawish, and 14.  ♘g5 should allow White to maintain the balance, although he would still have to play accurately.

14... b6N
This is an improvement on Ernst – L’Ami, Groningen 2003, and takes advantage of White’s last move; the threat of ... ♙a6 poses serious problems for White, due to the awkward placement of his minor pieces.

15. f3  exf3 16.  ♘xf3  bxc5
Black is just a pawn up.

B) 8.  ♘xb6  axb6
This is also a premature decision, since Black can use the semi-open a-file to generate play on the queenside.

9...exd5 exd5!

Black is already aspiring to an advantage; he is not satisfied with the more symmetrical position after 9...exd5.

10.e4

10...Nd3? allows Black good play: 10...Nxc3


C) 8.Nc3

This natural move is the only way for White to fight for an advantage.

8...Ed8

I have always considered 8...Nf5 to be an equally playable continuation, but recently White has found some new ideas against it. At the same time White has been struggling to demonstrate any advantage after the rook move, hence my choice of it for this book.


White has also tried:
9.Wxb6?! axb6 10.cxd5
This is quite harmless, since Black can recapture on d5 with his pieces.

10...Nxd5 11.Nxd5 Exd5!

One of the ideas behind 8...Ed8. The rook can be very useful on the fifth rank, and I think that Black already has the better chances. For example:

12.Ed1

This is a serious error, although White's position was already unpleasant. 15...Ed4!
12...\texttt{b5}! 13.e4 \texttt{e6} 14.a3
This was Rogozenko – Donchev, Debrecen 1992, and here Black should play the natural:
14...\texttt{d7}\texttt{N}
Black's queenside pressure gives him the better chances.

\textbf{C1) 9.cxd5 \texttt{xb3}! 10.axb3 \texttt{xd5}}

It is a clever idea to change the pawn structure in this way, as White may have problems in the future with his b3-pawn.

11.\texttt{g5} \texttt{f8}
This is more flexible than 11...\texttt{f6}, which blocks the long diagonal and makes the dark-squared bishop passive.

12.\texttt{d2} \texttt{e6} 13.\texttt{d2} \texttt{h6}
Defending against White's idea of \texttt{g5}.

14.e3 \texttt{d7} 15.\texttt{e1} \texttt{xc3}
A well-timed exchange.

16.\texttt{xc3}
Unfortunately for White, he cannot recapture with the pawn: 16.bxc3? \texttt{c5}! White is in trouble.

16...\texttt{g5}!
A multi-purpose move, which really appeals to me. First of all Black takes control over the f4-square, preventing White's idea of \texttt{d3}-f4; secondly Black is planning ...\texttt{f5}, and so he vacates the g6-square as a retreat for this bishop in the event of e3-e4.

17.\texttt{d3} \texttt{f5}
Black's idea is to play ...\texttt{e5}, so White must react quickly.

18.\texttt{c5} \texttt{xc5} 19.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{g6} 20.\texttt{c3} e6
21.b4 a6 22.\texttt{ea5}
Neither side can make any progress in this position, so it is no surprise that a draw was agreed in P.H. Nielsen – Radjabov, Tripoli (2.2) 2004.

\textbf{C2) 9.\texttt{f4} dxc4 10.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{e6}}

Grabbing the b-pawn obviously looks risky, although I don't see any refutation: 10...\texttt{xb2} 11.\texttt{g5} (or 11.\texttt{ab1} \texttt{a3} 12.\texttt{g5} e6 13.e4 \texttt{b5} 14.\texttt{d3} b4 15.\texttt{b3} \texttt{a6} 16.\texttt{f3} bxc3 17.\texttt{xb8} c2 and Black seems to be doing well in this...

11.Qd3 Qa6

Black continues to activate his minor pieces, using the slightly misplaced position of the white queen to help generate counterplay in the centre.

12.Qc2

Nor do other moves pose Black any serious problems:


12...Qb4

Recently Black demonstrated another route to equality: 12...c5 13.Qa4 Qb5 14.Qxc5 Qxc5 (14...Qac8 may be even stronger) 15.dxc5 (15.Qxc5 Qxe2 16.Qxe7 Qd5 is good for Black) 15...Qac8 16.Qfd1 Qxd1† 17.Qxd1 Qd5 18.Qd4 Qxd4 19.Qxd4 Qxf4 20.Qxf4 Qxc5 21.Qxc5 Qxc5= Alekseev – Radjabov, Astrakhan 2010.

13.Qa4 Qbd5

14.Wa3

Black has no problems after 14.Qc1 Qf5.

14...Qxf4 15.gxf4 Qd5

Black can also consider 15...a5!? with the typical idea of ...Qb4.

16.e3 Qe6=

Black has an extremely solid position, Sargissian – Guseinov, Dubai 2005.

C3) 9.Qa3

At first I thought that this move might be worth playing as White, but after delving deeper into the position I now feel that Black is doing fine here.

9...dxc4!

Obviously the most principled continuation.
10.\texttt{\textit{Wxe7 e8}} 11.\texttt{\textit{Wa3}}

I don't see much point in: 11.\texttt{\textit{Wd6 f5}} (11...\texttt{\textit{Qa6??}} also comes into consideration)
12.\texttt{\textit{Wf4}} Switching to the kingside, but the queen is not well-placed here. 12...\texttt{\textit{Qa6}} (also possible is 12...\texttt{\textit{Qbd7??}}) 13.\texttt{\textit{h3 b4}} 14.\texttt{\textit{g4 Qbd5}} 15.\texttt{\textit{Wd2 e4!}} 16.\texttt{\textit{Qxd5 cxd5}} 17.\texttt{\textit{Wf4 Qe6}} Black had a clear positional advantage in Burmakin - Midoux, Porto San Giorgio 2006.

11...\texttt{\textit{Qa6N}}

I like this natural developing move, with the idea of jumping to b4. Illeetskoy Sanchez Rodenas, e-mail 2008, continued 11...\texttt{\textit{f5}} 12.\texttt{\textit{Wf4 a6}} and now retreating with 13.\texttt{\textit{Wd1!}} is strong; White intends to play in the centre, while the black queen is slightly misplaced on a6.

12.\texttt{\textit{b3 cxb3}}

Initially I was tempted by the immediate 12...\texttt{\textit{b4}}, but then I discovered the following idea: 13.\texttt{\textit{Qa4 Wb5}} 14.\texttt{\textit{bxc4 Wxc4}} 15.\texttt{\textit{b6!}} axb6 16.\texttt{\textit{xa8}} I don't think that Black has full compensation for the exchange.

13.\texttt{axb3}

13.\texttt{\textit{Wxb3}} is possible, but after 13...\texttt{\textit{Wxb3}} 14.axb3 \texttt{\textit{b4}} 15.\texttt{\textit{Qd2 a5}}! Black is doing very well.

13...\texttt{\textit{d4}} 14.\texttt{\textit{b2}}

White can force a draw with 14.\texttt{\textit{Qa4 Wb5}} 15.\texttt{\textit{Qc3 Wb6}}, and that may well be his best option.

14...\texttt{\textit{d5}} 15.\texttt{\textit{Qf4 Qe4}}

We have reached a very complicated position in which Black is at least equal.

C4) 9.\texttt{\textit{Qd1 Qf5}}

Introducing the possibility of ...\texttt{\textit{Wxb3}} followed by ...\texttt{\textit{Qc2}}. The alternatives are weaker:

9...\texttt{\textit{a6??}} runs into 10.\texttt{\textit{Wxb6 axb6}} 11.\texttt{\textit{Qa4!}} with a clear advantage for White, Inarkiev - Svidler, Moscow 2006.

9...\texttt{\textit{Wxb3}} 10.axb3 \texttt{\textit{Qf5}} 11.\texttt{\textit{Qe1}} is slightly better for White.

10.\texttt{\textit{Qe1}}

The main attempt to fight for an advantage. Absolutely harmless is: 10.\texttt{\textit{Wxb6 axb6}} 11.\texttt{\textit{cxd5 Qxd5}} 12.\texttt{\textit{Qxd5 cxd5}} (this is safe, but I prefer the combative 12...\texttt{\textit{Qxd5!N}} when the rook may become active on the 5th rank) 13.\texttt{\textit{Qf4 Qe8}} 14.\texttt{\textit{Qe5 e6=}} Jankovic - Muslic, Pula 2001.
Forcing White to release the tension in the centre. I am not so convinced by: 10...dxc4 11...xc4 a6 12.e4 It is not clear that Black has enough counterplay against the white centre, Inarkiev – Svidler, Astrakhan 2010.

11.c5 wb3 12.axb3 bd7
The more typical 12...a6 was also mentioned by Nataf in Chess Informant 79 as a decent alternative.

13.b4 a6=
Black had absolutely no problems in Anic – Nataf, Vichy 2000.

C5) 9.h3
This is surely too modest to trouble Black.

9...e6!
I like this move, which forces White to clarify the situation in the centre.

10.c5
Aronian has tried: 10.g5 f5 11.wxb6 axb6 12.cxd5 d5! 13.e4 (more advisable is 13.d5 cxe4 14.g4 c2 15.e3 c6 16.gc1 a4 17.f3 when White is very slightly worse, but he should be able to hold) 13...xc3 14.bxc3 d7 The weakness of the a-pawn gave Black the advantage in Aronian – Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

10...wxb3
Black can even consider 10...wa6 with the idea of undermining the white pawn chain with ...b6. After 11.wg5 c8 12.wf4 h6 13.f3 e6 the position is very complicated, but Black seems to have reasonable chances.

11.axb3 a6
This is the thematic response to White’s c4-c5, but there is nothing wrong with: 11...bd7 12.b4 a6 13.f4 e4 ½–½ J. Horvath – Neuman, Aschach 2007.

12.f4 d7
Black begins to prepare ...e5.

13.g4 f6 14.g5 fxg5 15.xg5 f7!

The position is roughly balanced, but in Ippolito – Antal, Lubbock 2009, White was tempted into some incorrect complications:

16.xf7 xf7 17.xd5? cxd5 18.c6 b4!
19.cxd7 xd4
Black is clearly better.

C6) 9.c5
This is the main continuation according to theory.

9...wb3 10.axb3 a6
As we have already seen, this is a standard reaction to the advance of the white c-pawn.

11.\textit{f4}

This is very logical, preventing $...\text{c7}$ followed by $...\text{a6}$. White has also tried:

11.\textit{h3 $\text{d7}$ 12.\textit{f4 $\text{e8}\text{N}$}}

Black is planning $...\text{e5}$. This is an improvement on the rather passive: 12 $...\text{f8}$ 13.\textit{a4 $\text{f5}$ 14.\textit{fa1 $\text{e6}$}} Tregubov – Vorobiov, Moscow 2004. Here simply 15.\textit{e3N $\text{c2}$ 16.\textit{a3}} would ensure the better chances for White, due to the somewhat problematic position of Black's light-squared bishop.

13.\textit{a5}

13.\textit{e4 $\text{dxe4}$ 14.\textit{xe4 $\text{b4}$}} would give Black good play.

13 $...\text{e5}$ 14.\textit{xe5 $\text{xe5}$ 15.\textit{xe5 $\text{dxe5}$}} 16.\textit{xe5 $\text{xe5}$ $\text{e5}$ 17.e3 $\text{c7}$ 18.b4 $\text{a6}$}

Black has equalized comfortably.

12.\textit{\text{a3 $\text{e8}$ 13.\text{h3 $\text{f5}$}! 14.\text{c1 $\text{e5}$ 15.\text{xe5 $\text{dxe5}$}} 16.dxe5 This was played in A. Petrosian – Lamprecht, Germany 1994, and now there is no good reason for Black to refrain from the obvious 16 $...\text{xe5N}$, giving him the better chances.}

12.\textit{a4 $\text{e8}$ 13.\text{fd1 $\text{e5}$ Once he carries out $...\text{e5}$, Black can expect to be at least equal.}

14.\textit{xe5 $\text{xe5}$ 15.dxe5 $\text{xe5}$ 16.$\text{xe5}$ $\text{xe5}$ 17.$\text{e3}$ $\text{f5}$ 18.$\text{d2}$ $\text{c7}$ 19.b4 $\text{e8}$ 20.\textit{c3 $\text{a6}$} Black eventually won in Gagunashvili – Elness, Novi Sad 2009.

12.$...\text{e8}$!

This is an important move. It is not so good to rush with the e-pawn: 12 $...\text{e5}$? 13.\textit{xe5 $\text{dxe5}$ 14.$\text{xe5}$ $\text{xe5}$ 15.$\text{dxe5}$ $\text{f5}$ 16.$\text{e5}$! $\text{xe2}$ 17.$\text{d4}$ $\text{xb3}$ 18.f4 White had the better chances in Aronian – Svidler, Beersheba 2005.

13.$\text{e4}$

White fails to prevent $...\text{e5}$ with 13.$\text{h3}$, in view of: 13 $...\text{f5}$ 14.$\text{g4}$ $\text{e5}$!

13 $...\text{dxe4}$ 14.\textit{xe4 $\text{b4}$}

I don't believe that Black faces any problems in this position.

15.$\text{g5}$
White has also tried two other moves:

15.\( \text{c3} \) d6 16.\( \text{d3} \) e6 17.\( \text{d2} \) d8
18.\( \text{c4} \) bd5 19.a3 h5 20.da1 a6= Black is fine, and in fact went on to win in Bocharov – Kamsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005.

15.\( \text{d2} \) d5 16.\( \text{c3} \) d7f6 17.\( \text{e5} \) e6
18.\( \text{c4} \) d8 19.e2 e8 20.a5 d7 The position is about equal, Sakaev – Svidler, Russia 2007.

15...h6
15...f6!? is worth considering.

16.\( \text{d2} \) c2!?
There is nothing wrong with the natural 16...d5.

17.\( \text{a4} \)

We have been following the game Tregubov – Vachier Lagrave, Paris 2007. Here the computer points out that Black can play the calm:

17...d8!N 18.\( \text{c3} \)

It transpires that Black need not be afraid of 18.c1, as 18...f5! 19.e3 e6 20.g4 d3 21.e3 f5! gives him a strong initiative.

18...f5
Black has an excellent game, thanks to the following line:

19.\( \text{h4} \) e6 20.a2 d8 21.hf3 f5
Black has the better chances.

Conclusion

We have looked at a wide variety of options for White on his 8th and 9th moves, but have found little to trouble Black. I would just like to draw the reader’s attention to an important theme that features in several of the lines in this chapter. When White advances c4-c5, Black almost invariably reacts by exchanging queens, playing ...a6 to restrain the white b-pawn, and then preparing ...e5; this should secure him at least equal chances, even after losing a tempo with ...d8-e8.
**Fianchetto Systems**

**White exchanges on d5**

**Variation Index**

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 3...c6

A) 4. ♘f3

B) 4. ♘g2 d5
   B1) 5. ♘f3
   B2) 5. cxd5 cxd5
       B21) 6. ♘c3 ♗g7
            B211) 7. ♘h3
            B212) 7. e3
       B22) 6. ♘f3 ♗g7
            B221) 7. ♘c3
            B222) 7. e5 ♘e4
                B2221) 8. 0-0
                B2222) 8. ♘d2
       B223) 7. 0-0 0-0
           B2231) 8. ♘c3
           B2232) 8. ♘e5

B1) note to 8. ♗b3

B221) note to 15. e5

B222) after 12. ♘e3

13... ♘a6!N

20... h5!N

12... f6!N
1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6

In this chapter we shall be concentrating on the lines in which White exchanges pawns on d5. White has a wide range of move orders at his disposal, and Black must often react precisely in order to avoid finding himself in an undesirable variation. Here White chooses between A) 4.d3 and B) 4.g2.

A) 4.d3

This will often transpose into B, but we shall look at some lines where White delays the development of his king’s bishop.

4...d5 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.d3 g7 7.e5

7.g2 e4 is line B22 1 below.

7...d7!

I find it surprising that this move has been played only five times, as I think that it is a good way to avoid the variations arising after 7...0-0 8.g2 e6 9.0-0 d7 10.f4 etc. Although Black is solidly placed in this well-known line, I am personally not too keen on his prospects, and so I have designed the repertoire to avoid this possibility.

[Diagram 8]

8.f4

This looks the most challenging. Other options are clearly not dangerous for Black:

8.d7! 9.d3 dxe5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.d2

Black has no problems after 11.g2 0-0 12.0-0 d6.

11...d7?! An interesting idea; the bishop is heading for c6, which will force the exchange of the light-squared bishops. There is also nothing wrong with 11...d6 12.g2 0-0. Here I examined a nice variation: 13.d5 (13.0-0 d8 even looks better for Black) 13.d8 14.h6 e8 15.d2 d4 16.0-0 h3! Black equalizes comfortably.

12.xf4 e5 13.d5 d8 14.f4 xf4 15.xf4 a5+ 16.d2 xd2+ 17.xd2 xg2 18.xg2 c6

The position is absolutely equal. A draw was agreed in Bocharov – Roiz, Dagomys 2008.

8.dxe5!

This was played in Sebenik – Bosiocic, Austria 2010. Previously Black had tried: 8.e6 9.g2 c6 10.0-0 b6 11.e3 0-0 Play has transposed into the theoretical line that we are trying to avoid, Drasko – Kozul, Zadar 2005.

9.fxe5

After 9.dxe5 d4 10.e4 0-0 11.g2 c6 12.0-0 b6 (or 12.f5?!?) Black is certainly well in the game, and may even be better.

9...d6 10.g2 0-0

10...c6? is premature, in view of 11.e4!
We have transposed to B2232 at the end of the chapter.

B) 4.\(g2\) d5

The main continuation is the exchange of pawns now, but we shall also look at what happens if White improves his king's knight first: B1) 5.\(\text{f3}\) or B2) 5.\(\text{cx}d5\).

B1) 5.\(\text{f3}\) \(g7\) 6.\(\text{e}e5\)

With this move White is generally planning to exchange pawns in the near future, having somewhat limited Black's options. The immediate 6.\(\text{cx}d5\) \(\text{cx}d5\) is line B22.

6...\(\text{de}4!\)

We have to pay attention to White's move order. For example, the natural 6...0-0 would allow 7.\(\text{cx}d5\) \(\text{cx}d5\) 8.\(\text{c}c3\) - the variation we are aiming to avoid.

7.0-0 0-0 8.\(\text{b}b3\)

Usual here is 8.\(\text{cx}d5\) \(\text{cx}d5\), leading into B222. We shall look at a few other options:

8.\(\text{c}c3\)

Quite a risky approach.

8...\(\text{xc}3\) 9.\(\text{bxc}3\) \(\text{xe}5!\) 10.\(\text{dxe}5\) \(\text{dxc}4\)

White’s bishop pair is not very active, and Black’s position remains quite solid.

11.\(\text{c}c2\)

Black is happy to go into an endgame:

11...\(\text{c}c7\) 12.\(\text{h}h6\) \(\text{ed}8\) 13.\(\text{f}4\)

This was Fier – Achutti, Florianopolis 1999. Black should have continued:

13...\(\text{a}a6!\)

White's play does not look fast enough.

14.\(h3\)

Or 14.\(\text{ad}1\) \(\text{xd}1\) 15.\(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{c}c5\) 16.\(h3\) \(\text{f}5!\) 17.\(e4\) \(\text{d}7\) and the \(d3\)-square is significant.
14...\texttt{b}6\dagger 15...h2 \texttt{e}3!

It is not clear how White will create play, and meanwhile he is a pawn down.

8.b3 \texttt{d}7 9...b2 (after 9...xd7 \texttt{x}d7 10...b2 \texttt{e}6 Black has comfortable play) 9...xe5! 10.dxe5 \texttt{e}6 11...d3 f5 12.exf6 (12.cxd5 \texttt{xd}5 13...xd5 \texttt{xd}5 leads to a balanced position) 12...xf6 13.cxd5 \texttt{xd}5 Black's activity compensates for his slightly damaged pawn structure. 14...xd5\dagger \texttt{xd}5 15...xd5\dagger \texttt{xd}5 16...xg7 \texttt{x}g7 17...d2 \texttt{c}3 18...g2 \texttt{c}6 Black had no problems in Znamenacek – Dolezal, Czech Republic 2008.

8...

A well-timed operation.

9...xc4!

9...xc4 allows Black to equalize comfortably: 9...d6 10...c2 \texttt{f}5 11...d3 f5 12...d3 c5=

9...d6 10...e5

A critical try is: 10...xd6 exd6 11.d5 Otherwise Black will play ...d5 with equality. 11...c5 12...c3 \texttt{d}7 Black has a good Benoni, as he has managed to exchange a pair of knights.

10...e6 11...c2 \texttt{d}7 12.f4

Safer is 12...xd7, but Black has a pleasant game after 12...xd7 13...d1 \texttt{b}6.

12...xe5 13.dxe5

13.fxe5 \texttt{f}5 14.e3 \texttt{c}8 is also fine for Black; he may be able to play ...c5 in suitable circumstances.

13...\texttt{b}6\dagger 14...h1 \texttt{f}5!

Black had the better game in Inarkiev – Bosiocic, Rijeka 2010.

B2) 5.cxd5 cxd5

White may develop either knight: B21) 6...c3 or B22) 6...f3.

B21) 6...c3 \texttt{g}7

Usual now is 7...f3 (see B221), but I will also examine two minor ideas, B211) 7...h3 and B212) 7.e3.

B211) 7...h3
7...\text{hxh3}\text{!?}

I like this decision; with his light-squared bishop exchanged, Black can develop his other pieces very naturally. Black can also play: 7...\text{dxc6} 8.\text{dxc6} e6 9.0-0 0-0 10.\text{e3} b6 11.\text{b3} (or 11.\text{dxc6} \text{dxc6} 12.\text{b4} \text{b4} 13.\text{dxc6} \text{dxc6} 14.\text{a4}\text{+} \text{d5} 15.\text{e4} \text{e5} 16.\text{e5} \text{f6} 17.\text{exf6} \text{xf6} 18.\text{dxe5} \text{dxe5} 19.\text{g4} \text{g4} 20.\text{g5}\text{+}\text{d5}) 11...\text{a6} 12.\text{e4} \text{b6} 13.\text{a3} \text{a5} 14.\text{a5}\text{=} \text{Stahlberg - Flohr, Kemer}

8.\text{bxc6} 9.0-0 0-0 10.\text{e3} e6

I remember that during the game I felt this position was very easy for Black to play.

11.\text{a2} \text{a2} 12.\text{b3} \text{a6} 13.\text{a3} \text{a6} 14.\text{a1} \text{a6} 15.\text{e5} \text{b5} 16.\text{a4} \text{b4} 17.\text{b4} \text{a7}\text{!?} 16...\text{f8}\text{ is good enough as well.}

17.\text{b1}

The tempting 17.\text{b4} is a bit dubious, since after 17...\text{d8} Black can easily get his knight to the c4-square.

17...\text{dxc2} 18.\text{dxc2} \text{b5} 19.\text{a4} \text{a8} \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \text{Fridman - Avrukh, Germany 2008.}

B212) 7.e3 0-0 8.\text{d2} \text{d6} 9.0-0 \text{b6}

By developing his bishop to a6, Black will secure equal chances in a complex game.

10.\text{b3}

Or: 10.\text{f4} e6 11.b3 \text{a6} 12.\text{e1} \text{d7} (also quite good is 12...\text{e7} 13.\text{b2} \text{a5} 14.\text{d2} \text{f6} 15.\text{a1} \text{a8} 16.\text{d3} \text{d6} 17.\text{b4} \text{f7} and neither side can make real progress, \text{Pachman - Taimanov, Moscow 1956}) 13.\text{a3} \text{f6} 14.\text{e1} \text{ac8} 15.\text{h4} \text{e8} \text{The position is level, Cekro - Kozul, Zlatibor} 1989.

10...\text{a6}

We shall follow a famous Fischer game.

11.\text{a3} \text{e8} 12.\text{d2}

More accurate is: 12.\text{e1} \text{a5} 13.\text{e1} e6 The play is much the same as we saw after 10.\text{f4}, and the position is clearly balanced.

12...e5\text{!?}

This leads to a more interesting game, although of course there was nothing wrong with 12...e6.

13.dxe5 \text{xe5} 14.\text{d1}

This is the wrong rook, as it leaves the f2-pawn inadequately defended. White should play: 14.\text{d1} \text{d7}! (also interesting is 14...\text{c8}\text{!?} as recommended in the annotations in ChessBase) 15.\text{c2} \text{a6} 16.\text{b1} \text{f5} (this is simpler than 16...\text{b4} 17.\text{h3} \text{f3} 18.\text{h1} \text{h5} 19.\text{f4} \text{h6} 20.\text{d5} \text{xf6} 21.\text{xf6}+}
\( \Box f6 \) 22.\( \Box f1 \), when White has definite compensation for the exchange) 17.\( \Box xf5 \) gxf5 18.\( \Box d2 \) \( \Box e4 \) 19.\( \Box xe4 \) dxe4 20.\( \Box d1 \) \( \Box xe2 \) 21.\( \Box xe2 \) \( \Box ed8= \) Black has no problems.

8 ... \( \Box d3! \) 15.\( \Box c2 \) \( \Box xf2! \) 16.\( \Box xf2 \) \( \Box g4\uparrow \)
17.\( \Box g1 \) \( \Box xe3 \) 18.\( \Box d2 \) \( \Box xg2! \) 19.\( \Box xg2 \) d4!
The main continuation is 8.0–0 0–0, which will be examined in B2231.

A rarer alternative is 8.\( \Box xe4 \) dxe4 9.\( \Box e5 \) and here, since the players haven’t castled, Black can go for 9 ... \( \Box xe5 \) 10.\( \Box x e5 \) \( \Box x d1\uparrow \) 11.\( \Box x d1 \) \( \Box f5 \). With his king on d1, White seems unable to pose Black any problems. For example: 12.g4 \( \Box xg4 \) 13.\( \Box xe4 \) after 13 ... \( \Box c6 \) 14.\( \Box xc6\uparrow \) bxc6 15.f3 0–0–0 16.\( \Box e1 \) \( \Box e6 \) 17.\( \Box e3 \) \( \Box b7 \) 18.\( \Box f2 \) \( \Box d5 \) 19.\( \Box hcl \) \( \Box hd8 \) The game is absolutely equal, Maherramzade – Sideif Sade, Baku 1997.

10.0–0

Another option is: 10.\( \Box d2 \) e6 11.e4 \( \Box c6 \)
12.exd5 (12.0–0 transposes to the main line) 12 ... \( \Box a5 \) 13.\( \Box b4 \) exd5 14.0–0 \( \Box b6 \)
Chapter 7 – White exchanges on d5

Black has absolutely no problems, for instance: 15.\textit{b}e1 (or 15.\textit{b}2 \textit{a}6 16.\textit{f}e1 \textit{e}8–Sergejev – Glek, Internet 2000) 15...\textit{e}6 16.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}8 17.\textit{g}5 \textit{c}7 18.\textit{a}c1 \textit{e}8 The position was balanced in Galego – Movsziszian, Can Picafort 2008.

10...\textit{c}6 11.\textit{d}2

This is the main move. The alternatives are harmless, for example: 11.\textit{f}4 \textit{a}5 12.\textit{b}4 \textit{b}6 13.\textit{d}2 \textit{b}7 14.\textit{e}4 \textit{d}xe4 15.\textit{x}e4 \textit{c}8 16.\textit{f}e1 \textit{e}8 I already prefer Black, with the white c- and d-pawns providing permanent targets, Samsonkin – Zilberstein, Edmonton 2009.

11...\textit{e}6

With 13.\textit{e}3?! White is probably hoping to carry out the c3-c4 advance, but Black is in time to prevent it: 13...\textit{a}5 14.\textit{b}1 \textit{b}6 15.\textit{f}e1 \textit{a}6 16.\textit{e}4 \textit{d}xe4 17.\textit{x}e4 \textit{c}4 18.\textit{c}1 \textit{e}8 Black has the better chances, Graf – Krasenkow, Sanxenxo 2004

13...\textit{a}5 14.\textit{c}2

Other queen moves are possible, but they don’t change the character of the game.

14...\textit{b}6 15.\textit{f}e1

15.\textit{b}4 \textit{c}6 16.\textit{a}3 \textit{b}7 (Black can of course repeat moves with 16...\textit{a}5) 17.\textit{b}3?! \textit{d}xe4 18.\textit{x}e4 \textit{c}7 Black was slightly better in Timofeeva – Duer, Wattens 1995.

15...\textit{b}7 16.\textit{e}5 \textit{c}8 17.\textit{d}3

This was Nambiar – Rey, San Francisco 2002, and now I like:

17...\textit{d}7

Black will play ...\textit{a}4 next, with a nice position.

12...\textit{a}5 13.\textit{b}4

After 13.\textit{c}2 Black as always continues: 13...\textit{b}6 14.\textit{e}1 (14.\textit{a}3 \textit{e}8 transposes to the previous note) 14...\textit{b}7 (14...\textit{a}6? is careless; after 15.exd5 exd5 16.\textit{a}3 \textit{e}8 17.\textit{e}8\textit{t} \textit{xe}8 18.\textit{x}d5 White is just a pawn up, Aramil – Langreck, Kokomo 2000) 15.\textit{e}5 \textit{c}8 Black has a good game.

12.e4

Quite similar is:

12.\textit{a}3 \textit{e}8 13.e4

13...\textit{b}6 14.exd5 exd5
We have reached an equal position that we saw in the note to White's 10th move above.

**B222** 7.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}e5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}e4!}}\)

Once again we avoid the variation arising after 7...0-0 8.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c3}}\) e6.

White now chooses between **B2221** 8.0-0 and **B2222** 8.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d2}}\).

**B2221** 8.0-0 0-0 9.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c3}}\)

Black is also doing okay against the alternatives:

9.f3 is hardly a serious try for an advantage:
9...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d6}}\) 10.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c3}}\) e6 11.f4 f6 12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c6}}\)
13.e3 \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{e}f7}}\) 14.a4 b6 Black had comfortable equality in Johannessen – Schandorff, Roskilde 1998.

9.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d2}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{f}f5}}\)

Black does not achieve equality with:
9...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xd2}}\) 10.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xd2}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d7}}\) (or 10...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c6}}\)
11.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xc6}}\) bxc6 12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}b4}}\pm\) Kasparov – Howell, London [simul] 1998) 11.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c3}}\)±
10.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xe4}}\)
10.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}f3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}b6!}}\) is good for Black, Kr. Georgiev – Donchev, Prague 1995.
10...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xe4}}\)

**B2222** 8.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d2}}\)

Other moves:
a) 11.f3 \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{f}f5}}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{e}e3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d7}}\) 13.f4 \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c6}}\) (there is also nothing wrong with 13...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xe5}}\) 14.dxe5 e6) 14.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}b3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}b6}}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{f}f1}}\) Gross – Ungr, Plzen 2000. Now the natural 15...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{f}f8}}\)N
16.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xb3}}\) 17.axb3 a6 would lead to an equal game.

b) 11.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xe4}}\) dxe4 12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}b3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c6}}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xc6}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}bxc6}}\) transposes to the line with 11.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}b3}}\).

11.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c6}}\)

Black could try: 11...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{a}xa2}}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{e}e5}}\) 13.dxe5 (not 13.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c7}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c8}}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{e}e4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c6}}\) and White is defenceless against the threat of ...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d5}}\) 13...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d7}}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d1}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d8}}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{f}f4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c6}}\) The position is double-edged. However, if he wishes White can avoid this possibility by using the move order 11.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xe4}}\) dxe4 12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}b3}}\).
12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xc6}}\) bxc6 13.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}xe4}}\) dxe4 14.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d1}}\)

Weaker is 14.e3?! \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}b8}}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c2}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d5}}\) 16.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d1}}\)
\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c8}}\) and the coming ...e5 will give Black the advantage, Sunye Neto – Illescas Cordoba, Linares 1994.
14...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}b8}}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c4}}\)!

Better is 15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c2}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d5}}\) 16.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c8}}\) 17.b3 e6
18.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{a}a1}}\) a5 with balanced play.
15...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d7}}\)
15...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d5}}\) is also good.
16.b3 \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}b5}}\) 17.e3?
17.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c3}}\) was necessary, although after 17...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d5}}\) Black is doing quite well.
17...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{h}h5}}\)!

Suddenly ...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{h}h3}}\) is a serious threat.
Chapter 7 – White exchanges on d5

18...e5
Black was better in Zhidkov – Vorobiov, Moscow 1999.

9...cxd5
This is the easiest route to equality. More complicated, but also good enough is: 9...f5 10.b3 cxd5 11.d1 (11.exd5 cxd5 12.bxc3 cxd5 13.exd5 cxd5 14.dxe5 cxe5= Benko – Fischer, New York 1962)

This recently occurred in the high-level game Mamedyarov – Ivanchuk, Nalchik 2009, and Black missed the well-known blow: 11...xd4! 12.exd4 cxd3 13.bxc3 dxe5 14.exd5 c7 White must play carefully to hold the balance. 15.h6 c6 16.xf8 xf8 17.c1 cxd5 18.bxd5 b6 19.c4 ½–½ Khodzhaev – Liberman, Sukhumi 1991; the final position is still slightly more pleasant for Black.

10.bxc3 c6

11...xc6
This leads to a symmetrical and level position, but other moves do not offer White any advantage either:

11.d3 a5 12.h4 b6 13.h5 a6 14.hxg6 hxg6 15.g5 Gutman – Hort, Germany 1984. After the natural improvement 15...c8N 16.c1 d7 Black enjoys the better chances, thanks to his superior pawn structure.

11.a3 (also worth considering is 11...a6?) 12.e4 (after 12.a4 Mascaro March – Gaya Llodra, Palma de Mallorca 2008, the typical 12...b6N followed by ...c7 and ...c8, would give Black the more pleasant game) 12...dxe4 13.xe4 Nemeth – Juhasz, Hungary 1998. Now Black should play: 13...e6N 14.a3 (Black needn't worry about 14.f5 a5 15.xf5 cxe5+) 14...c8 I do not see any compensation for White's weakened pawn structure.

11.bxc6

12.a3
Also possible was:
12.a4 b6!
Black wants to play ...a6, as the queen swap will kill White's chances of obtaining any queenside pressure.
13.\textit{e}4 \textit{a}6 14.\textit{a}e1 e6 15.\textit{f}4 \textit{d}3! This is an important resource. 16.\textit{d}6 (16.\textit{ad}1 dxe4 17.\textit{xe}4 \textit{axe}4 18.\textit{xe}4 \textit{f}d8 also leads to equality) A draw was agreed here in Schmidt – Averbakh, Polanica Zdroj 1975, and indeed after 16...\textit{fd}8 17.e5 \textit{xf}8 18.\textit{xf}8 \textit{xf}8 19.\textit{f}1 \textit{xf}1 20.\textit{xf}1 \textit{b}8 Black has absolutely no problems.

13...\textit{a}6!

14.\textit{xa}6 \textit{xa}6

The position is very drawish.

15.\textit{f}b1

Or 15.\textit{f}e1 \textit{fe}8 16.\textit{c}5 e6 17.\textit{ab}1 \textit{f}8 18.\textit{xf}8 \textit{d}–\textit{f}8 Marin – Fressinet, Eforie Nord 2009.

15...\textit{xe}2 16.\textit{xe}7 \textit{fb}8!

16...\textit{fe}8 17.\textit{b}7 leads to some pressure for White.

17.\textit{d}6 \textit{xb}1† 18.\textit{xb}1 \textit{b}5 19.\textit{f}1 a6 20.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}8 21.\textit{xf}8 \textit{xf}8

\textit{\frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2}} Vaiiser – Nataf, Pau 2008.

12.\textit{e}4 \textit{a}6 (12...\textit{e}6 is also reasonable) 13.\textit{e}1 \textit{a}5 14.\textit{d}2 e6 15.\textit{c}4 \textit{b}6 16.\textit{c}5 (I think White should have been satisfied with equality after 16.exd5 \textit{xd}4 17.\textit{c}3 \textit{xe}3 18.\textit{xe}3 exd5 19.cxd5 \textit{ad}8 16...\textit{b}2 17.\textit{e}3 \textit{Ising – Voigt, Germany 1999}. After 17...\textit{fb}8N 18.exd5 exd5 Black has slightly the better chances.

12...\textit{a}6 13.\textit{e}1 \textit{e}8 14.\textit{e}4 e6 15.\textit{e}5

White has also tried:

15.\textit{h}4 \textit{c}4 16.\textit{e}5

White decides to block the centre anyway. He is probably right to avoid 16.h5 e5!? with good play for Black.

16...\textit{b}8 17.\textit{d}2

Or: 17.h5 \textit{g}5! A good square for the queen. 18.\textit{f}3 (after 18.hxg6 hxg6 19.\textit{f}1 \textit{xf}1 20.\textit{xf}1 \textit{f}8 Black may even have an edge, as he can play for ...e5) 18...\textit{f}8 19.\textit{c}1 \textit{d}8 \textit{f}–\textit{g}6 Csom – Tompa, Hungary 1974. I think that in the final position Black stands better; he will meet 20.hxg6 with 20...\textit{fxg}6!.

17...\textit{f}8

This is a key positional idea; after trading dark-squared bishops Black will have chances to penetrate on the queenside.

18.\textit{xf}8 \textit{xf}8 19.\textit{f}1

After the natural 19.h5 Black can respond in an interesting manner: 19...\textit{xh}5! 20.\textit{h}6 \textit{d}3 21.\textit{xh}5 \textit{g}6 Having managed to stabilize his kingside, Black can play on the queenside with ...\textit{a}5, ...e5 etc.

19...\textit{xf}1 20.\textit{xf}1
20...h5!N
This gives Black a good game. It is a logical improvement on 20...c5 21.h5, which allowed White attacking chances in Tregubov – Yandemirov, Maikop 1998.

15...f8 16.xxf8 xf8 17.h4 g7?!
18.eb1
Black is not afraid of 18.h5 in view of 18...g5!.

18...e7 19.df1 xf1 20.xf1 eb8
21.d2 eb6 22.fb3 ab8 23.fb1 h5=
Ragger – Miroshnichenko, Austria 2010.

B2222) 8.d2

8...d7!
In my opinion this is the most accurate move. I am not satisfied with Black’s other options:

8...xd2 9.xd2 d7 Here nobody has tried 10.c3, which seems to me to promise White some pressure.

8...f5 runs into 9.xe4 xe4 10.xe4 dxe4 11.b3 and the double attack on b7 and f7 is most unpleasant.

9.xd7
I also examined 9.xe4 dxe4 10.gf4, but here Black has 10...a5† 11.d2 xd2†

12.xd2 and now there is an unexpected idea: 12...g5! 13.xg5 b6! The threat of ...f6 is very strong.

9...xd7 10.xe4 dxe4

11.e3
I also checked:
11.xe4 xd4
This is stronger than: 11...xd4 12.0–0 0–0
13.g5 d8 14.c2 White preserved some pressure in Pearce – Zuev, e-mail 2008
12.xd4 xd4 13.0–0

13.h3!N
This is an important improvement. After 13...0–0 14.ed1 f6 Schandorff – Sulypa, Esbjerg 2004, the correct 15.f4 would be unpleasant for Black. For example:
15...xb2 16.ab1 f6 17.xb7 xb7
18...\texttt{Exb7} Black is doomed to a passive
defence.

14...\texttt{Exb7}
14...\texttt{Exd1} 0–0–0! 15...\texttt{Ed2} \texttt{Exe5} is level.
14...\texttt{Exf1} 15...\texttt{Exa8} \texttt{Exe2} 16...\texttt{Ec6+} \texttt{Ed8} 17...\texttt{Ed4} 
\texttt{Exe5}
Black doesn't have any problems.

11...\texttt{Ed5} 12...\texttt{Ea4}+ \texttt{Ed7} 13...\texttt{Ed3} \texttt{Ec6} 
14.0–0

14...\texttt{We6N}
This is simplest. Keene – Eichhorn, Ybbs 1968, saw: 14...0–0 15...\texttt{We7} \texttt{Exd4} 16...\texttt{Exe4}! 
\texttt{We4} 17...\texttt{We4} \texttt{Exe4} 18...\texttt{Exd4} Black eventually managed to achieve a draw, but he suffered for the rest of the game.

15...\texttt{Ec1} 0–0
Black has a comfortable game.

\textbf{B223) 7.0–0 0–0}

We have arrived at a final crossroads: \textbf{B2231) 8...\texttt{Ec3} or B2232) 8...\texttt{Ed5}.}

\textbf{B2231) 8...\texttt{Ec3} \texttt{Ed4!}}

As should be clear by now, we wish to avoid the lines 8...\texttt{Ec6} 9...\texttt{Ed5} and 8...\texttt{Ee6} 9...\texttt{Ed5}.

9...\texttt{Exe4}
The most challenging continuation. Other options are:

9...\texttt{Ed5} transposes to line B2221.

9...\texttt{Ed3} \texttt{Exc3} 10...\texttt{Exc3} \texttt{Ec6} was examined in B221.

9...\texttt{Ed2} \texttt{Exd2}
This is simplest. After 9...\texttt{Exc3} 10...\texttt{Exc3} \texttt{Ec6} 
11...\texttt{Ee4} White can fight for an advantage.

10...\texttt{Exd2}
White can also recapture with the bishop:
10...\texttt{Exd2} \texttt{Ee6} 11...\texttt{Ee4} (or 11...\texttt{Ed4} \texttt{Dxe4} 12...\texttt{Dxe4} 
\texttt{Ec6=} 11...\texttt{Ec6} The position is symmetrical and absolutely equal.

10...\texttt{Ee6} 11...\texttt{Bb3} \texttt{Ec6} 12...\texttt{Ee3}
This seems easier than: 12...b6 13.\textit{a}3 \textit{e}8 14.\textit{f}c1 \textit{b}b7 15.\textit{d}5 \textit{f}8 16.\textit{b}b2 \textit{d}7 17.\textit{x}f8 \textit{x}f8 18.\textit{f}1 a6 19.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}6=


13.a4
13.\textit{a}4 \textit{x}d2 14.\textit{x}d2 b6=
13...\textit{d}7 14.\textit{a}3 \textit{f}c8
Black has full equality.

9.\textit{f}4 \textit{xc}3 10.\textit{bxc}3 \textit{c}6 11.\textit{e}5
Or: 11.\textit{b}b1 \textit{a}5 12.\textit{d}d2 b6 13.e4 (after 13.c4 \textit{b}7 14.e3 \textit{c}8 15.\textit{e}c1 \textit{d}7 16.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 Black has some advantage in a typical Grünfeld position, De Groot – Glek, Utrecht 1999)
13...\textit{b}7 14.\textit{e}1 \textit{dxe}4 15.\textit{c}xe4 \textit{d}7 16.\textit{e}c1 \textit{e}8 Black had good play in Juswanto –
H. Olafsson Yerevan (ol) 1996.

11...\textit{a}5
I prefer this to 11...\textit{xe}5, although that is obviously good enough for equality.
12.e4 \textit{e}6 13.\textit{f}3 \textit{dxe}4 14.\textit{xe}4 \textit{c}8
Black has a comfortable game, Muhring –

9.e3
This is quite harmless. For example:
9...\textit{xc}3 10.\textit{bxc}3 \textit{c}6 11.\textit{d}d2
After 11.\textit{a}3 I like the following example:
11...\textit{e}8 12.\textit{d}d2 \textit{e}6 13.\textit{b}1 \textit{d}7 14.\textit{e}2
b6 15.\textit{f}c1 \textit{e}8 16.c4

Marin – Margvelashvili, Plovdiv 2008. Now the simple 16...\textit{xc}4 N 17.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xd}5 is fine for Black.

11...\textit{e}6 12.\textit{b}1
12.a3 transposes to 11.a3 above.
12.\textit{b}3 b6 13.a4 \textit{d}7 14.e1 occurred in Strikovic – Alonso Garcia, Lorca 2007, and here I found a nice positional idea:
14...\textit{xc}8 N 15.\textit{e}2 \textit{d}8! 16.\textit{b}2 \textit{b}7 Black will play ...\textit{d}6 next, with a good game.

12...\textit{d}7 13.c4?!
This is a mistake, although Black was comfortable anyway.
13...\textit{xc}4 14.d5 \textit{xd}5 15.\textit{xc}4 \textit{d}8 16.\textit{xd}5
\textit{xd}5 17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 18.\textit{xb}7 \textit{e}5! 19.\textit{d}2
\textit{e}2
Black had the better chances in Fontaine –
Nunn, Paignton 2000.

9...\textit{dxe}4

10.\textit{e}5
Less popular is:
10.\textit{g}5 \textit{xd}4 11.\textit{xd}4
White does not benefit from delaying the queen exchange: 11.\textit{xe}4 \textit{c}6 12.\textit{b}3
(Inaccurate is 12.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 13.\textit{c}3 \textit{g}4
14.e3 Ilincic – Vaganian, Yerevan 2000. Here Black missed the strong 14...\textit{xc}2 N 15.\textit{b}1
\textit{fd}8 with the point that after 16.\textit{e}4 \textit{b}4
17.\textit{xb}7 \textit{ab}8 18.\textit{g}2 \textit{e}6= White is in trouble.) 12...\textit{b}8
13...\textit{e}3?! (White probably should have preferred 13...f4 \textit{e}6 14.e3 \textit{xb}2 15...\textit{xb}2 \textit{xb}8 16...\textit{xa}1 \textit{xa}7 \textit{g}7 18...b6 and a draw seems likely) 13...\textit{xb}2 14...\textit{xb}2 \textit{ab}1 \textit{d}4 16...\textit{c}5 \textit{xe}3 17.fxe 3 Allahverdiev – Radjabov, Baku 2005. Now best for Black is 17...\textit{a}5!N 18...a6 \textit{f}5 19...\textit{xf}5 \textit{gxf}5 20...\textit{xb}8 \textit{xb}8 21...\textit{b}5 b6 22...\textit{xf}5 \textit{c}8 and White will suffer in this endgame.

11...\textit{xd}4

12...\textit{xe}4

An alternative is: 12...d1 \textit{c}6 13...\textit{xe}4 (after 13...\textit{xe}4 \textit{g}4 14...f1 \textit{fd}8 only Black can be better, Voelzke – Christ, Kappeln 1990) 13...\textit{g}7 14...\textit{g}2 (not so good is 14...\textit{b}1 \textit{h}6 15...f3 \textit{e}6 and White unexpectedly experiences some problems, for example 16...b3 \textit{b}4! 17...d4 \textit{fd}8 18...\textit{e}3 \textit{d}5 19...\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5= Godes – Ma. Tseitlin, Belgorod 1989) 14...a5? 15...\textit{b}1 a4 16...b4 axb3 17.axb3 \textit{a}2 18...d2 \textit{xd}2 19...\textit{xd}2= Smiejkal – Kadlec, Hlinske 1993.

12...c6 13...c3

13...h6 \textit{Ed}8 14...c3 \textit{e}6 15...fd1 Berkell – Schussler, Stockholm 1978. After 15...f6 it is White who has to play carefully to keep the balance.

13...\textit{e}6

13...\textit{Ed}8 is also good enough.

14...d2 \textit{ac}8 15...fd1

Olszewski – Zugic, North Bay 1998. Simplest now is:

15...\textit{fd}8 N 16...ac1

The game is just equal.

10...\textit{Wd}5

I also consider 10...d7 sufficient for equality. I shall give just one example of typical play: 11...f4 \textit{f}6 12...a4 \textit{f}5 13...fd1 \textit{d}5= Adianto – Peng Xiaomin, New Delhi/Teheran 2000. After 14...d2 Black can maintain equality with 14...b6 15...b4 \textit{c}8 16...ac1 a5 17...xa5 \textit{xd}4 18...\textit{c}3 \textit{xc}1 19...\textit{xc}1 \textit{xb}2.

11...\textit{ac}3

White has several other options:

11...b3 \textit{f}5?! (11...c6 is also very reasonable, but I prefer the text, since it equalizes without needing to know much theory) 12...b2
\( \text{d}7 \ 13. \text{c4} \) (I also examined 13. \text{c1}, but after 13... \text{xe5} 14. \text{dx}5 \ \text{f}d8 15. \text{xd}5 \text{xd}5 16. \text{c7} \text{d}2 it is White who has to fight for the draw) 13... \text{f6} (13... \text{h}6?! is interesting) 14. \text{e}3 \text{d}6 15. \text{xf}5 \text{gxf}5 Black was very solid in Lima - Finkel, Ubeda 1997.

11.f3?! doesn't work, because of the strong 11... \text{c6}! 12. \text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 13. \text{e}3 \text{f}5 14. \text{g}4 \text{ex}3 15. \text{xf}3 Helbig - Riefner, Germany 2000. Black can now play: 15... \text{e}6?N 16. \text{xd}5 (or 16. \text{d}2 \text{b}5! 17. \text{xc}6 \text{xb}2?) 16... \text{xd}5 17. \text{d}2 \text{g}2 18. \text{g}2 e5 Black has the better chances, due to White's weakened pawn structure.

11. \text{a}4 \text{d}7 12. \text{f}4
Black has no problems after: 12. \text{d}1 \text{b}6 13. \text{c}2? Strangely enough, this weak move occurred in both games that reached this position. (Better is 13. \text{b}3 \text{e}6=.) 13... \text{f}5 14. \text{g}4 \text{ac}8 15. \text{b}3 \text{e}6 16. \text{xd}5 \text{d}5 Benko - Niephaus, Moscow (ol) 1956. Black stands better, as it's not easy for White to deal with the threat of...f6.

12... \text{b}6
This is clearly better than the unnecessary: 12...g5?! 13. \text{e}3 \text{b}6 14. \text{c}2 \text{f}5 15.g4! White had a big advantage in Barbero - Kapozsras, Hungary 1989.

13. \text{b}4 \text{f}5
This novelty is connected with a new plan. Blechar - S. Jones, corr. 1996, saw 13... \text{e}6 14. \text{f}c1 \text{g}5 15. \text{c}5 \text{d}8 16. \text{xg}5 \text{f}6 17. \text{xe}4 \text{fx}5 18. \text{xb}7 with a messy position.

14. \text{f}d1 \text{f}6
Black's idea is to bring his knight to d5. The position remains very complicated, with chances for both sides.

11... \text{d}7 12. \text{c}2
This is White's first choice according to theory. Other options:

12. \text{b}3 \text{xb}3 13. \text{axb}3 occurred in Nogueiras – Krasenkow, Merida 2005. I recommend the simple: 13... \text{xe}5N (13...f5 was played in the game, but I am concerned about 14. \text{c}4 followed by f3) 14. \text{dx}5 \text{f}5 15. \text{f}4 \text{fc}8= 12. \text{d}3 \text{f}6

13. \text{a}4
I also examined:

13. h3 \text{d}8!?N (This looks simpler than 13. \text{b}5 14. \text{a}4 \text{b}6 15.a5 \text{b}5 16. \text{c}5 \text{xb}2 Ilincic – Simic, Novi Sad 1995. Here White can play 17. \text{h}2!N regaining the pawn and obtaining some pressure.) 14. \text{d}2 \text{d}6 15. \text{c}5 b6 16. \text{c}4 \text{c}4 17. \text{xe}4 \text{h}3 The position is roughly equal.

13. \text{f}4!?! \text{b}5! 14. \text{c}2 \text{g}5 15.a4 \text{b}4 16. \text{h}3 \text{h}6 White was in trouble in Dobrzynski – Pytel, Lublin 1969.

13... \text{g}4!?
A very concrete approach, although there is nothing wrong with 13... \text{f}5N 14. \text{ac}1 (or 14. \text{e}5 \text{e}6) 14... \text{fd}8.

14. \text{f}4 \text{d}6 15. \text{d}2
After 15. \text{xe}4 \text{xe}3 16. \text{f}xe3 e5 17. \text{dx}5 \text{xe}5 Black has excellent compensation for the pawn.

15. \text{xd}4 16. \text{xd}4 \text{xd}4 17. \text{xe}4
This was Granda Zuniga – Krasenkow, Madrid 1998, and now I suggest:

17... \text{f}6N 18. \text{g}2 \text{f}5
Black has nothing to worry about.
12...\( \square \)xe5
Black may also choose: 12...\( \square \)f6 13.\( \square \)e5 \( \diamond \)f5 14.\( \textsf{b} \)b3 \( \textsf{f} \)c8= Vlasov – Yandemirov, Kaluga 2007.

13.\( \textsf{f} \)xe4 \( \textsf{e} \)c4 14.dxe5 \( \textsf{w} \)xc2 15.\( \textsf{g} \)xc2 \( \textsf{g} \)xe5
16.\( \textsf{e} \)e4 \( \textsf{e} \)e6!

The game has simplified to a very drawish position.

17.\( \textsf{f} \)fd1 \( \textsf{a} \)d8 18.\( \textsf{x} \)a7
\( \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \) Kosyrev – Yandemirov, St Petersburg 2001.

For a final time I shall point out that 8...e6 9.\( \textsf{c} \)c3 goes into a line that we wish to avoid.

8...\( \textsf{e} \)e4 is a valid alternative though, and was covered in B2221. However, even if you want to choose that option, much of the following analysis is relevant to our repertoire, as our main line can also be reached via the move order 6.\( \textsf{c} \)c3 \( \textsf{g} \)g7 7.\( \textsf{e} \)e5 \( \textsf{f} \)d7 8.f4 \( \textsf{c} \)xe5 9.fxe5 etc.

9.f4
This looks the most challenging. The alternatives are:

9.\( \textsf{f} \)f4 \( \textsf{c} \)xe5 10.\( \textsf{f} \)xe5 (not good is 10.dxe5?! e6 and the e5-pawn is weak) 10...f6?!N This new idea seems to me the most natural move. 11.\( \textsf{f} \)f4 (also leading to an equal position is 11.\( \textsf{x} \)b8 \( \textsf{x} \)b8 12.\( \textsf{c} \)c3 e6 13.\( \textsf{b} \)b3 [White has no time for 13.e4? dxe4 14.\( \textsf{c} \)xe4 f5 and he loses the d4-pawn] 13...f5=) 11...\( \textsf{c} \)c6 12.\( \textsf{c} \)c3 e6 13.\( \textsf{f} \)d2 f5=

9.\( \textsf{c} \)xg4 \( \textsf{x} \)xg4 10.\( \textsf{c} \)c3 \( \textsf{c} \)c6

11.h3
I believe that White should settle for this calm move, since entering complications can easily lead to him being worse, for instance:

a) 11.\( \textsf{f} \)f3? e5! 12.\( \textsf{c} \)xd5 (Even worse is 12.dxe5? d4 13.\( \textsf{c} \)xc6 dxc3 14.\( \textsf{x} \)b7 \( \textsf{b} \)b8
Chapter 7 – White exchanges on d5

15...\text{c}xe4 \text{c}xb2 16...\text{c}b1 Wang Yue – Vachier Lagrave, Lausanne 2006. Now Black could have secured his advantage by 16...\text{d}xe5N 17...\text{d}xa7 \text{c}c8 and the b2-pawn should decide the game.) 12...\text{d}xd4 13...\text{c}c1 \text{d}e8 14...\text{c}c8 Black has the better chances and he soon seized the initiative in Malakhov – Mamedyarov, Sant Lluis 2005: 15.h3 \text{f}5 16.a3 \text{d}d7 17...\text{d}h2 \text{d}e4N

b) 11...\text{d}xe5 \text{d}xe5 12...\text{d}xb7 13...\text{d}g2 \text{d}b8 (13...\text{d}a6 \text{d}a5 14...\text{d}d3 \text{dd}8 gave Black great compensation for the pawn in J. Akesson – Poley, Sweden 2008) 13...\text{d}xe2† (here too, Black can play for long-term compensation with 13...\text{a}a5?) 14...\text{d}xe2 \text{x}d1 15...\text{d}xd1 \text{d}xe2 16...\text{d}d7 \text{fd}8 17...\text{d}xd8† \text{xd}8 White will have to fight for the draw.

11...\text{d}7! 12.e3

This leads to a symmetrical and equal position. But playing more actively does not promise White any advantage: 12...\text{d}xe5 \text{d}xe4 13...\text{d}g5 \text{e}8 14...\text{d}h2 (14...\text{d}d2? loses a pawn to 14...\text{x}h3!) 14...\text{c}c6 15.e4 \text{d}d6 16...\text{d}d2 Sargissian – Smirin, Bursa 2010. Black should now play 16...\text{f}5N 17...\text{c}c3 \text{ad}8 with good chances.

12...\text{d}e6 13.b3 \text{a}5 14...\text{d}d2

After 14...\text{b}2 \text{c}7 15...\text{e}1 \text{f}5 16...\text{c}1 \text{fc}8 17...\text{g}4 \text{d}d6 18.f3 \text{c}c6 19...\text{d}2 \text{ac}8 Black was even slightly better in Arencibia Rodriguez – V. Mikhalevski, Montreal 2004.

14...\text{c}7 14...\text{a}3? could be tried.

15...\text{c}1 \text{ac}8 16...\text{e}2


9...\text{d}xe5 10...\text{d}xe5

Recapturing with the other pawn is harmless: 10...\text{d}xe5 \text{b}6† 11...\text{h}1 \text{d}8 Black has no problems at all. 12...\text{c}c3 \text{e}6 13.b3 \text{c}c6 14...\text{b}2 \text{d}4 15...\text{a}4 \text{b}5† Damaso – Markos, Dresden (ol) 2008.

10...\text{c}6 11...\text{c}3

11...\text{e}6!

It is important to play this, because after the more natural 11...\text{e}6 White has an interesting pawn sacrifice at his disposal: 12.e4 \text{d}xe4 13...\text{e}3 \text{f}5 14...\text{f}6 \text{f}6 15...\text{e}xe4 \text{xf}1† 16...\text{xf}1 \text{d}d4 (after 16...\text{d}xd4? 17...\text{d}1 \text{e}5 18...\text{g}5 White wins on the spot, as in the well-known game Kasparov – Nunn, Brussels 1986) 17...\text{d}x\text{d}4 \text{d}d4 Theory considers this to be a balanced position, but it looks a bit suspicious to me and I prefer something more solid.

12...\text{e}3

In my opinion this is the main continuation, but White has other options:

First of all, it is important that 12.e4 doesn't work: 12...\text{d}xe4 13.d5 (13...\text{e}3 \text{b}6 also favours Black) 13...\text{b}6† 14...\text{h}1 \text{a}d8† Black wins material.

12...\text{f}4 \text{f}6N I do not see any reason for refraining from this thematic idea, although Black can also carry it out a move later. (12...\text{c}8 13...\text{d}3 \text{f}6 14...\text{f}6 \text{f}6 15...\text{d}1 Larsen – Weber, e-mail 2009, and now I like 15...\text{f}5N, when Black is certainly not worse.) 13...\text{f}6 \text{f}6 14.e4 This is White's only aggressive try, but it's not dangerous. 14...\text{d}xe4 15.d5 \text{b}6† 16...\text{h}1 \text{a}d8 17...\text{e}4 \text{d}xd5 18...\text{f}6† \text{f}6 19...\text{d}5† \text{h}8 It is White who must fight for equality.
12.\textit{h}1
The main alternative according to theory.

12...\textit{d}7
Now 12...\textit{f}6? fails to 13.e4, since Black doesn't have a check on b6.

13.e4
This does not promise an advantage, but nor do other continuations:
13.a4 \textit{h}3!? (the calm 13...a6 is worth considering) 14.xh3 \textit{x}h3 15.f4 \textit{d}8
13.e3 \textit{f}6 14.exf6 exf6 15.d2 \textit{f}5! In my opinion, this pawn structure secures Black's position and White must be careful to avoid being worse. For example: 16.ac1 \textit{e}8 17.a4 b6 18.b3 \textit{h}5 19.c3 \textit{ac}8\textit{f} Papin – Vitik, Belorechensk 2009.

13...\textit{g}4

14.e6!
Were it not for this cute tactical trick, White would just be worse.

14...\textit{x}d1 15.exd7 \textit{g}4 16.g5 \textit{f}6 17.e3
Schulze – Ostoic, Germany 1988. Now Black could have achieved easy equality with:
17...e5\textit{f}! 18.dxe5 d4 19.exf6 \textit{x}f6 20.xf6 \textit{xf}6 21.d5 \textit{g}7 22.f4 \textit{xd}7=

Conclusion

When White exchanges on d5 the symmetrical structure does of course limit Black's chances for active play. On the other hand, Black faces fewer problems equalizing than against some other lines. My aim in constructing this repertoire was to ensure that Black does not face the unpleasant task of defending a passive, slightly worse position. I believe that by responding accurately to the various possible white move orders, Black can confidently expect to achieve full equality.
Chapter 8

Various 4th Moves

Rare Options

Variation Index

1. d4 ½f6 2.c4 g6 3.½c3

3...d5

A) 4.g4
B) 4.h4
C) 4.f3 c5!
   C1) 5.cxd5
   C2) 5.dxc5
D) 4.½d2

A) note to 7.e3
C2) after 10.½d3
D) after 15.½c1

7...½c6!N
10...½d7!N
15...½c8N
1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5

In this chapter we shall examine four of White's rarer fourth moves: A) 4. g4, B) 4. h4, C) 4. f3 and D) 4. ♘d2.

Another possibility is 4. g3. This is an uncommon move order for playing the Fianchetto System, probably because it allows Black some extra options connected with ...dxc4. However, I recommend the straightforward 4...♕g7 5. ♘g2 (5. cxd5 ♘xd5 is covered in Volume Two) 5...c6. There is no way for White to benefit from this move order, so he should just enter one of the lines that were covered in the previous chapters.

A) 4. g4

This aggressive approach does not pose Black any real problems.

4...dxc4!

It is hardly wise to enter the complications after 4...♕xg4 5. ♙b3.

5. h3

White generally settles for this calm move, since he doesn't achieve much with:
5. g5 ♘d5 6. ♘g2 c6 7. e4
7. ♙a4 ♙b6 8. ♙a5 ♘g7 9. ♙f4 0-0 was clearly better for Black in De Nucci – Mekhitarian, Campinas 2010.

7...♕b4

The point; Black's knight penetrates to d3 with check.

8. ♙ge2 ♘d3? 9. ♙f1 ♘g7
9...e5 is also strong, with the idea: 10. dxe5 ♘d7!+
10. h4

Damnjanovic – Hemmer, e-mail 2009. There is no reason for Black to refrain from capturing the white centre pawn.

10...♕xd4N 11. ♙xd4 ♙xd4
Black has a large advantage.

5...♕g7 6. e4

White may choose not to bother regaining the c4-pawn, but he does not obtain much compensation:
6. ♙g2 0-0 7. e4 c5 8. d5 e6 9. ♙f4
This is an understandable decision, since the natural 9. ♙ge2 exd5 10. exd5 runs into a strong response: 10...h5 11. g5 ♙e8 Black transfers his knight to d6. His extra pawn and the exposed white kingside make Black's advantage obvious.

9...exd5 10. e5

This was Amelchenko – Leonov, Ufa 1996. It is not difficult to improve Black's play:
10...d4N 11. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 12. ♙e4 ♙e7 13. ♙f2 ♙c6
Black is clearly better, with three pawns
for the piece, a lead in development and an exposed white king.

6...0-0 7.\texttt{Nx}c4 c5
A well-timed counter in the centre.

8.d5?!
This leads to an advantage for Black.
Objectively White’s best is:
8.dxc5 \texttt{Q}bd7!
8...\texttt{W}xd1† 9.\texttt{W}xd1 is not so clear.
9.\texttt{Q}f3
After 9.\texttt{Q}e3 \texttt{W}a5 White experiences problems defending his e-pawn.
9...\texttt{Q}xc5 10.\texttt{Q}e2 b5!
This nuance assures Black of an excellent game.
11.\texttt{Q}xb5 \texttt{Q}b7
Black will regain the pawn, and meanwhile White will hardly be able to find any compensation for the weakening of his kingside.

8...b5!
This thematic idea works perfectly.

9.\texttt{Q}xb5 \texttt{Q}xe4 10.\texttt{Q}xe4 \texttt{W}a5† 11.\texttt{Q}c3 \texttt{Q}xc3†
12.bxc3 \texttt{W}xb5 13.\texttt{Q}e3 \texttt{Q}a6 14.\texttt{W}e2 \texttt{W}a4
15.\texttt{W}d2 \texttt{Q}d7
Black’s advantage was already decisive in Wehmeier – Sygulski, Germany 1995.

B) 4.h4
This move has been a favourite of the Croatian Grandmaster Miso Cebalo, but his fairly recent game against Riazantsev constitutes a serious blow to this line. I find it hard to believe that this variation can be repaired for White.

4...c5!
Black is seeking to take over the initiative.
Were it not for this move, the line would be perfectly playable for White.

5.dxc5
The alternative is:
5.cxd5 \texttt{Q}xd5 6.h5 \texttt{Q}g7
Black’s pressure on the white centre underlines that White’s idea has not been a resounding success.
Various 4th Moves

7. \( \text{f3} \)

7.\( e3 \) cxd4 8.exd4 \( \text{c}6 \) 9.hxg6 (9.\( \text{b}5 \) can be met by 9...0-0 and Black has the better chances) 9...hxg6 10.\( \text{e}h8^+ \) \( \text{x}h8 \) 11.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{a}5 \) (the simple 11...\( \text{e}6 \) is good too) 12.\( \text{b}3 \) Delis – Koukos, Ano Liosia 2007.

Now 12...\( \text{c}3 \)N is the best solution:
13.\( \text{c}3 \) (13.\( \text{b}5 \) just loses a pawn to 13...\( \text{a}d4! \)) 13...\( \text{b}6 \) 14.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \) Black has good play against the isolated d-pawn.

7...\( \text{c}6 \) 8.\( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 9.\( \text{e}3 \)

This was Lichman – Neerforth, Bad Woerishofen 2008, and now simplest is:

9...cxd4N 10.exd4 0-0+

Black has a comfortable position.

5...\( \text{d}4 \) 6.\( \text{b}5 \) e5!

This is an important move. After 6...\( \text{c}6 \) 7.e3 e5 8.exd4 \( \text{c}d4 \) 9.\( \text{b}4 \) we reach a very complex position, in which White is fighting for an advantage.

8.\( \text{g}5 \)

White does not have time to slowly defend the b4-pawn: 8.a3 a6 9.\( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 10.\( \text{d}6^+ \) \( \text{x}d6 \) 11.cxd6 \( \text{x}c4 \) Black has a clear advantage.

5...\( \text{d}4 \) 6.\( \text{b}5 \) e5!

A very strong idea; Black sacrifices material, but in return gets powerful play against the white king, which is stuck in the centre.

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

9.\( \text{a}4 \) is met with 9...\( \text{x}c5 \) (strongest, though 9...\( \text{c}6 \) 10.\( \text{x}f6 \) \( \text{x}f6 \) 11.\( \text{c}7^+ \) \( \text{d}8 \) 12.\( \text{x}a8 \) \( \text{x}c5 \) also gives Black great compensation) 10.\( \text{c}7^+ \) \( \text{f}8 \) 11.\( \text{x}a8 \) \( \text{d}3 \) White is facing a huge attack, for example 12.0-0-0 \( \text{d}4 \) wins for Black.

12.\( \text{xf}6 \) 10.\( \text{c}7^+ \) \( \text{d}8 \) 11.\( \text{x}a8 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 12.\( \text{e}1 \)

After 12.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}2^+ \) 13.\( \text{d}1 \) Black has the great resource: 13...\( \text{e}4! \) 14.\( \text{c}6 \) (White has no time for 14.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{xf}2 \) and he is losing) 14...\( \text{xf}2 \) 15.\( \text{f}3 \) b6 Black is clearly better.

12...\( \text{xc}5 \)
A critical position for the evaluation of my idea. Despite being a rook down, I strongly prefer Black. Firstly, the white knight is unlikely to escape from the corner, which means that White’s material advantage will not be so great. And most importantly, Black is clearly ahead in development and it’s not easy for White to develop his kingside. Here is an illustrative line that clearly shows the dangers of White’s position:

13...b3 c8

Not only intending to capture the knight in the corner, but also vacating the d8-square for the rook.

14.a3

After 14.g3 d8 15.g2 d3 Black seizes a decisive initiative.

14...c6 15.g4 a4!

This is stronger than 15...xg4 16.b1! b6 17.h3, when White is still in the game.

16.f3

16.f3 runs into 16...d3! with a powerful attack.

16...d3 17.h3 b8

White is in trouble.

8...xe5 a6

The point of Black’s play.

9.a4

9.a3 runs into the strong: 9...b4†! (but not 9...xa3?! intending to follow up with ...a5xe5, as White can insert the intermediate move 10.a4†! 10.d2 xd2† 11.xd2 e4 12.b4 (otherwise 12...a5† would be a killer) 12...c7 13.f3 c6 14.a4 0–0 Black’s development advantage looks scary from White’s point of view.

9...c6 10.d3 e7 11.a3 0–0 12.g5 f5

White is again experiencing serious problems with his development.

7...xc5 8.exd4 exd4

It is already clear that White’s opening concept has been a failure; his knight is totally misplaced on b5, while the advance of the h-pawn has only created weaknesses in his own camp. It is not surprising that Black achieved a convincing victory in the following encounter:

9.f3 0–0

There is also nothing wrong with the natural 9...c6.

10.e2
Accepting the pawn sacrifice wouldn’t help White: 10.\(\text{cxd4}\) \(\text{bxd4}\) 11.\(\text{cxd6}\) 12.\(\text{xc6}\)
(or 12.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{b6}\) 13.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{f5++}\) 12...\(\text{xd1}\) 13.\(\text{xd1}\) \(\text{g4}\)! Black is doing very well.

10...\(\text{c6}\) 11.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{f5}\) 12.\(\text{d3}\)
White had no time to castle, since Black was threatening 12...\(\text{d3}\).

12...\(\text{xd3}\) 13.\(\text{xd3}\) a6 14.\(\text{c7}\) \(\text{c8}\) 15.a3
Black had a decisive material advantage in Cebalo - Riazantsev, Biel 2009.

C) 4.\(\text{f3}\)
In my opinion this is not a dangerous variation, but it still has to be covered, as it has occurred more than two hundred times in practice!

4...\(\text{c5}\)!

This aggressive response is best. Black immediately tries to profit from the slight vulnerability of White’s centre caused by the previous move. White now chooses between C1) 5.\(\text{cxd5}\) and C2) 5.\(\text{dx}c5\).

C1) 5.\(\text{cxd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 6.\(\text{a4}\)
I find this much more interesting than the more popular:

6.e4 \(\text{xc3}\) 7.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{g7}\)

I don’t think that it makes sense for White to play like this. Comparing the position with the Exchange Variation, it is hard to imagine that anyone would choose 7.\(\text{f3}\) instead of the normal 7.\(\text{c4}\), 7.\(\text{e3}\) or 7.\(\text{df3}\).

8.\(\text{b5}\)
Black is not troubled by: 8.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{c6}\) 9.\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{xd4+}\) 10.\(\text{xd4}\) 0-0 11.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{bxc6}\) 12.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{c7}\) 13.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{xc7}\) 14.\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{a8}\) Lecluse - Bosch, Herlies 1999. Now the simple 13...\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{N}\) 14.\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{b8}\) would leave Black with a clear advantage.

8...\(\text{d7}\)
This natural continuation is of course quite sufficient, but I like the more challenging 8...\(\text{c6}\), inviting the complications: 9.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{xc3+}\) 10.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{a5}\)! Black is doing well.

9.\(\text{xd7}\) \(\text{xd7}\) 10.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{cxd4}\) 11.\(\text{cxd4}\) \(\text{c6}\) 12.\(\text{e3}\) 0-0 13.\(\text{b1}\)
This was Alsina Leal - Garcia Andrinal, Lisbon 2001, and now I suggest:

13...\(\text{a5}\) 14.d5 \(\text{c4}\) 15.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{e5}\)!
Black has a comfortable position.

6...\(\text{g7}\)
Black accepts the challenge and sacrifices the c5-pawn, hoping to make use of his lead in development. Of course White would be happy to see: 6...\(\text{xd4}\) 7.\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{f6}\) 8.e4 \(\text{c7}\) 9.\(\text{xd8}\) \(\text{xd8}\) 10.\(\text{e3}\) White has the better endgame, Blasko - Varadi, Hungary 2003.
7.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{d}xc5}}

After 7.dxc5 0–0 8.e4 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d}b}4}} Black has a serious initiative for the pawn, thanks to the tactical point: 9.a3 \textit{\texttt{\textit{w}xd1+}} 10.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{f}d}1}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}d}8+}} 11.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d}d}2}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{h}6}}}+

7...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{c}6}} 8.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{b}3}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{b}6}} 9.e3

9...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}5N}}

I. Botvinnik – Greenfeld, Israel 2002, continued: 9...0–0 10.f4! White prevents Black’s key idea of ...e5. Although Black still has definite compensation, I prefer to attack the white centre immediately, which I consider more in the spirit of the Grünfeld.

10.\textit{\texttt{dxe5}}

After 10.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}d}2}} Black has a pleasant choice between 10...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}e}6!?}} and 10...0–0.

10...\textit{\texttt{\textit{w}xd1+}} 11.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d}x}d1}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}x}e}5}

I prefer this to 11...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}x}e}5} 12.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{b}b}5+}}.

12.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{b}5}} 0–0

Black has full compensation for the pawn.

\textit{C2) 5.dxc5 d4}

We now have a more or less forced sequence of moves.

6.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{b}b}5}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{c}c}6}} 7.e3 e5 8.\textit{\texttt{\textit{e}xd4}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d}x}d4}}

9.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d}x}d4}}

White has other options here:

9.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{g}5}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{c}c}5}} 10.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d}x}d4}} (It is not a good idea to grab material with 10.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{a}x}f6?}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{w}xf}6}} 11.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{c}c}7+}} Coenen – Gertosio, Calvi 2009. After 11...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{f}f}8N}} 12.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{c}c}a}8} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{b}b}4+} 13.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d}f}2}} e4! 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}e}2}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{f}f}5}} White should not survive for long.) 10...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}x}d4}} 11.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d}d}3}} Nestorovic – Misailovic, Budva 2003. Here I like 11...0–0N 12.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}e}2}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{a}a}5+}} 13.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{c}c}d}2} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{b}b}6}} 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{b}b}1}} a5 15.0–0 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}e}8}} and the strong d4-pawn means that only Black can be better.

9.b4 a5!
Konopka, Decin 1996, and now the simple 16...b6!N 17.axf6† Qxf6 18.Qe4† Qg7 leads to a definite advantage for Black) 10...Qe7 11.Qe2 Qxb5 12.Qxd8† Qxd8 13.Qxb5 axb4 14.Qd1† Nihal – M. Andersen, Kemer 2009. After 14...Qe8N 15.Qc1 Qe6 Black has a clear superiority.

9...exd4 10.Qd3

10...Qd7!N

In my opinion this is a nice improvement over 10...Qxc5, which occurred in all four games that reached this position; after 11.Qe2 0–0 12.0–0 the play is balanced.

11.b4

White attempts to prevent Black achieving an optimal arrangement of his pieces. Black gets exactly what he wants after 11.Qe2 Qxc5 12.0–0 Qg7, when the d4-pawn secures him a long-term edge.

11...a5 12.Qe4

Or 12.Qe2† Qe7 13.Qb2 Qe5! and Black is better.

12...Qg7 13.Qb2

After 13.c6 bxc6 14.Qxc6 Qb8 15.b5 0–0 White is in trouble, as Black’s lead in development will soon start to tell.

13...axb4 14.Qxd4 0–0 15.Qe2 Qh4† 16.g3 Qe7

Black will regain the c5-pawn, leaving him with the better pawn structure and a generally favourable position.

D) 4.Qd2

This is a relatively rare continuation, but since Ivanchuk played it in 2007, a few other strong grandmasters have also tried it.

4...Qxc4!?

This is a critical reaction, temporarily going a pawn up. Black will gain time for developing his pieces while White is regaining the pawn. The natural 4...Qg7 is of course possible, and after 5.Qxd5 Qxd5 we have transposed into Volume Two (4.Qxd5 Qxd5 5.Qd2).

5.e3

It is hard to believe that White can afford to calmly continue 5.Qf3, as Black can hold onto the extra pawn: 5...a6 (5...c6 followed by ...b5 also comes into consideration) 6.e4 b5 7.e5 Qd5 8.a4 Qxc3 9.Qxc3 Qd5! White does not have enough compensation for the pawn. 10.axb5 axb5 11.Qxa8 Qxa8 12.d5 Qg7 13.b3 Qa3† Burnier – Lagarde, France 2009.

5...Qe6 6.Qf3 c6 7.Qg5
White is obliged to play this if he wants to regain the pawn.

7...d5 8.e4 h6 9.exd5 hxg5 10.dxc6

After 10...xc4 cxd5 11.b5+ c6 12.xg5 g7 Black has the better pawn structure, and has nothing to worry about.

10...c6 11.xg5 g7

Black has several other possibilities here, but it is natural to complete the development of his kingside.

12.xc4

Ivanchuk correctly indicated that the alternative 12.d5 wouldn't pose Black any problems: 12...e5 13.xc4 (13.f4?! is too weakening, and after 13...eg4 14.xc4 14...c8 15.b5+ f8 White's position looks vulnerable) 13...xc4 14.a4+ d7 15.xc4 White has won a pawn, but Black has ample counterplay. 15...c8 16.e2 h5! 17.h4 c7 18.d2 xc3 (Black can also invite a repetition by 18...f6) 19.xc3 xd5 20.f1 f8 Black's position even looks slightly preferable to me.

12...xd4 13.e3

13.0-0? is a serious mistake, due to the double attack 13...c7; after 14.a4+ f8 15.h3 g4! Black obtains a decisive attack.

13.a4+ d7 14.xd7+ xd7 leads to a comfortable endgame for Black.

13.e5 14.0-0 0-0 15.xc1

15.f4? is premature in view of: 15...f5 16.c5+ xd1 17.axd1 fc8+

We have been following the game Ivanchuk – Sutovisky, Montreal 2007, and now I suggest the natural improvement:

15...c8N 16.fd3

Other options are 16.e2 d5! and 16.b3 a6 17.a4 d7. In both cases Black's position is perfectly playable.

16...a6 17.a4 d7 18.fd1 fd8

The position is balanced, Black's centralized knight fully compensating for White's bishop pair.

Conclusion

White's early lunges, 4.g4 and 4.h4, are too loosening. Black should follow the classical advice to counter in the centre, and White will often end up regretting the self-inflicted weakening of his kingside. The other two moves we looked at, 4.f3 and 4.d2, are more solid options, but neither of them is particularly dangerous.
Various 4th Moves

4. a4†

Variation Index

1. d4 f6 2. c4 g6 3. \( \mathcal{D} \)c3 d5 4. a4† \( \mathcal{D} \)d7 5. b3 dxc4 6. xc4

6... g7

A) 7. f4 a6 8. f3 0–0 9. e4 c5
   A1) 10. e5
   A2) 10. dxc5

B) 7. e4 0–0
   B1) 8. f3
   B2) 8. e5

A) note to 8. f3

A1) after 19. \( \mathcal{D} \)c3

B2) note to 9. \( \mathcal{B} \)b5

9... 0–0 N

19... b4 N

16... f6! N
1. d4 d6 2. c4 g6 3. c3 d5 4. a4†

This cheeky check aims to disrupt Black’s natural development. Having said this, Black does gain a tempo as well.

4... d7 5. b3 dxc4 6. xc4

The b-pawn is obviously untouchable:
6. xb7? c6 White is in trouble due to the threat of ...xb8 followed by ...b4.

6... g7

Now 7. f3 is covered as line A in Chapter 24; we shall look at A) 7. f4 and B) 7. e4 here.

A) 7. f4 a6 8. f3

The alternatives are:

8. e4 0–0 9. d1 N I checked this new idea for White. (9. d3 transposes to the main line.) 9... c5 10. dxc5 a5 11. e5 xe6! This is a convincing route to equality. 12. b5 xb5 13. xb5 h5 14. e3 (after 14. g5 xc5 15. xe7 fxe8 Black has compensation for the pawn) 14... xe5=

8. d1 c5 9. e3 (This is hardly the way to try for an advantage, but after 9. dxc5 a5 Black has nothing to worry about.)

9... 0–0! N

This enables Black to fight for the initiative. Other moves:
9... a5 10. b3 led to unnecessary complications in Julve – Lucas, France 2003.
9... cxd4 N is the simplest way to equalize:
10. xd4 0–0 11. xa6 bxa6 12. f3 b6= 10. b3
10. dxc5 a5 11. f3 ac8 and 10. d5 h5 are hardly satisfactory for White either.
10... cxd4 11. exd4 a5 12. f3 ac8+ 8... 0–0

White does not hesitate to seize the centre.

The modest 9. e3 should not pose Black any problems. For example: 9... c5 10. b3 cxd4 11. exd4 c6 12. e2 c7 13. 0–0 d5 14. e5 b6= M. Gurevich – Akesson, Antalya 2004.

9. d1 N

This is a thematic move in this variation, and it can lead to an interesting battle.

9... c5 10. dxc5 a5 11. e4

Giorgadze – Sion, Castro Mondariz 1995, was agreed drawn after 11. d4; if we continue with 11... xc5 12. xc5 xc5 then Black is very slightly better.

11. ac8

The endgame arising after 11... e6 12. b5 xb5 13. xb5 xc5 is fine for Black.

12. e5
Various 4th Moves

White must continue to play sharply. He has no time to simply complete his development, for example: 12.\(\text{\textbf{e}}2\) \(\text{\textbf{e}}xc5\) 13.\(\text{\textbf{d}}3\) \(\text{\textbf{a}}4!\) 14.\(\text{\textbf{e}}d2\) \(\text{\textbf{e}}xc3\) 15.bxc3 \(\text{\textbf{c}}c5\) Black will play \(\ldots\)\(\text{\textbf{f}}e4\) next, with a big advantage.

12...\(\text{\textbf{e}}xc5\)

13.\(\text{\textbf{b}}3\)N

It is clear that this is the critical continuation. Otherwise:
13.exf6? loses on the spot: 13...\(\text{\textbf{e}}xc4\) 14.\(\text{\textbf{f}}g7\) \(\text{\textbf{e}}4!\) 15.\(\text{\textbf{e}}3\) \(\text{\textbf{d}}8\)→ Ermenkov – Orev, Bulgaria 1973.
13.\(\text{\textbf{d}}4?\) fails to 13...\(\text{\textbf{b}}4!\).
13...\(\text{\textbf{e}}6\) 14.\(\text{\textbf{x}}b7\)

White cannot play 14.exf6? in view of 14...\(\text{\textbf{x}}b3\) 15.\(\text{\textbf{f}}g7\) \(\text{\textbf{d}}8\) 16.\(\text{\textbf{e}}x\text{\textbf{d}}8\)+ \(\text{\textbf{e}}x\text{\textbf{d}}8\) 17.axb3 \(\text{\textbf{b}}4!\) and the white king will be stuck in the centre.

14...\(\text{\textbf{b}}4?!\) 15.\(\text{\textbf{e}}x\text{\textbf{f}}6\) \(\text{\textbf{x}}f6\) 16.\(\text{\textbf{e}}2\)

Settling for the draw. Other moves cannot be recommended:
16.\(\text{\textbf{d}}2?\) \(\text{\textbf{x}}c3\) 17.bxc3 \(\text{\textbf{e}}xc3\) 18.\(\text{\textbf{e}}2\) \(\text{\textbf{c}}1\)† 19.\(\text{\textbf{d}}1\) \(\text{\textbf{d}}3\)†++
16.\(\text{\textbf{d}}3\) \(\text{\textbf{c}}8!\) 17.\(\text{\textbf{e}}4\) \(\text{\textbf{f}}5\) 18.\(\text{\textbf{e}}2\) \(\text{\textbf{x}}d3\)† 19.\(\text{\textbf{e}}x\text{\textbf{d}}3\) \(\text{\textbf{x}}d3\) 20.\(\text{\textbf{e}}x\text{\textbf{d}}3\) \(\text{\textbf{e}}d8\) 21.\(\text{\textbf{e}}2\) \(\text{\textbf{b}}4\) Black is much better.
16...\(\text{\textbf{c}}8\) 17.\(\text{\textbf{e}}4\)
17.\(\text{\textbf{e}}a8\) \(\text{\textbf{f}}5\) also repeats moves, but 17.\(\text{\textbf{b}}8?\) loses to 17...\(\text{\textbf{a}}6\) 18.\(\text{\textbf{e}}a7\) \(\text{\textbf{c}}2\)†.
17...\(\text{\textbf{f}}5\) 18.\(\text{\textbf{b}}7=\)

9...\(\text{\textbf{c}}5\)

White has to decide what to do with his centre pawns, the main options being A1) 10.e5 and A2) 10.dxc5.

Closing the centre with 10.d5 is strongly met by: 10...b5! 11.\(\text{\textbf{d}}xb5\) (11.\(\text{\textbf{e}}2\) c4 12.e5 \(\text{\textbf{h}}5\) 13.\(\text{\textbf{d}}2\) \(\text{\textbf{b}}4\)† was not much fun for White in R. Popov – Pavlov, Novosibirsk 2002) 11...\(\text{\textbf{x}}e4\) 12.\(\text{\textbf{x}}e4\) \(\text{\textbf{e}}xb5\) Black is already clearly better. 13.0–0–0 \(\text{\textbf{x}}f1\) 14.\(\text{\textbf{h}}x\text{\textbf{f}}1\) \(\text{\textbf{a}}5\) 15.\(\text{\textbf{c}}4\) \(\text{\textbf{a}}b8\)! 16.\(\text{\textbf{e}}x\text{\textbf{b}}8\) \(\text{\textbf{e}}xb8\) 17.\(\text{\textbf{e}}d2\) \(\text{\textbf{b}}4\) Black had a decisive attack in Demchenko – Gabrielian, Armavir 2010.

A1) 10.e5 \(\text{\textbf{h}}5\) 11.\(\text{\textbf{e}}3\) cxd4 12.\(\text{\textbf{w}}d4\) \(\text{\textbf{c}}6\)

Krasenkov sums up the position rather well: “Both black knights are on the edge of the
board but his bishops are active and he is ahead in development.”

13.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{c2 \textit{a5}}}}

The alternative is:

13...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e7}}}

I was intending to recommend this move and had already sent material to my editor when White posed serious problems to this continuation in a game in the latest European Championship.

14.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{0-0}}}

14.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{h4}}} was played in a previous game;

14...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xex5}}} 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{exxe5}}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{0-0-0}}} (16.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{0-0}}} is stronger, but Black is absolutely fine after 16...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{g7}}} 17.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{f4}}} 17...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{f5}}} [even 17...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d4}}}?

18.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{ad1}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{b4}}} could be considered]

18.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xh7+}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{xh7}}} 19.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xe5}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{f6}}} 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{f4}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{e5=})}}

16...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{g7}}}N (an improvement over 16...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{c7}}} Grigorian - Esen, Warsaw 2005) 17.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{f4}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{e6}}} (17...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{f5}}} 18.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xe5}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{f6}}}) 18.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{g4}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{f5}}}

14...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xf3}}} 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xf3}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{xe5}}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e4}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{c5}}} 17.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{b4!}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{d3}}}

Black’s play looks very logical, but he still finds himself in difficulties. The power of the two bishops is not easily contained.

18.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{b3}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{xc3}}} 19.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xc3}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{xc3}}} 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{bxc3}}}

The endgame is very unpleasant for Black and White won effortlessly by clearing the queenside and advance his a-pawn; Feller – Jansa, Aix-les-Bains 2011.

14.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{0-0 \textit{xe3}}}}

14...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{b4}}} did not work well for Black in Jakovenko – Topalov, China 2009. Now 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{c5!N}}} is strong.

15.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xf3 \textit{xe5}}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d5 \textit{xd5}}} 17.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xd5 \textit{f6}}} 18.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{a1}}}}

This looks harmless. The most challenging option is probably 18.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{g4}}} 19.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e1}}}. Here I developed the following defensive strategy for Black: 19...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{h5}}}! 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{h3}}} (20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{g5}}} 20...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{d5}}} solves the problem of his misplaced knight and is fine for Black) 20...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{hxg4}}} 21.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{hxg4}}} 22.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{b4}}} 23.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{g7}}} 23...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e1}}} f6 White obviously has compensation for the pawn, but Black is in decent shape and I would evaluate the position as balanced.

18...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e6}}} 19.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{c3}}}

19.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{b4N}}}

I prefer this to the slightly passive 19...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e7}}} as in I. Sokolov – Van Wely, Belgium 2003.

20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{f1}}} 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{ad8}}}

Black obtains good activity.

A2) 10.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{dxc5}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{e6}}} 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xb5}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{d7}}} 12.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xb7}}}

12.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{c4}}} would lead to a repetition.

12...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{xc5}}} 13.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{b4}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{e6}}}
Various 4th Moves

14.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{e}5}}}

Another option is:

14.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{g}3 a5}}}

Black chases the white queen away from the b4-square in order to undermine the defence of the e4-pawn.

15.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{a}3}}

15.\textit{\textbf{b}3 a4 16.\textit{\textbf{a}3 c6 17.\textit{\textbf{d}2 d4}}}

18.0–0–0 Smithers – De Waard, e-mail 2001. Black should now play the straightforward:

18...\textit{\textbf{h}6N 19.\textit{\textbf{b}1 (19.f4 \textit{\textbf{e}7=+) 19...\textit{\textbf{x}d}2}}}

20.\textit{\textbf{x}d2 \textit{\textbf{x}e}4 21.\textit{\textbf{d}1 \textit{\textbf{b}6 Black is clearly better.}}}

15...\textit{\textbf{c}6 16.\textit{\textbf{d}1 \textit{\textbf{b}6}}}

Black's lead in development provides full compensation for the pawn.

17.\textit{\textbf{d}3}

17.e5 \textit{\textbf{h}5 18.\textit{\textbf{d}5?!} is too risky: 18...\textit{\textbf{x}d}5}

19.\textit{\textbf{x}d}5 \textit{\textbf{f}c8 20.\textit{\textbf{d}1 Sitnik – Balenovic,}}

Sisak 2000. Now the simple 20...\textit{\textbf{x}g}3 \textit{\textbf{c}2 22.\textit{\textbf{e}2 \textit{\textbf{b}2 would leave Black with a considerable advantage.}}}

17...\textit{\textbf{c}5 18.e5 \textit{\textbf{h}5 19.\textit{\textbf{e}2 \textit{\textbf{x}g}3 20.hxg}3 \textit{\textbf{e}6}}}

21.0–0 \textit{\textbf{d}7}

21...\textit{\textbf{x}f}3 22.gxf3 \textit{\textbf{x}e}5 23.\textit{\textbf{b}5 would have led to an equal game, but Black tries to squeeze a bit more out of the position.}

22.\textit{\textbf{d}6 \textit{\textbf{a}d}8 23.\textit{\textbf{d}4}}

This was Ftacnik – Illincic, Prague 1989, and now Black could have put the finishing touch to his strategy with:

23...\textit{\textbf{b}8N}

Black will win back the e5-pawn and then be able to press with his bishop pair.

14...\textit{\textbf{a}5 15.\textit{\textbf{a}3 \textit{\textbf{b}6 16.\textit{\textbf{c}4}}}

The alternatives do not promise White any advantage either:

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

16...\textit{\textbf{x}d}5 17.exd5 \textit{\textbf{d}4! 18.\textit{\textbf{x}d}4 \textit{\textbf{x}d}4}

19.\textit{\textbf{d}4 \textit{\textbf{x}d}4}

Black is in no danger, and it is actually White who must be careful to avoid getting a worse position.

20.\textit{\textbf{e}2}

20.\textit{\textbf{d}1 \textit{\textbf{e}5+ 21.\textit{\textbf{e}2 \textit{\textbf{b}5 22.\textit{\textbf{e}3 \textit{\textbf{xb}2}}}

23.\textit{\textbf{d}2 Mujica – Laczay, e-mail 2009. Here Black could maintain some pressure with:}

23...\textit{\textbf{e}5N 24.\textit{\textbf{e}3 \textit{\textbf{xe}3 25.fxe}3 \textit{\textbf{bab}8=)}}
20...\texttt{ab}8 21.0-0 \texttt{ab}2 22.\texttt{ad}1
22.\texttt{we}xe7 \texttt{a}4! 23.\texttt{a}6 (23.\texttt{af}3? \texttt{be}8 24.\texttt{w}c7
\texttt{ab}5 25.\texttt{wd}f1 \texttt{xf}2\# 26.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{xa}2\#) 23...\texttt{xd}5 White has not fully equalized,
due to the poor coordination of his pieces.
22...\texttt{b}4\texttt{N}
This is more testing than 22...\texttt{b}6, as I
played in Pelletier - Avrukh, Biel 1999.
23.\texttt{xb}4 \texttt{xb}4! 24.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}8 25.\texttt{fe}1 \texttt{f}8
26.\texttt{d}6!
White should manage to hold the balance.

16.\texttt{xf}6 \texttt{ex}f6 17.\texttt{de}1
White has also tried 17.\texttt{d}5, but 17...\texttt{c}5 is
a strong reply: 18.\texttt{wc}5 \texttt{xc}5 19.0-0-0 \texttt{e}6
20.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{f}5! Black had a dangerous initiative
in Novoa - Jelen, e-mail 2002.
17...\texttt{c}6 18.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{f}5!

16...\texttt{g}4!\texttt{N}
The most direct approach.

17.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{b}4!

18.\texttt{xb}4 \texttt{xb}4 19.\texttt{d}5
White is far from equalizing after 19.\texttt{d}1
\texttt{fc}8\#! 20.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{a}7! as pointed out by Sutovsky
in Chess Informant 76.

19...\texttt{xb}2
Once again we are in a situation where it is
Black who is trying for an advantage. However
I believe that White can maintain equality
with accurate play.

20.\texttt{d}1
After 20.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{c}3\# Black takes over the
initiative: 21.\texttt{xc}3 (21.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{c}5! 22.\texttt{b}6
\texttt{e}6! 23.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{xe}6 24.\texttt{xa}8 \texttt{xa}8\# Rustemov
- Sutovsky, Polanica Zdroj 1999) 21...\texttt{xc}3
Now Sutovsky gives 22...\texttt{fc}8\texttt{N} 23.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{c}2
24.\texttt{bc}1 \texttt{a}3 with a clear advantage for Black.

20...\texttt{a}4
This was Johansson - Pasko, e-mail
2001, and now White should sacrifice the
exchange:
Various 4th Moves

B) 7.e4 0-0

White now chooses between B1) 8.d3 and B2) 8.e5.

B1) 8.d3 b5!

White may refrain from this capture:

9.exb5

White may refrain from this capture:

9.b3 c5 10.e5

White has also tried: 10.dxc5 a6 11.e5 (11.e3 runs into 11...g4 12.d2 xc5

13.d5? b6 and Black was already winning in Witte - Lonoff, Chicago 1990) 11...g4

Play has transposed to 10.e5.

10...g4

11.dxc5

Worse is: 11.cxb5! cxd4 12.xd4 xb5 (Kasparov pointed out that 12...xe5! also leads to an advantage for Black) 13.dxb5 a6 14.xa3 d4! 15.e2 (15.0-0 xe5 16.g3 h5 17.h4 c6+ 15...c6 16.e2 xe5! Black was clearly better in Hübner - Kasparov, Brussels 1986.

11...a6 12.e5

White should hurry to complete his development, or he may find himself in trouble. For example: 12.e6? xc5 13.exf7+ h8 (13...xf7?? is also possible) 14.a3 Osieka - Pein, Lugano 1986. Black could have decided the game on the spot with 14...b6!N 15.d5xd6+-.

12.xc5 13.c4 c8 14.0-0 xe5 15.xe5 xe5 16.h6

Valtera - Vagenknecht, corr. 1999. Black should now play:

16...e8N 17.fd1 b6

Black is slightly better, thanks to his pressure down the long diagonal.

For the record I also checked 9.c5,N, but it does not pose Black any problems: 9.a6 10.a3 b4 11.xa6 bxc3 12.d3 cxb2 13.xb2 Black can think about taking the initiative. 13...b8 14.e3 b6 15.a3
9...\text{\textit{d}xe4} 10.\textit{W}xc7

Theory considers 10.\textit{W}xc7 very dangerous for White, and rightly so.

11.\textit{d}b4 12.\textit{\textit{d}xe4} \textit{\textit{d}xb5} 13.\textit{W}xd8

White has to swap queens, in order to prevent his king becoming too vulnerable. For example: 13.\textit{W}c3 a5! 14.a3 \textit{W}d7?! 15.\textit{\textit{d}e}3 \textit{\textit{e}c}8 16.\textit{W}d2 \textit{f}5 17.\textit{\textit{b}b}1 \textit{\textit{d}d}5† White failed to solve the problem of his king in Rasmussen – Schandorff, Denmark 2010.

13...\textit{\textit{f}a}xd8 14.\textit{\textit{d}d}2 \textit{f}5!

Theory considers this move dubious, but I believe that it is the easiest way to equalize. The main continuation is: 14...\textit{\textit{c}c}3† 15.\textit{\textit{d}d}3 \textit{\textit{d}d}3 Although Black should hold this without much difficulty, I prefer the more active text move.

15.\textit{\textit{f}f}5 \textit{\textit{f}f}5 16.\textit{\textit{d}b}4

10.\textit{\textit{d}d}3 is harmless: 10...\textit{\textit{d}d}6 11.\textit{\textit{d}d}6 cxd6 12.\textit{\textit{e}e}4 \textit{\textit{e}e}6 13.\textit{\textit{a}a}4 \textit{\textit{d}d}5 (in Zhou Jianchao – Ganguly, Subic Bay 2009, Black settled for the draw with 13...\textit{\textit{d}d}7 14.\textit{\textit{c}c}4 \textit{\textit{e}e}6 15.\textit{\textit{a}a}4 \textit{\textit{d}d}7 \textit{\textit{f}f}2–\textit{f}2) 14.\textit{\textit{d}d}3 \textit{\textit{b}b}6 15.0–0 \textit{\textit{c}c}6†

10...\textit{\textit{c}c}6 11.\textit{\textit{d}d}3

11.\textit{W}xd8 \textit{\textit{f}x}d8 12.\textit{\textit{d}d}3 has been played in two game. Black should continue: 12...\textit{\textit{f}f}5!N 13.0–0 (after 13.\textit{\textit{e}e}3 \textit{\textit{a}b}8 the white knight is vulnerable on b5) 13...a6 14.\textit{\textit{c}c}7 \textit{\textit{a}a}7 15.\textit{\textit{f}f}xa6 \textit{\textit{g}g}3! 16.\textit{\textit{f}f}xf5 \textit{\textit{f}f}xf5 17.\textit{\textit{c}c}5 \textit{\textit{d}d}xd4 Black's initiative is enough to give him the advantage.
16...\textit{e5}!\textsc{N}

This was mentioned by Giorgadze in \textit{Chess Informant} 71. In Giorgadze – Khalifman, Germany 1997, Black prematurely captured the d-pawn: 16...\textit{xd4}?! 17.\textit{d}1\textit{e}5 18.\textit{d}2 White was slightly better.

I found another interesting idea in 16...\textit{c6N}, when play may continue: 17.\textit{c}3\textit{xf}3 18.\textit{gx}f3 \textit{xf}3 19.\textit{e}2 \textit{d}f8 20.\textit{af}1 \textit{f}3= 17.a4

Other moves are:

17.dxe5 \textit{xe}5 18.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}8! 19.\textit{xe}5 \textit{exe}5+ 20.\textit{d}2 \textit{xf}2+ 21.\textit{c}1 \textit{ex}g2=

17.0–0–0? \textit{e}4 18.\textit{d}2 \textit{h}6! Even though he is two pawns down, Black has seized the initiative.

17.\textit{c}1 \textit{e}8! (Giorgadze gives only 17...\textit{ex}d4 18.\textit{d}1 \textit{d}3 19.b3\textsc{=} 18.dxe5 \textit{xe}5 19.\textit{xe}5 \textit{exe}5+ 20.\textit{d}1 \textit{d}5+=

17...\textit{c}6 18.dxe5 \textit{xf}3 19.\textit{gx}f3 \textit{xe}5

Black is not worse, despite being two pawns down.

20.0–0 \textit{d}4 21.\textit{c}3 \textit{hx}2+ 22.\textit{h}x2 \textit{g}5+ 23.\textit{g}2 \textit{g}5+ 24.\textit{h}3=

\textbf{B2) 8.e5}

8...\textit{e}6!

8...\textit{e}8 9.h4 looked very promising for White in Aleksandrov – Olszewski, Warsaw 2009.

9.\textit{b}5

White can get a position with three pieces versus queen and two pawns by:

9.exf6 \textit{xc}4 10.fxg7 \textit{x}g7 11.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xd}4

I think that the poor coordination of the white forces makes Black’s chances preferable.

12.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}6 13.\textit{f}3 \textit{b}6 14.0–0 \textit{ad}8 15.\textit{b}1

I also examined: 15.\textit{b}5 \textit{d}4 16.\textit{xd}4 \textit{x}d4 17.\textit{e}1 \textit{c}6 18.\textit{a}4 \textit{d}7+=

15...\textit{e}5 16.\textit{e}1
16. $a3$ is strongly met by 16... $d4$ and the e5-pawn is untouchable: 17. $xe5$ $xe2+$ 18. $xe2$ $b5−$

16... $f6!N$
This is more accurate than: 16... $a6$ 17. $b4$ $e8$ 18. $f1$ $f6$ 19. $a4$ $a7$ 20. $c5$ White had a reasonable game in Lev – Huzman, Israel 1999.
17. $b4$ $d4$ 18. $d1$ $a6$
Black has the better chances.

9... $d5$ 10. $xb7$
If White does not take the pawn then he is just positionally worse.

10... $b6!$ 11. $e4$
White's problem is that he cannot play the natural 11. $f3$ because 11... $c6!$ would trap his queen and threaten ... $c8$.

11... $f5$ 12. $h4$ $c6$
Black has an enormous lead in development, which provides more than enough compensation for the pawn.

13. $g5$
White gives up his d-pawn without a fight. He was no doubt concerned about the threat of ... $b4$, but he would have been better off giving up the exchange, for example: 13. $e3$ $b4$ 14. $c1$ (14.0–0–0 $d7$ would give Black a very powerful attack) 14... $c2+$ 15. $xc2$ $xc2$ 16. $f3$ White is in the game, although Black's chances are clearly better.

13... $xd4$ 14. $xd4$ $xd4$ 15.0–0–0 $c6$
16. $e3$ $xe5−$

White's position has collapsed, Chekhov – W. Schmidt, Polanica Zdroj 1981.

**Conclusion**

A key position arises in line A after 7. $f4$ $a6$ 8. $f3$ 0–0 9. $e4$ $c5$. When White chooses A1) 10. $e5$ Black must react accurately, but if he does so then he can expect to equalize. With A2) 10. $xc5$ White goes a pawn up, but Black can count on obtaining full compensation. Line B is less critical and should not worry Black overmuch.
Various 4th Moves

4.\(\text{Nh}3\)

Variation Index

1.\(d4\) \(\text{Nf6}\) 2.\(c4\) \(g6\) 3.\(\text{Nc3}\) \(d5\) 4.\(\text{Nh}3\) \(\text{dxc4}\) 5.\(\text{Nxc4}\) \(\text{g7}\) 6.\(e4\)

6...0–0

A) 7.\(\text{Ng4}\) \(\text{Na6}\) 8.\(\text{Nh}3\) \(c5\)
   A1) 9.\(\text{Nbd}1\)
   A2) 9.e5
   A3) 9.d5 \(\text{e6}\)
      A31) 10.\(\text{Nc2}\)
      A32) 10.d6 \(\text{e5}\) 11.\(\text{Nxe5}\) \(\text{b4}\)
         A321) 12.\(\text{Nc1}\)
         A322) 12.\(\text{Nxd1}\)

B) 7.\(\text{Nge2}\)

A) note to 8.\(\text{Nh}3\)

A31) after 12.\(\text{Nbd1}\)

B) after 9.dxe5

10...\(\text{b5}\)\(\text{!N}\)
12...\(\text{c2}\)\(\text{!N}\)
9...\(\text{g4}\)\(\text{!N}\)
Chapter 10 - 4.\textit{b}3

1.d4 \textit{f}6 2.c4 g6 3.\textit{c}3 d5 4.\textit{b}3

This line has been quite popular recently. By employing this tricky move order, White may intend to transpose into the Russian System (4.\textit{f}3 \&g7 5.\textit{w}3), or may hope to profit from delaying the development of his king's knight.

4...dxc4 5.\textit{w}xc4 \&g7 6.e4

6.\textit{f}3 would transpose to the starting position of the Russian System – see Chapters 27 and 28.

The only other reasonable alternative is:

6.\textit{f}4 \textit{a}6 7.e3

7.e4 0–0 will be examined in line A below.

7...0–0 8.\textit{f}3 c5

Other than going into the Russian System, the main options for White are A) 7.\textit{f}4 and B) 7.\textit{e}2.

On both occasions that 7.f3 was played, Black's response was rather unconvincing. I will spare you the details and focus on the logical improvement 7...\textit{c}6!N.

9.\textit{d}1

After 9.dxc5 \textit{w}a5 10.\textit{b}5 \textit{w}xb5 11.\&xb5 \textit{w}xc5 12.0–0 a6 13.\&e2 b5 14.a3 \&b7 Black was even slightly better, Avanzi – G. David, corr. 1991.

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

After 10.\textit{w}d4 Black can avoid an immediate queen swap by 10...\textit{w}a5! and the white queen cannot feel comfortable in the centre.

10...\textit{w}b6!

The white pieces are rather awkwardly placed.

11.\textit{a}4 \textit{w}a5† 12.\textit{w}c3

White offers to swap queens in order to try and complete his development, Khan – Halle, France 2005. Black should now play:

12...\textit{w}f5

The threat of ...\textit{w}b1† followed by ...\textit{w}xa2 poses White definite problems.

6...0–0

Black has comfortable play.
Black's idea is to play ...e5 next, which White can hardly stop. Here is a nice illustrative line:
8.e3 e5 9.d5 (after 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.Wd4 Wc7 Black's chances are also preferable) 9...d4
10.dxd4?! c6! 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.e4 exd4 13.Wd1 (it transpires that 13.exd4? loses on
the spot to 13...exd4!) 13...c5 Black is clearly better.

A) 7.Wf4 b6

This looks to me the most challenging response to the development of the bishop to f4. It is quite possible to play 7...c6 8.d1 d7, though if White chooses the move order with
6.f4 then Black has to play ...b6 anyway.

8.f3

There is also:
8.d1 c6

I have come to the conclusion that this is Black's best idea, since 8...c5 9.d5 Wb6
10.d2! offers White serious chances for an advantage.

9.e2

The alternative is: 9.Wf3 a5! (9...b6 is again met by 10.d2!) 10.Wd3 Wd8 11.Wb1
Black has gained a couple of tempos as a result of the slightly misplaced white queen.
11...g4 12.e2 Legky - Mrdja, Larange 2000. I believe Black should now play:
12..e8N 13.e5 (After 13.e3 c5 [13...c5
14.d5 b5?! also looks interesting] 14.exf6 gxf6 15.Wxf6 d5 16.Wxd5 Wxe5 17.0-0
Black has a decent game. Play may continue
17...g4 18.Wf3 c5 [18...b6?] 19.exf6 Wxf6 and Black has good
compensation for the pawn.) 13...e7
14.0-0 f5 15.Wc1 b4 We have a complex
game in which Black's chances are not worse,
due to his control over the d5-square.

9...a5 10.d3

This occurred in Peters - Mach, Hamburg
1989. This is a good moment for:
10...b5!N 11.a3

After 11.f3 b4 12.b1 b3†! 13.Wc3
Wxc3† 14.Wxc3 bxa2 15.Wc4 d4 Black is
better.

11...b4 12.axb4 dxb4 13.Wb1 e6 14.Wh3!
The natural 14.f3 is met by the very unpleasant: 14...a2! 15.Wa1 (or 15.ea2
d3† 16.Wf1 Wxf4+) 15...exd4†
14...b3 15.d2 d7 16.0-0 e5
16...b6 also makes sense.
17.dxe5 xe5
Black is fine.

8...c5

White has many ways to react to the blow against his centre. As well as A1) 9.d1, A2) 9.e5 and A3) 9.d5, we also have:

9.dxc5 xe6 transposes to line A2 of Chapter 9.

9.0-0-0?! can hardly be recommended. Black easily gets good play: 9...cxd4 10.xd4 d7 11.f3 c8 12.b3 c5 13.a3

White has many ways to react to the blow against his centre. As well as A1) 9.d1, A2) 9.e5 and A3) 9.d5, we also have:

9.dxc5 xe6 transposes to line A2 of Chapter 9.

9.0-0-0?! can hardly be recommended. Black easily gets good play: 9...cxd4 10.xd4 d7 11.f3 c8 12.b3 c5 13.a3

13...fxe4! Not a difficult tactical blow. 14.fxe4 e5 Black was clearly better in Korchnoi – Tukmakov, Moscow 1971.

9...cxd4

This is the most principled continuation, although Black has a decent alternative in: 9...a5 10.b5 xb5 11.xb5 cxd4 12.xd4 d8N (this is more accurate than 12...c5 13.e5, when White has chances for an advantage) 13.xa6 (13.e5 is now strongly met by 13...h5=) 13...bxa6 14.c6 xd1+ 15.xd1 f8! 16.f3 d7 The position is balanced.

10.xd4

Capturing with the knight is weaker: 10.xd4 b6 11.b5 xe4! 12.xb6 axb6 13.xe4 e5 14.xe5 xe5 Black was clearly better in Kozakov – Musicki, Backa Palanka 2002.

10...b6 11.e5 e6 12.b5
This is quite old theory, which to tell the truth was rather unfamiliar to me before I started work on this book. It is important for Black to react actively.

12...\textit{d7}! 13.\textit{d5}

Another line is:

13.\textit{xd7} 14.\textit{xd7} \textit{xb2}

15.\textit{d2}

15.\textit{d1} \textit{xa2} 16.\textit{xb7} \textit{c5} 17.\textit{b5} (or 17.\textit{b2} \textit{xb2} 18.\textit{xb2} \textit{ab8} 19.\textit{d1} \textit{b1} 20.\textit{e2} \textit{d8} 21.0-0 Szegedi – Miniboek, Balatonberegny 1986, and after the simple 21...a5N White would have to fight for a draw) 17...\textit{fc8} 18.\textit{c4} \textit{ab8}! An important tactical trick. 19.\textit{xc5} (19.\textit{xb8}? fails to 19...\textit{d3}!+-) 19...\textit{xc4} 20.\textit{xc4} \textit{xc4} 21.\textit{e3} a5 Again it is White who is trying to draw, Kobayashi – Graeser, corr. 1989.

15...\textit{a1}! 16.\textit{c1} \textit{xc1}! 17.\textit{xc1} \textit{ac8} 18.\textit{d2}

Maybe 18.\textit{b2} is an improvement, although after 18...\textit{c5} 19.\textit{axa6} \textit{bxa6} 20.0-0 \textit{b8} Black is in no danger.

18...\textit{b4} 19.\textit{b5} \textit{c6} 20.e6 \textit{f5} 21.\textit{e2}

This was Strand – Vukcevic, corr. 1984, and now Black should improve upon that game with:

21...\textit{f8}N 22.\textit{d1} \textit{d5}!

13.\textit{xd5} 14.\textit{xd5}

14...\textit{c7}! 15.\textit{xd7} \textit{xd5} 16.\textit{xd5} \textit{xb2} 17.\textit{e2} \textit{b1}! 18.\textit{d1} \textit{a8} 19.\textit{b3} \textit{e4}+ 20.\textit{e3}

After 20.\textit{e3} \textit{b4}! 21.\textit{d2} \textit{d7} 22.a3 \textit{b2} Black is not worse.

20...\textit{d3} 21.\textit{c2}?!  

Correct is: 21.\textit{a4}! \textit{xe3}! 22.\textit{fxe3} \textit{xe3}+ 23.\textit{f1} \textit{d8} Black has sufficient compensation for the knight.

21...\textit{h6}! 22.0-0 \textit{xe3} 23.\textit{e2} \textit{xf2}+ 24.\textit{xf2} \textit{e3}

Black was better in Van Dijk – Kruger, e-mail 2000.

A2) 9.e5 \textit{d5}!
This is the most straightforward way to meet White's rather risky advance.

10.\textit{e3} cxd4 11.0-0-0

Another line is also quite illustrative: 11.\textit{d1} e6! 12.\textit{b5}?! (stronger is 12.\textit{xd4} a5 13.\textit{e2} d8 14.\textit{c4} xd1 ++ 15.\textit{xd1} b4! although Black has no problems) 12...d7! Black takes over the initiative. 13.b7 c5 14.c5 Ider – Bernard, Issy Les Moulineaux 2009. Black could now stabilize his advantage by: 14...dxc3!N 15.bxc3 (or 15.xc5 xb2++) 15...a4! Black remains with a material plus.

11...e6 12.bxd4 a5!

The white king is not safe on the queenside.

13.c4

I also examined: 13.xa6 bxa6 14.g4 d8 15.e4 c8! Black develops a dangerous attack.

13...d8 14.e4 xc4 15.xc4 xe5 16.xd8+ cxd8 17.xe5 xe5++

White did not have enough compensation for the pawn in Molo – Marcos Nozar, e-mail 2008.

A3) 9.d5 e6

White generally chooses between A31) 10.e2 and A32) 10.d6, although he has also tried:

10.0-0-0 exd5 11.exd5 White usually castles short with this pawn structure, and it's clear that the white monarch cannot feel safe on the queenside. 11...f5 (11...e8!? also looks good) 12.d3 xd3 13.xd3

This was Wagner – Neubauer, Ketsch 1978. Black could now seize the initiative on the queenside with: 13.d7!N 14.d6 b4 15.d2 a5 16.b1 b6 17.b5 xb5 18.bxb5 c4 19.e2 xb2! Black has an advantage.

10.d1 This is a thematic move for this pawn structure, but White’s problem is that he is behind in development, which allows Black
an easy game: 10...exd5 11.exd5 \( \textsf{\textit{w}} \textsf{b}6! \) White has no convenient way to defend his b-pawn, for example: 12.\( \textsf{\textit{w}} \textsf{d}2 \textsf{\textit{e}}8\textsf{\textit{f}} 13.\textsf{\textit{a}}2 \textsf{\textit{f}}5 14.0-0 \textsf{\textit{e}}4\textsf{\textit{f}} White cannot avoid losing material.

A31) 10.\textsf{\textit{a}}2 exd5 11.exd5

A similar position often occurs when Black plays \( \textsf{\textit{a}}6 \) against the Russian System, but with White having castled rather than developed his queen’s bishop. Here Black can benefit from this slight difference in concrete fashion.

11.\textsf{\textit{a}}b4! 12.\textsf{\textit{d}}1

White has also played: 12.0-0 \( \textsf{\textit{a}} \)fxd5\( N \) (in my opinion this is stronger than 12...\textsf{\textit{a}}bd5)
13.\textsf{\textit{b}}d1 \textsf{\textit{a}}6 14.g5 \textsf{\textit{w}}xg5! 15.xg5 \textsf{\textit{a}}xc3 16.bxc3 (after 16.\textsf{\textit{a}}xc5 \textsf{\textit{a}}xe2\textsf{\textit{f}} 17.\textsf{\textit{g}}h1 \textsf{\textit{a}}c6\textsf{\textit{f}} Black’s three pieces are stronger than the white queen) 16...\textsf{\textit{a}}xc4 17.\textsf{\textit{a}}xc4 \textsf{\textit{a}}c6 White does not have enough compensation for the pawn.

12.\textsf{\textit{a}}c2\textsf{\textit{f}}N

In three games Black has played 12...\textsf{\textit{a}}b6 here, but it makes sense to force the white king to move.

13.\textsf{\textit{f}}1 \textsf{\textit{b}}6

I do not believe that White can really hope for an advantage with his king on \textsf{\textit{f}}1.

A32) 10.d6 e5!

This was played by Garry Kasparov, which is indeed a strong endorsement for the move. Black sacrifices a pawn for the initiative.

11.\textsf{\textit{a}}xe5

Much weaker is 11.\textsf{\textit{a}}xe5? \textsf{\textit{a}}h5! and Black is better.

11...\textsf{\textit{a}}b4

We shall look at A321) 12.\textsf{\textit{a}}c1 and A322) 12.\textsf{\textit{a}}d1. Other moves are:

12.\textsf{\textit{a}}b3

This occurred in Khurtsilava - Chigladze, Tbilisi 2009. Black should now play:
12...\textsf{\textit{a}}c6\textsf{\textit{f}}N 13.\textsf{\textit{a}}c4

After 13.\textsf{\textit{f}}4 \textsf{\textit{h}}5 Black regains the pawn.
13...\textsf{\textit{g}}4 14.\textsf{\textit{w}}xb7 \textsf{\textit{xf}}3 15.\textsf{\textit{w}}xc6 \textsf{\textit{a}}xg2
16.\textit{\textbf{g}}\textbf{1}

An important point of Black's play is that the tempting 16.0-0-0 runs into the incredible 16...\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}4!! and White cannot play 17.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{g}7 in view of 17...\textit{\textbf{w}}\textbf{g}5\textbf{t} followed by ...\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{c}3. 16...\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}4 17.\textit{\textbf{w}}\textbf{c}7 \textit{\textbf{f}}\textbf{5}\textbf{t}

12.0-0-0 is mentioned in the comments to the above game, but the white king is hardly safe on the queenside: 12...\textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{6} 13.\textit{\textbf{w}}\textbf{b}5 (not 13.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{c}5? \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{a}2\textbf{t}!) 13...\textit{\textbf{a}}\textbf{6} 14.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{b}7 \textit{\textbf{h}}\textbf{6}\textbf{t}! An important tactical nuance. 15.\textit{\textbf{b}}\textbf{1} \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}4! Black suddenly has a serious initiative.

\textbf{A321) 12.\textit{\textbf{c}}\textbf{1}}

This was played in Taitt – N. Arias, Guanare 2000. Black should respond with:

12...\textit{\textbf{b}}\textbf{6}!\textbf{N}

A very flexible decision. Black defends the c5-pawn and keeps all his options open; he may develop his light-squared bishop to a6, b7, or e6.

13.\textit{\textbf{a}}\textbf{3}

An alternative is:

13.\textit{\textbf{b}}\textbf{3} \textit{\textbf{b}}\textbf{7} 14.\textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{2}

Another exciting line I found is: 14.\textit{\textbf{a}}\textbf{3} \textit{\textbf{c}}\textbf{6} 15.\textit{\textbf{c}}\textbf{4} \textit{\textbf{a}}\textbf{5} 16.\textit{\textbf{a}}\textbf{4} \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}4?! Not the only option for Black. 17.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}4 \textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{8}! 18.d7 \textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{5}

19.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}5 \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}5 20.0-0 \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{h}2\textbf{t} 21.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{h}2 \textit{\textbf{h}}\textbf{4}\textbf{t} 22.\textit{\textbf{g}}\textbf{1} \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}4 23.f3 \textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{3}\textbf{t} 24.\textit{\textbf{h}}\textbf{1} \textit{\textbf{h}}\textbf{6}\textbf{t}= It finishes in perpetual check. 14...\textit{\textbf{c}}\textbf{6}!

Black has enough activity for the sacrificed pawn, for instance:

15.\textit{\textbf{g}}\textbf{3} \textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{4} 16.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{d}4 \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{d}4 17.\textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{5} \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{d}5 18.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{d}5 \textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{8} 19.\textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{2}

After 19.\textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{1} \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}2\textbf{t}! 20.\textit{\textbf{xe}}\textbf{2} \textit{\textbf{g}}\textbf{5} Black has excellent compensation for the exchange.

19...\textit{\textbf{a}}\textbf{6} 20.\textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{1} \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}2\textbf{t} 21.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}2 \textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{2} 22.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}2 \textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{8}\textbf{t} 23.\textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{1} \textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{4} 24.\textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{1} \textit{\textbf{b}}\textbf{1}\textbf{t} 25.\textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{2} \textit{\textbf{h}}\textbf{6}\textbf{t} 26.f4 \textit{\textbf{f}}\textbf{5}

The game is balanced.

13...\textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{6} 14.\textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{2} \textit{\textbf{c}}\textbf{6} 15.\textit{\textbf{f}}\textbf{4}

After 15.\textit{\textbf{g}}\textbf{3} Black would have the additional possibility of 15...\textit{\textbf{h}}\textbf{6}.

15...\textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{8}!

It is clear that Black's lead in development should count, for example:

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

Black has an initiative after both 16.h3 \textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{4} 17.\textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{3} \textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{5}! and 16.\textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{3} \textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{4}!.

16...\textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{4} 17.\textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{2} \textit{\textbf{f}}\textbf{5} 18.\textit{\textbf{d}}\textbf{2} \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}2

19.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}2 \textit{\textbf{h}}\textbf{5} 20.\textit{\textbf{e}}\textbf{3} \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{c}3 21.\textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{c}3 \textit{\textbf{x}}\textbf{e}4

Only Black can be better.
A322) $12.\&d1 \&e6$

12...\&c2\* 13.\&d2 \&e6 will come to the same thing.

13.\&xc5

It is very dangerous for White to play 13.\&e2 \&e8, when Black has good compensation for the pawn, and a lot of ideas based on the white king still being in the centre.

13...\&c2\* 14.\&d2

14...\&d7

The key move.

15.\&c7 \&xe5 16.\&xd8

White has also tried: 16.\&xc2 \&g4! 17.\&d2 \&h6 18.\&e2 It is dangerous to allow Black to keep the queens on. (18.\&d8 \&axd8 transposes to our main line.) 18...\&h6 19.\&c5 \&fd8 20.\&d4 \&f4! 21.\&d2 \&ac8 Black had a strong initiative in Boecker – Kappes, e-mail 2008.

16...\&axd8 17.\&xc2

As mentioned by Kasparov, 17.\&xe5? would be a serious mistake: 17...\&b4 18.\&c4 \&h6\* 19.f4 \&xf4\* 20.\&e1 f5! Black is clearly better.

17...\&g4

Also playable is the less ambitious: 17...\&xf3 18.gxf3 \&xe5 19.\&d5 \&xd6 20.\&c4 \&fd8 21.a4 \&f8 22.b3 \&xd5 23.\&xd5 \&xd5 24.\&xd5 \&e8\* 25.\&d2 b6 Black made a draw without any problems in Latronico – Neven, e-mail 2003.

18.\&d2 \&h6

An important resource, which forces White to return one of his extra pawns.

19.\&e2 \&xd6 20.h3 \&f6 21.g4!

Otherwise White could easily find himself being worse.

21...\&d7


B) 7.\&e2 \&c6

8.\&e3

8.\&f3 is covered in Chapter 28.

8.d5 does not pose Black any problems: 8...\&e5 (or 8...\&a5N 9.\&a4 c6 10.dxc6 \&xc6 11.\&f3 \&e6 12.0–0 a6=) 9.\&b3 S. Pedersen – Mogranzini, Beijing 2008. Now I like 9...e6N 10.f4 \&eg4 11.h3 \&h6 and the opening up of the position should be in Black’s favour.
8...e5
Black takes advantage of the lack of a knight on f3 to obtain counterplay with this punch in the centre.

9.dxe5
Other moves:

9.d5  $\text{\textsuperscript{2}d4} 10.\text{\textsuperscript{2}d3}
10.\text{\textsuperscript{2}xd4} exd4 11.\text{\textsuperscript{2}xd4} $\text{\textsuperscript{e}e8}! (11...c6 12.d6 $\text{\textsuperscript{d}d5}?! is also interesting) 12.\text{\textsuperscript{2}d3} (or 12.e5 $\text{\textsuperscript{g}g4} 13.f4 f6! with a strong initiative for Black) 12...$\text{\textsuperscript{d}d7} 13.f3 f5! Black has ample compensation.
10...c6 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.$\text{\textsuperscript{f}f3} $\text{\textsuperscript{xe}xe2}
I think that 12...$\text{\textsuperscript{g}g4}!N is even stronger, for example: 13.0–0 $\text{\textsuperscript{xf3}}! 14.gxf3 $\text{\textsuperscript{xe}xe3} 15.\text{\textsuperscript{w}xd8} $\text{\textsuperscript{xd8}} 16.fxe3 $\text{\textsuperscript{d}d2} Black has a clear advantage.
13.\text{\textsuperscript{w}xe2} $\text{\textsuperscript{wa5}}$
Thanks to the possibility of ...$\text{\textsuperscript{a}a6}, Black has the better game, Potpara – Csiba, Batumi 2010.

9.$\text{\textsuperscript{f}f3} exd4 10.$\text{\textsuperscript{x}xd4}$

This position occurred in Vanderhallen – Swinkels, Vlissingen 2005, and here Black missed the strong idea: 10...$\text{\textsuperscript{g}g4}!N 11.\text{\textsuperscript{w}xe5} (after 11.\text{\textsuperscript{x}xc6} $\text{\textsuperscript{xe}xe3} 12.\text{\textsuperscript{x}xd8} $\text{\textsuperscript{xc}xc4} 13.$\text{\textsuperscript{xc}xc4} $\text{\textsuperscript{xd}xd8} Black has a pleasant edge in the endgame) 11...$\text{\textsuperscript{e}e6}! Black will play 12...$\text{\textsuperscript{x}xe5} with advantage.
12...\textbf{x}c3!  
The key move. White would even be better after: 12...\textbf{w}xd3?! 13.\texttt{Ge}2 \texttt{e}8 14.\texttt{d}1\texttt{t}  

13.\texttt{b}xc3 \textbf{w}xd3 14.\texttt{De}2 \texttt{e}8 15.f3 \texttt{d}7  
Black has the initiative, thanks to his better pieces.  

16.\texttt{d}1  
This is stronger than: 16.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{e}5! 17.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{a}6 White is in trouble, due to the threat of \texttt{a}4.  

16...\texttt{c}4 17.\texttt{d}4  
After 17.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{e}5 18.0–0 \texttt{b}5 19.a4 \texttt{a}6 20.\texttt{g}3 h5! Black has a clear plus.  

17...f5  

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

Black keeps a strong initiative.

\textbf{Conclusion}  
After A) 7.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{a}6 8.\texttt{f}3 c5 White has several options, but none of them promise him an advantage. In particular line A32 with 9.d5 e6 10.d6 e5! offers Black good compensation for his pawn sacrifice. In line B with 7.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{c}6 I do not believe that White can gain anything by avoiding the transposition to the Russian System, as Black obtains fine counterplay after 8.\texttt{e}3 e5.
Chapter 11

Closed Variation

Various Fifth Moves

Variation Index

1.d4 ��f6 2.c4 g6 3.��c3 d5 4.e3

4...��g7

A) 5.b4 0–0 6.��f3 c6
   A1) 7.��e2
   A2) 7.��b2

B) 5.��b3 e6
   B1) 6.��f3 0–0
      B11) 7.��e2
      B12) 7.��d2
   B2) 6.��a3

C) 5.��d2

D) 5.cxd5

B12) 17.d5

C) after 15.��e2

D) after 12.exd5
White's quiet fourth move can be played with various follow-ups in mind. In this chapter we shall examine A) 5.b4, B) 5.Wb3, C) 5.dd2 and D) 5.cxd5, while 5.d3 is covered in the following chapter.

A) 5.b4

By playing on the queenside in this manner, White intends to steer the game into a positional battle.

6...0-0 6.d3

White's other options do not have much independent significance:

6...c6 7.d5 is line A2.

6.Wb3 c6 7.a4!

This is a somewhat suspicious strategy; White gains space on the queenside, but completely neglects his kingside development. The natural 7.d3 is clearly better and transposes to the line with 7.Wb3 in the following note.

7...e5

This strike in the centre seems to me a very natural response to White's provocative play.

8.dxe5 de

The point; Black's bishop starts to work on the long diagonal.

9.d3

I also examined a couple of other moves:

9.dxe4 dxe4 10.b2 d7 11.e6 d5 Black has an initiative.

9.cxd5 cxd5 10.b2 e6! 11.d1 c6 12.d3 a5! 13.b5 b4 Black has excellent play for the pawn.


Black has a very pleasant position, and the only question is whether White can hold on.

6...c6

As well as our main lines of A1) 7.d2 and A2) 7.b2, White has a couple of other options:
7. \( \texttt{W}^b3 \) dxc4 8. \( \texttt{A}^x\texttt{c}4 \) b5 9. \( \texttt{A}^e2 \) a5 10.0-0 (a nice line is 10. \( \texttt{A}^a3 \) \( \texttt{A}^e6 \) 11. \( \texttt{W}^b2 \) c5! and the white position collapses) 10... \( \texttt{A}^e6 \) We have transposed to the note to White's eighth move in line A1 with 8. \( \texttt{W}^b3 \) etc.

7.a4 \( \texttt{A}^g4 \) 8. \( \texttt{W}^b3 \)

8.h3?! is too slow and deserves to be punished: 8... \( \texttt{A}^x\texttt{f}3 \)N (the illogical 8... \( \texttt{A}^f5 \) was played in Baudot – Philippy, Luxembourg 1994) 9.gxf3 (after 9. \( \texttt{W}^x\texttt{f}3 \) Black breaks up the centre by 9...e5 10.dxe5 \( \texttt{A}^d7 \) and White is in danger) 9... \( \texttt{B}^d7 \) 10.f4 White has managed to stop the ...e5-break, but Black now strikes on the queenside. 10...a5 11.b5 c5 Black has a strong initiative.

8. \( \texttt{W}^b3 \) dxc4! 9. \( \texttt{A}^x\texttt{c}4 \)

This was Duong The Anh – Le Quang, Ho Chi Minh City 2005. Black should now play:

9...b5N

Although this is a new move in this particular position, play soon transposes into an old game.

10. \( \texttt{A}^e2 \)

10. \( \texttt{A}^x\texttt{f}7 \) \( \texttt{A}^x\texttt{f}7 \) 11. \( \texttt{E}^e5 \) \( \texttt{E}^e8 \) is not dangerous for Black.

10...a5 11.0-0 \( \texttt{B}^e6 \) 12. \( \texttt{W}^b2 \) axb4 13. \( \texttt{W}^x\texttt{b}4 \) \( \texttt{A}^a6 \) 14. \( \texttt{A}^b2 \) b4! 15. \( \texttt{A}^a4 \) \( \texttt{A}^a5 \) 16. \( \texttt{E}^c2 \) \( \texttt{E}^f5 \) 17. \( \texttt{W}^b3 \) \( \texttt{E}^e4 \)

Black clearly had the better chances in Troianescu – Botvinnik, Budapest 1952.

A1) 7. \( \texttt{A}^e2 \) \( \texttt{A}^g4 \) 8. \( \texttt{A}^b2 \)

Releasing the tension in the centre does not have much point: 8.cxd5 \( \texttt{E}^x\texttt{d}5 \) 9.cxd5 \( \texttt{W}^x\texttt{d}5 \) 10.0-0 \( \texttt{E}^d7 \) 11.a4 (after 11. \( \texttt{A}^b2 \) Black strikes from other side with 11...a5!) 11...e5 This solves all possible problems. 12.dxe5 \( \texttt{B}^x\texttt{d}1 \) 13. \( \texttt{B}^x\texttt{d}1 \) \( \texttt{E}^x\texttt{d}5 \) Black had a comfortable endgame in Tunik – Belov, Internet 2004.

8. \( \texttt{W}^b3 \) dxc4! 9. \( \texttt{A}^x\texttt{c}4 \)

Black's play from this position has been rather unconvincing in practice, so I was obliged to find a new idea:

8... \( \texttt{B}^d7 \) ?N 9.cxd5 cxd5 10. \( \texttt{E}^x\texttt{d}5 \)

White cannot really hope for an advantage after: 10. \( \texttt{A}^e2 \) e6 11.h3 \( \texttt{A}^x\texttt{f}3 \) 12. \( \texttt{A}^x\texttt{f}3 \) \( \texttt{B}^b6 \)

The black knight will land on the c4-square. 10... \( \texttt{A}^x\texttt{f}3 \) 11.gxf3 e5

Black's activity fully compensates for the sacrificed pawn.
8...dxc4 9.\textit{\texttt{dx}c4} \texttt{bd}7
Black's main idea is to carry out the ...e5 advance.

10.\textit{\texttt{d}e}2
Black is not troubled by: 10.0-0 e5 11.dxe5 \texttt{xf}3 12.gxf3 (Black has no problems after 12.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{xe}5 13.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{e}7) 12...\texttt{xe}5 13.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{c}8! Black immediately uses the slightly vulnerable position of the white king by heading towards h3. 14.f4 \texttt{d}8 15.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{h}3 (15...\texttt{d}3 also leads to a draw) 16.fxe5 \texttt{g}4 17.\texttt{tg}x4 \texttt{gx}4\texttt{f} 18.h1 \texttt{f}3\texttt{f} 19.\texttt{g}1 \texttt{g}4\texttt{f} 20.h1 \texttt{f}3\texttt{f} 1/2-1/2 Karjakin – Van Wely, Foros 2008.

10...\texttt{d}5 11.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{xc}3 12.\texttt{xc}3 e5!
Black makes use of his lead in development.

13.\textit{\texttt{xe}5}
After 13.dxe5 \texttt{xf}3 14.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{xe}5 the exchange of dark-squared bishops secures equality for Black.

13...\texttt{xe}5 14.dxe5 \texttt{xe}2 15.\texttt{xe}2

15...\texttt{g}5!
A key move; Black obtains full compensation for the small material deficit, due to the vulnerable position of the white king.

16.h4
White could have settled for a draw by:
16.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{xe}5 17.f4 \texttt{xf}4\texttt{f} 18.exf4 \texttt{xf}4\texttt{f} 19.\texttt{g}1 \texttt{e}3\texttt{f} Black has perpetual check.

16...\texttt{g}4\texttt{f}!
The correct decision. After 16...\texttt{xg}2?! 17.\texttt{ag}1 \texttt{e}4 18.f3 \texttt{f}5 19.h5± White consolidates and has the better chances, as Fracnik pointed out in ChessBase Magazine 84.

17.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{ad}8 18.f3 \texttt{f}5 19.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{fe}8

20.f4?
This allows Black to seize the initiative. Instead White could have maintained equality with: 20.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{xe}5 21.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{exe}5 22.\texttt{ad}1=

20...\texttt{d}3 21.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{ed}8
Black was clearly better in Kempinski – Ara. Minasian, Ohrid 2001.

A2) 7.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{e}6?

8.\texttt{g}5
There are several other moves:

8.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{bd}7 9.\texttt{g}5?!
Not the best moment for this aggressive move, but White was probably scared of the black knight penetrating to the c4-square.
Chapter 11 – Various Fifth Moves

For example: 9...e2 b6 10.c5 c4 Black has a good game.

8.d2 b7 9.e2

9.db6 a5N (This nice idea improves on 9...b6 10.c5 db7 11.d3 Birch – Lein, Beersheba 1982, which is quite promising for White, although Black is very solid of course.) 10.b5 dxc4 11.exd3 a4!

Black instigates various tactical ideas on the queenside. 12.wb4 (The main point of Black's

idea is seen in the remarkable line: 12.axa4 cxb5 13.wxb5 a5 14.wb4 b5! 15.axe6 [White is clearly worse after 15.axb5 d5 16.wb3 xe3 17.wxe3 xb5 18.0–0 wa8] 15...xa4 16.wxb5 a5 17.xd7 xb5 18.xb5 wd5 19.a4 wg2 Black is better, although White has some counter-chances.) 12...c5! 13.dxc5 e5 14.exf2 a3! 15.axa3 d3+ 16.xd3 wxd3 Black has a strong initiative.

9...dxc4 10.axc4
This is more natural than: 10.axc4 d5 11.0–0 a5 Black has a comfortable game.

10...cxd5 11.exd5 Black has a strong initiative.

Chapter 11 – Various Fifth Moves

For example: 9...e2 b6 10.c5 c4 Black has a good game.

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idea is seen in the remarkable line: 12.axa4 cxb5 13.wxb5 a5 14.wb4 b5! 15.axe6 [White is clearly worse after 15.axb5 d5 16.wb3 xe3 17.wxe3 xb5 18.0–0 wa8] 15...xa4 16.wxb5 a5 17.xd7 xb5 18.xb5 wd5 19.a4 wg2 Black is better, although White has some counter-chances.) 12...c5! 13.dxc5 e5 14.exf2 a3! 15.axa3 d3+ 16.xd3 wxd3 Black has a strong initiative.

9...dxc4 10.axc4
This is more natural than: 10.axc4 d5 11.0–0 a5 Black has a comfortable game.

10...cxd5 11.exd5 Black has a strong initiative.
This occurred in Strating - I. Sokolov, Amsterdam 2001. Here I like:
11...\textsf{\textit{Qf5}} 12.\textsf{\textit{Qh4}}

Another line is: 12.\textsf{\textit{Qd3}} \textsf{\textit{Qxc3}} 13.\textsf{\textit{Qxc3}} \textsf{\textit{Qxd3}}
14.\textsf{\textit{Qxd3}} \textsf{\textit{Qc7}} 15.0-0 e5 Black is fine.
12...e5 13.\textsf{\textit{Qxf5}} gxf5

The position is complex and unbalanced.

8...\textsf{\textit{Qf5}} 9.h3 h6 10.\textsf{\textit{Qf3}} \textsf{\textit{Qbd7}} 11.c5

A dubious looking decision, which allows Black an easy game.

8.0-0

White now chooses between B1) 6.\textsf{\textit{Qf3}} and B2) 6.\textsf{\textit{Qa3}}.

B1) 6.\textsf{\textit{Qf3}} 0-0

8.0-0

White can release the tension in the centre by:

\textbf{B11) 7.Qe2 b6}

Black shouldn't hurry with 7...\textsf{\textit{Qxc4}} 8.\textsf{\textit{Qxc4}} since after 8...b6 White has 9.b4!, countering both ...\textsf{\textit{Qa6}} and ...c5, and securing an edge, Tarasov - Piankov, USSR 1966.

B) 5.\textsf{\textit{Qb3}} e6

This is considered to be Black's most reliable reply, although other moves are also playable.
8.cxd5 exd5 9.0–0

9...e5 is strongly met by: 9...c5 10.0–0 a6 11.axa6 cxa6 Black has no problems whatsoever.

9...c5!

A very aggressive approach. 9...b7 has been more popular in practice, but that seems to me more in the spirit of the Queen's Indian. It is hard to believe that any Grünfeld players would refrain from the thematic ...c5 when it works.

10.dxc5
10.d2 transposes to B12.
10.d1 e6 11.g5 d7 is not dangerous for Black.
10...bxc5 11.d1 e6 12.g5 d7 13.e4 White's most aggressive response.
13...b8 14.e2 d4 15.a4 c7 We have reached a complicated position with mutual chances.

8...dxc4!

The correct solution, since each recapture has its own drawback.

Black failed to equalize after: 8...c5 9.dxc5 bxc5 10.d1 a6 11.cxd5 e2 12.e2 exd5 13.c3= Hesse – S. Fischer, Germany 1993.

9.xc4

9.xc4 b7 10.e2 (after 10.d1 I recommend the simple 10.e7N 11.e2 d7 followed by ...c5) 10...d7 11.d1

\[ \text{\begin{tikzpicture}
  \node[inner sep=0] (a) {a};
  \node[inner sep=0] (b) [right of=a] {b};
  \node[inner sep=0] (c) [right of=b] {c};
  \node[inner sep=0] (d) [right of=c] {d};
  \node[inner sep=0] (e) [right of=d] {e};
  \node[inner sep=0] (f) [right of=e] {f};
  \node[inner sep=0] (g) [right of=f] {g};
  \node[inner sep=0] (h) [right of=g] {h};
  \draw (a) -- (h);
\end{tikzpicture}} \]

9...a6N

Previously Black tried 9...b7, but failed to equalize: 10.b4 d7 11.b2= Viner – Hill, Toowoomba 1986.

10.e4 xe2 11.e2 d7
11...c5 would be premature: 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.d1 b6 14.d2 c6 15.c3 White's better pawn structure gives him an edge.

12.c2 e8

White cannot do anything against the coming ...c5. For instance:

13.b4 c5 14.bxc5 bxc5 15.dxc5 b5
Black regains the pawn with a comfortable position.

B12) 7.d2 b6 8.cxd5

Other options:

8.e2 c5 9.cxd5 exd5 transposes to the main line.

8.c1 c5 9.cxd5 exd5 10.e2 c6 11.0–0 M. Ivanov – Hillarp Persson, Gothenburg
2010. Now simplest is 11...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{e}}\textit{\texttt{e}}8 and Black can comfortably meet 12.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{a}}3 with 12...\textit{\texttt{f}}8.}

8...\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}5 9.\textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{e}2 \textit{\texttt{c}}5

As we have already seen, Black is not forced to continue with the natural 9...\textit{\texttt{b}}7, but can play more aggressively. Meanwhile the lightsquared bishop can be very useful on the h3-c8 diagonal.

10.0-0

I also checked:
10.\textit{\texttt{e}}5 \textit{\texttt{b}}7?!N

An interesting pawn sacrifice. The alternatives 10...\textit{\texttt{a}}6 and 10...\textit{\texttt{e}}6 are playable too.

11.dxc5

11.0-0 \textit{\texttt{c}}c6 12.\textit{\texttt{x}}c6 \textit{\texttt{x}}c6 leads to a comfortable game for Black.

11...\textit{\texttt{e}}7 12.c6

I believe that White should return the pawn, since 12.\textit{\texttt{d}}3 \textit{\texttt{c}}6 followed by ...d4, looks very promising for Black.

12...\textit{\texttt{x}}c6 13.\textit{\texttt{x}}c6 \textit{\texttt{x}}c6 14.0-0 \textit{\texttt{f}}d8

Black will play ...d4 at a suitable moment, with comfortable equality.

10...\textit{\texttt{c}}c6 11.\textit{\texttt{f}}d1 \textit{\texttt{f}}e6

This is quite a nice square for the bishop, but the more flexible 11...\textit{\texttt{e}}8?!N is worth considering, since Black would then be able to meet \textit{\texttt{a}}3 with ...\textit{\texttt{f}}8.

12.\textit{\texttt{a}}3 \textit{\texttt{x}}d4 13.\textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{d}4

Black has no problems after 13.\textit{\texttt{x}}d4 \textit{\texttt{e}}4 14.\textit{\texttt{f}}4 \textit{\texttt{x}}c3 15.\textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{c}3 \textit{\texttt{e}}8.

13...\textit{\texttt{x}}d4 14.\textit{\texttt{x}}d4 \textit{\texttt{e}}4 15.\textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{e}4 \textit{\texttt{d}}xe4 16.\textit{\texttt{b}}4 \textit{\texttt{e}}8 17.d5

This happened in Lalev – Dorfman, Lvov 1988. Black can now favourably sacrifice his queen by:

17...\textit{\texttt{x}}d5!N 18.\textit{\texttt{c}}4

After 18.\textit{\texttt{b}}5 \textit{\texttt{e}}5 19.\textit{\texttt{c}}3 \textit{\texttt{f}}5 Black is just a healthy pawn up.

18...\textit{\texttt{x}}c4 19.\textit{\texttt{x}}d8 \textit{\texttt{x}}d8\textit{\texttt{e}}

Black has sufficient material for the queen, and objectively the position is level.

B2) 6.\textit{\texttt{a}}3
An unusual idea that temporarily prevents Black castling.

6...a5
This seems to me the most challenging option, preparing ...\(\text{Na6-b4}\) to block the a3-f8 diagonal.

7.\(\text{Nf3}\) c6
This is necessary to defend the a5-pawn.

8.b3
The immediate 8.cxd5 does not pose Black any problems: 8...exd5 9.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{Na6}\) 10.0-0 \(\text{Nf6}\) 11.b6 12.\(\text{a4}\) 0-0 13.a3 \(\text{Nf7}\) 14.\(\text{Nf3}\) \(\text{Na6}\) 15.\(\text{d2}\) Gulko - Cu. Hansen, Rome 1988. Now simply 15...\(\text{e8N}\) would give Black a fine game, for instance: 16.\(\text{d1}\) c5 17.\(\text{e5}\) c4 18.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{c7}\) 19.a4 \(\text{d7}\) Black has the much better coordination.

8...\(\text{Na6}\)

9.\(\text{d2}\)
White has a couple of other possibilities:

9.c5
This seems too ambitious.

9.\(\text{d7}\) 10.\(\text{a6}\) \(\text{a6}\) 11.\(\text{a4}\) 0-0
The extravagant 11...g5 turned out okay for Black in Korchnoi - Van Wely, Istanbul 2000, but the text is more logical.

12.\(\text{b2}\)

Here I found the following idea:

12...\(\text{e8N}\)
In Korchnoi - Kurnosov, Chelyabinsk 2007, Black opted for: 12...\(\text{e7}\) 13.0-0 \(\text{e8}\) 14.\(\text{ac1}\) \(\text{f8}\) 15.\(\text{a1}\) b5 16.\(\text{b2}\) White has managed to maintain balanced play.

13.0-0 \(\text{f8!}\)
Suddenly the threat of ...b5 is very powerful.

14.\(\text{b4}\) axb4 15.\(\text{xb4}\) b6
Black is clearly better.

9.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{b4}\) (there is also nothing wrong with 9...\(\text{e4}\) Korchnoi - Krasenkow, Lvov 2000)
10.\(\text{b2}\) c5 Black immediately attacks the white centre. 11.0-0 0-0 12.\(\text{d1}\) b6 13.a3 \(\text{c6}\) 14.\(\text{c2}\) cxd4 15.exd4 \(\text{b7}\) 16.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{c8}\) 17.h3
This complex position occurred in Jakobsen - Ruck, Koszeg 2000. Black should continue 17...\(\text{e7}\) 18.\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{e4}\) with a sound game.

9...\(\text{e4}\)
With the white bishop on d2, this idea is now even stronger.

10.\(\text{b2}\)
White defends his bishop again, since after 10.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{xd2}\) 11.\(\text{xd2}\) e5 Black takes over the initiative.

10...0-0 11.\(\text{e2}\)
This was U. Baumgartner – Siger, e-mail 2008. Black now has various attractive options – the one I like most is:

11...c5N 12.0-0 cxd4 13.exd4 Qxd2
14.\textit{X}d2 dxc4 15.bxc4 e5 16.d5 Qc5
Black is doing well.

C) 5.d2 0-0 6.Qc1

This relatively rare continuation has been tested several times by Belarusian GM Aleksandrov. It may look as if White is well-prepared to meet ...c5, but Black can still play it.

6...c5 7.dxc5 Qa6 8.Qxd5

This is White’s main idea. Black has an excellent game after 8.cxd5 Qxc5 9.Qc4 Qf5, for instance: 10.Qge2 Qd3! 11.a3 a6
12.0-0 Exc8 13.Qb1 Qd6 14.a3 Qg4 Black had a dangerous initiative in Cusi – Yermolinsky, Chicago 2003.

8...Qe4!

A very strong idea. After the exchange of White’s dark-squared bishop, Black will have fine compensation for the pawn.

9.f3 Qxd2 10.Qxd2 e6 11.Qc3 Qa5
Black has no intention of easing White’s task by swapping queens.

12.a3 Qd8 13.Qc2 Qd7!
Black is waiting for a better moment to capture the c5-pawn, since 13...Qxc5 could be met by 14.Qf2.

14.Qf2

After both 14.Qge2 Qxc5 and 14.Qd3 Qxc5, Black is clearly better.

14...Qac8 15.Qe2

15...Qh6!N
This is an improvement on 15...Qxc5, which allowed White to stabilize the position with 16.b4 in Aleksandrov – Ivanchuk, Chalkidiki
2002. Black’s idea is that when he plays ...\texttt{xc5} he will be attacking the e3-pawn.

\textbf{16.f4 e5!}

The position opens up in Black’s favour.

\textbf{D) 5.cxd5 \texttt{xd5 6.\texttt{xd5}}}

This line has recently been very fashionable. I would also like to mention: 6.\texttt{c4} \texttt{b6} 7.\texttt{b3} 0–0 8.\texttt{ge2} This can hardly pose Black any difficulties. (The natural 8.\texttt{f3} transposes to line D2 in the following chapter.) 8...c5 9.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{d67} 10.\texttt{e4} \texttt{a6} 11.\texttt{c2} \texttt{b4} 12.\texttt{d2} \texttt{a5} 13.0–0 \texttt{xc5} 14.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 15.a3 \texttt{c6} Black clearly has the better chances, Sinprayoon – Ogaard, Haifa (ol) 1976.

\textbf{6...\texttt{xd5} 7.\texttt{e2}}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{scope}
\node (a) at (0,0) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {a};
\node (b) at (1,0) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {b};
\node (c) at (2,0) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {c};
\node (d) at (3,0) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {d};
\node (e) at (0,1) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {e};
\node (f) at (1,1) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {f};
\node (g) at (2,1) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {g};
\node (h) at (3,1) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {h};
\end{scope}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

The point of White’s play; the second knight will come to c3 with tempo.

7...0–0 8.\texttt{c3} \texttt{d8}

Some strong players have opted for 8...\texttt{d6} in recent games, but I prefer the d8-square for the queen.

9.\texttt{e2} c5

This is of course more active than 9...c6, which is also quite popular.

\textbf{10.d5}

The only way to fight for an advantage. 10.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{a5} can only be better for Black, for example: 11.\texttt{d2} (after 11.0–0 \texttt{d8}! 12.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xc5} Black has the more pleasant position) 11...\texttt{xc5} 12.\texttt{a4} \texttt{g5} (12...\texttt{c7} is fine too) 13.0–0 \texttt{d8} 14.\texttt{c1} This occurred in Gregor – Sulko, Slovakia 2002, and now the simple 14...\texttt{h3} 15.\texttt{f3} \texttt{c6} 16.\texttt{c3} \texttt{ac8} would have led to a better position for Black.

\textbf{10...e6 11.e4 \texttt{exd5} 12.\texttt{xd5}}

Here I have a new idea to suggest:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{scope}
\node (a) at (0,0) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {1};
\node (b) at (1,0) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {2};
\node (c) at (2,0) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {3};
\node (d) at (3,0) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {4};
\node (e) at (0,1) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {5};
\node (f) at (1,1) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {6};
\node (g) at (2,1) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {7};
\node (h) at (3,1) [draw, shape=rectangle, minimum width=2cm, minimum height=2cm] {8};
\end{scope}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\texttt{12...b6?!}

I like the idea of preventing the white bishop from easily jumping to f4 or g5. Now White will need to spend time solving the problem of the b2-pawn. In practice Black’s most popular continuation has been 12...b6.

\textbf{13.0–0 \texttt{a6}}

13...\texttt{f5} is also worth considering.

The position is very complex, but my feeling is that Black is doing fine. Here is my brief analysis:

14.\texttt{d6}

This looks the most challenging continuation, but of course there are reasonable alternatives:
14...e6 15.a4 c6 16.e3 d7 17.e3
c4
Black has good Grünfeld counterplay.

Conclusion

We have covered a range of different approaches from White, but in all of these lines I believe that Black can count on obtaining good play. The most important variation is probably D) 5.cxd5 exd5 6.exd5 xd5 7.e2, which has been all the rage in the last year or so. In that line I think that my new idea of 12...b6!? offers Black promising counterplay.
Chapter 12

Closed Variation

5.f3

Variation Index

1.d4 f6 2.c4 g6 3.e3 d5 4.e3 g7 5.f3

5...0–0

A) 6.e2 c5
   A1) 7.dxc5
   A2) 7.cxd5
   A3) 7.0–0 cxd4 8.exd4 c6
      A31) 9.c5 e4
           A311) 10.f4
           A312) 10.e3
      A32) 9.cxd5
      A33) 9.e1 g4
           A331) 10.c5
           A332) 10.cxd5
      A34) 9.h3

B) 6.d2

C) 6.d3

D) 6.cxd5 exd5 7.c4 b6
   D1) 8.e2
   D2) 8.b3
1.d4 ćf6 2.c4 g6 3.ćc3 d5 4.e3 ćg7 5.ćf3 0–0
6.b4 (via the 5.b4 move order) and 6.ćb3 e6 were covered in the previous chapter, but there are still four other serious continuations to be examined: A) 6.će2, B) 6.đd2, C) 6.đd3 and D) 6.cxd5.

A) 6.će2 c5

White now chooses from A1) 7.dxc5, A2) 7.cxd5 and A3) 7.0–0.

A1) 7.dxc5 ća5

Also playable is: 7...dxc4 8.ćxd8 ćxd8 9.ćxc4 ćbd7 10.c6 bxc6 11.0–0 ćb6 Black will play ...ćfd5 next, with equality.

8.cxd5

There is also:
8.ćd2 dxc4 9.ća4
Or 9.ćxc4 ćxc5 and:

a) 10.ćb3 ćc6 11.0–0 ćd8 The position resembles those that can arise from the 4.ćf4 Variation (see line C of Chapter 17), but the passivity of White’s dark-squared bishop makes a difference and Black is very comfortable here. 12.h3 Dvoranova – Purgar, Herceg Novi 2008. Black can now go after the light-squared bishop by: 12...ća5N 13.će2 ćxb3 14.axb3 b6 15.će4 ćb7 Black’s chances are preferable.

b) 10.ćb3 ćc6 11.ća4 ćh5 12.će2 (White probably only now realized that the natural 12.ćc3 runs into the extremely unpleasant 12...ćh3!) 12...će4 Black captures the white dark-squared bishop and has the better game, Serrano Pertinez – ‘Chessbolo’, Internet 2004.

9...ćc7 10.ćxc4 će4 11.ćc1

White has managed to temporarily retain the extra pawn, but his pieces are lacking in coordination, while Black has active pieces and full compensation.

11...ćg4 12.ćc2

An important variation is 12.h3 ćxf3 13.gxf3 ćxd2 14.ćxd2 Cvitan – Donchev, Polanica Zdroj 1985, and now best is 14...ćc6N, for example: 15.ćc2 (15.0–0 is dangerous in view of 15...će5 16.će2 ćc6!) 15...ća5†
16.\texttt{xf1} b5 17.cxb6 axb6 18.\texttt{c3} e6 Black has excellent positional compensation for the pawn.
12...\texttt{xzf3}
12...\texttt{c6?!} is also interesting.
13.gxf3 d7xd2 14.dxd2 d8f8 15.c2 a5f\texttt{16.de2}
12...\texttt{c6!}
I prefer this natural move to 12...\texttt{e6}, as played in the above-mentioned game.
13.b2
After 13.\texttt{c4} Korpas - Matyas, Nyiregyhaza 1999, Black should play: 13...\texttt{f6N} 14.b2 e5 15.b5 d8f\texttt{+}
13...\texttt{xa2} 14.c3 e5 15.xe5 h5xe5 16.xe5 f6 17.c3
17.e7 fails to 17...\texttt{f5--}.
We have been following Thoma - Postl, Austria 1998, and here Black should play the simple:
17...\texttt{e6N}
White will have to work hard in order to demonstrate his compensation.
8...\texttt{xd5} 9.xd5 xxc3\texttt{+} 10.xd2
Other options:
10.\texttt{xf1?!} looks unnatural, and indeed after 10...\texttt{d8} 11.c4 \texttt{f6} Black has more than enough compensation. For example: 12.c2 a6 13.d2 xc5 Black had an obvious advantage in Zlotnik - Sion Castro, Palma de Mallorca 1991.
10.bxc3
This exchange sacrifice deserves attention; it brought an important victory for Milov in his game against the young Indian GM Negi in the 2009 World Cup.
10...\texttt{xc3}\texttt{+} 11.d2 xal 12.0-0
10...\texttt{d8!}
A very important move, which comfortably solves all Black's opening problems.
11.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}c3}}
Sacrificing the queen is possible, but tends to leave White fighting for equality rather than for the advantage:

11.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{xd}8}+ \texttt{\texttt{xd}8}} 12.\texttt{\texttt{xc}3} \texttt{\texttt{d}7} 13.\texttt{b4} \texttt{a5}!

14.\texttt{\texttt{0}-0}
White cannot maintain his pawn structure by means of the natural 14.\texttt{a3} in view of:

14...\texttt{axb4} 15.\texttt{axb4} \texttt{\texttt{xa}1} 16.\texttt{\texttt{xa}1} \texttt{xc}5!
17.\texttt{\texttt{e}4} Black had the better chances in Murach - Packroff, corr. 1977.

On 14.\texttt{bxa5} Klinghammer - Hallier, corr. 1986, Black should of course recapture:

14...\texttt{\texttt{xa}5}!\texttt{\texttt{N}} 15.0-0 (after 15.\texttt{\texttt{xa}5} \texttt{\texttt{xa}5} 16.\texttt{\texttt{hf}1} \texttt{xc}5 Black has a serious edge, due to the misplaced white king) 15.\texttt{xc}5
16.\texttt{\texttt{b}4} \texttt{\texttt{xc}7} 17.\texttt{\texttt{fd}1} \texttt{\texttt{f}8} Black has the advantage, although White has reasonable drawing chances.

14...\texttt{\texttt{xb}4} 15.\texttt{\texttt{xb}4} \texttt{\texttt{c}7} 16.\texttt{\texttt{fc}1} \texttt{\texttt{b}8}
The knight is heading for the \texttt{c}6-square.

17.\texttt{\texttt{d}4} \texttt{\texttt{d}7} 18.\texttt{\texttt{b}5} \texttt{\texttt{e}5}
Again Black is better, but White has chances of surviving, Moehring - Tukmakov, Leipzig 1975.

11...\texttt{\texttt{xc}3} \texttt{\texttt{+}} 12.\texttt{\texttt{xc}3}
12.\texttt{\texttt{d}2} \texttt{\texttt{xd}2} 13.\texttt{\texttt{xc}3} \texttt{\texttt{d}5} transposes to the main line.

12...\texttt{\texttt{xd}5}

13.\texttt{c4}
White has tried 13.\texttt{\texttt{d}1} more often, but Black can respond: 13...\texttt{\texttt{xc}5} 14.\texttt{\texttt{d}8}+ \texttt{\texttt{g}7} 15.\texttt{\texttt{d}4} e5 16.\texttt{\texttt{b}5} Suvrajit-Ganguly, Visakhapatnam 2004. Here the simple 16...\texttt{\texttt{c}6}N 17.\texttt{\texttt{e}8} \texttt{\texttt{b}8} would solve the problem of the back-rank pin and leave Black with much the better chances.

13...\texttt{\texttt{xc}5} 14.\texttt{\texttt{d}4} \texttt{\texttt{d}7} 15.0-0 \texttt{\texttt{f}6} 16.\texttt{\texttt{ab}1} \texttt{\texttt{e}5}
16...\texttt{\texttt{b}8}! is worth considering.

17.\texttt{\texttt{b}5}
We have been following Struzka - Hlavac, e-mail 2005. Black should now play:

17...\texttt{\texttt{e}4}N 18.\texttt{\texttt{xc}5} \texttt{\texttt{xc}5} 19.\texttt{\texttt{b}3} \texttt{\texttt{a}4} 20.\texttt{\texttt{b}1} \texttt{\texttt{e}6}
Black has slightly better chances.

A2) 7.\texttt{\texttt{d}5} \texttt{\texttt{xd}5} 8.\texttt{\texttt{b}3}
A common alternative is:
8.0-0 \texttt{\texttt{c}6} 9.\texttt{\texttt{xc}5}
White has a wide choice:
9.h3 \texttt{\texttt{xd}4} 10.\texttt{\texttt{ex}d}4 is examined in the note to White's tenth move in A32.
9.\texttt{\texttt{b}3} \texttt{\texttt{e}6} 10.\texttt{\texttt{xb}7} \texttt{\texttt{xd}4} 11.\texttt{\texttt{ex}d}4 transposes to the main line of A32.
9.\texttt{\texttt{xd}5} \texttt{\texttt{xd}5} 10.\texttt{\texttt{dxc}5} \texttt{\texttt{xc}5} Black has a thematic advantage, due to the contrast between the dark-squared bishops.
9...\(\text{Qxc3}\) 10.bxc3 \(\text{Wxa5!}\) 11.\(\text{Qxd2}\) \(\text{Wxc5}\) 12.\(\text{Bb1}\) b6 13.\(\text{Wc2}\)

Holtorp – Schoene, Bensheim 2002. Here there is the simple:
13...\(\text{Qe5!}\)

Black has a pleasant edge.

8...\(\text{Qxc3}\) 9.bxc3 \(\text{Qc6}\)

Quite a common pawn structure in this opening. Here Black has a good version, since the white queen is obviously misplaced on b3; Black can at some point win a tempo with the thematic ...\(\text{Qa5}\).

10.0–0 b6

Black has a comfortable game, as we can see from the following examples:

11.\(\text{Qd1}\)

I also examined: 11.\(\text{Qa3}\) \(\text{Qa5}\) 12.\(\text{Wc2}\) \(\text{Wc7}\) 13.\(\text{Qac1}\) \(\text{Qd8}\) 14.\(\text{dxс5}\) This exchange is slightly premature. 14...\(\text{bxc5}\) 15.\(\text{c4}\) Trojan – Lazanek, Czech Republic 1998. Now Black can maintain better chances with: 15...\(\text{Qf5!}\) 16.\(\text{Wc4}\) (after 16.\(\text{е4}\) \(\text{Qg4}\) the nice d4-square will be available to the black minor pieces) 16...\(\text{Qb7}\) Black will continue with ...\(\text{Qd6}\). White’s main problem is his clearly misplaced dark-squared bishop.

11...\(\text{Wc7}\) 12.e4 \(\text{Qa5}\) 13.\(\text{Wb1}\)

13...\(\text{Qb7!}\)

I like this straightforward approach for Black. Instead 13...\(\text{Qd7}\) 14.\(\text{Qg5}\) \(\text{Qa4}\) 15.\(\text{Qc1}\) was unclear in Fries Nielsen – Giorgadze, Gausdal 1992.

14.\(\text{Qe3}\) \(\text{Qfd8}\)

14...\(\text{cxd4}\) 15.\(\text{cxd4}\) \(\text{Qac8}\) also comes into consideration.

15.\(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{cxd4}\) 16.\(\text{cxd4}\) \(\text{Qac8}\) 17.\(\text{Wb4}\) \(\text{Wd6!}\)

18.a3 \(\text{e6}\)

Black has a good game.

A3) 7.0–0 \(\text{cxd4}\) 8.\(\text{exd4}\)

There have also been a large number of games in which White recaptured with the knight:
8.\(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{dxс4}\) 9.\(\text{Qxc4}\) \(\text{a6}\)
There are more than a hundred games from this position; however I believe that a short review is quite sufficient to show how Black should play here.

10.a4

Other options are:

10.\(\text{\(\text{\(e}2\text{\)}}\) \(\text{\(\text{\(f}c7\text{\)}}\) 11.\(\text{\(d}2\text{\)}}\) \(\text{\(e}5\text{\)}} The key idea – Black grabs a lot of space. 12.\(\text{\(b}3\text{\)}} \(\text{\(c}6\text{\)}} 13.\(\text{\(e}c1\text{\)}} \(\text{\(d}8\text{\)}} 14.\(\text{\(e}1\text{\)}} Hoang Thanh Son – Erhembayar, Shenyang 1999. Now the natural 14...\(\text{\(f}5\text{\)}} N 15.\(\text{\(a}4\text{\)}} \text{\(b}6\text{\)}} would secure Black's slight edge.

10.\(\text{\(f}e2\text{\)}} \text{\(b}5\text{\)}} 11.\(\text{\(b}3\text{\)}} \(\text{\(b}7\text{\)}} 12.\(\text{\(d}d\text{\)}} \text{\(b}d7\text{\)}} Black has comfortable development. 13.e4 \(\text{\(c}7\text{\)}} 14.\(\text{\(g}5\text{\)}} \(\text{\(c}5\text{\)}} 15.\(\text{\(e}c1\text{\)}} \text{\(e}6\text{\)}} 16.e5 \(\text{\(d}d7\text{\)}} 17.f4 This occurred in Bisguier – Daskalov, Tallinn 1971, and here 17...\(\text{\(e}c8\text{\)}} N would give Black a sound position in a very complex game.

10...\(\text{\(f}c7\text{\)}} 11.\(\text{\(e}2\text{\)}} \text{\(e}5\text{\)}} 12.\(\text{\(c}c2\text{\)}} \text{\(e}4\text{\)}} I like this move, grabbing more space and creating possibilities such as ...\(\text{\(g}4\text{\)}} or ...\(\text{\(g}4\text{\)}}.

13.\(\text{\(d}5\text{\)}}

13.\(\text{\(b}4\text{\)}} is strongly met by: 13...\(\text{\(g}4\text{\)}}! 14.\(\text{\(f}3\text{\)}} \text{\(e}6\text{\)}} Black has the better chances, due to the exposed white king.

13...\(\text{\(x}d5\text{\)}} 14.\(\text{\(x}d5\text{\)}} \(\text{\(e}8\text{\)}} 15.\(\text{\(d}d\text{\)}} \text{\(d}7\text{\)}} 16.\(\text{\(c}4\text{\)}} \(\text{\(c}4\text{\)}} 17.\(\text{\(x}c4\text{\)}} \text{\(b}6\text{\)}} 18.\(\text{\(e}2\text{\)}}

After 18.\(\text{\(b}3\text{\)}} \(\text{\(x}d4\text{\)}} 19.\(\text{\(x}d4\text{\)}} \(\text{\(e}6\text{\)}} Black retains a pleasant edge.

18...\(\text{\(d}7\text{\)}} 19.a5 \(\text{\(d}5\text{\)}} 20.\(\text{\(d}2\text{\)}} \(\text{\(e}c8\text{\)}}

Black has a slight advantage, although White remains solid, Golombek – Smyslov, Bucharest 1953.

8...\(\text{\(c}6\text{\)}}
This was Gierth – Summerrmatter, Switzerland 1996, and now simplest is:

12...d5N 13.b3 e6
Black enjoys a comfortable game.

9.g5 e6 10.cxd5
A different pawn structure arises after: 10.c5
e4 Black has an improved version of line A31 below. 11.e3 xc5! This works
very well here. 12.dxc5 d4 13.xd4 xd4
14.d3 a5 Black was clearly better in

10...xd5 11.d2 b6 12.fd1
After 12.h6 fd8 13.xg7 xg7 14.ad1
fd6 Black's position is preferable, as White
doesn't have enough activity to compensate
for the isolated d-pawn, Sbarra – J. Horvath,
Verona 2005.

12...fd8 13.ac1?!
This inaccuracy was committed in
Vekshenkov – Yandemirov, Tomsk 1998,
although Black was fine anyway.

13...d4
Black wins a pawn.

9.e3 dxc4 10.xc4
White occasionally tries a pawn sacrifice:
10.d5 a5 11.d2 (11.b4 cxb3 12.axb3
looks tempting, but there is a clear refutation:
12...xd5! 13.xd5 xa1 14.b4 c6 15.b5
Black should play 15...g7N 16.bxc6 e6
17.b4 xd1 18.xd1 a5 19.d3 bxc6
with an obvious advantage.) 11...b6 12.ad1
b7 Budde – Peelen, Dieren 1983. White
does not have sufficient compensation
for the pawn after, for example, 13.d4
c8.

10...a5

11.e2
The main choice according to theory.
After 11.d3 Black has a comfortable
game: 11...e6 12.e2 c8 13.e5 d5!
14.xd5 xd5 15.b3 c6 16.ac1 d6
Black was slightly better in Singher – Legky,
Montreal 2003; again White does not have
enough activity to compensate for the
isolated d-pawn.

11...e6 12.a4 d5 13.xd5 xd5
14.ac1
Bregadze – Pavlidis, Kemer 2007. Black
should have continued:
14...c6N 15.fd1 e6±
Again Black has good play against the
isolated pawn.

A31) 9.c5

By releasing the tension in this way, White
signals that he wants to make use of his
queenside majority, but Black's counterplay in
the centre will be too strong.

9...e4
White generally chooses between A311) 10.\textit{f}4 and A312) 10.\textit{e}3.

I would also like to mention 10.h3, after which I recommend: 10...b6 11.\textit{b}5 \textit{b}7N 12.\textit{a}4 \textit{c}8 Black has slightly the better chances.

A311) 10.\textit{f}4

This doesn't look best, since White may subsequently need to defend the d4-pawn with \textit{e}3 anyway.

10...\textit{g}4

11.\textit{e}3

Other moves:

11.\textit{e}5? \textit{xe}5!N This just leads to the win of a pawn. (In all six games to reach this position Black has played 11...\textit{xe}2, after which 12.\textit{xc}6 leaves White only slightly worse.) 12.\textit{xe}5 (also after 12.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}4 13.\textit{xc}4 \textit{d}x\textit{d}4 Black is a pawn up) 12...\textit{xe}2 13.\textit{xe}2 \textit{xe}5 14.dxe5 \textit{xc}5 Black has a healthy extra pawn.

11.\textit{c}1 e6 12.h3 \textit{f}3 13.\textit{xf}3 Chachere – Stone, Chicago 1990. Black should now play 13...\textit{g}5!N when there is no good way for White to defend the d4-pawn.

11...\textit{e}6

I think that Black can already aspire to an advantage, and therefore should not be satisfied with: 11...\textit{xc}5, 12.dxc5 \textit{xf}3 13.\textit{xf}3 \textit{d}4 14.\textit{g}5 dxc3 15.bxc3 The game was more or less equal in Dumitrache – Nisipeanu, Romania 1992.

12.h3

There is also: 12.\textit{e}1 \textit{xe}2 13.\textit{exe}2

13...\textit{e}5N (I consider this more challenging than 13...b6, which is nevertheless okay for Black) 14.f3 exd4 15.\textit{xd}4 \textit{g}5! 16.\textit{ec}2 \textit{e}6 17.\textit{xe}6 fxe6 18.\textit{d}4 \textit{f}6 19.\textit{xc}6 bxc6 Black has promising position.

12...\textit{xf}3 13.\textit{xf}3 \textit{f}5

Black has a fine game. I like the following example:
14.\textit{\text{x}e4 \text{dxe4} 15.d5 \text{exd5} 16.\textit{\text{xd}5} \textit{\text{f}7}! 17.\textit{\text{d}2} \textit{\text{d}7} 18.\textit{\text{a}d}1 \textit{\text{d}4}! 19.\textit{\text{g}5} \textit{\text{f}8}}

Black had a decisive advantage in Mirkovic – Tringov, Vrnjacka Banja 1996.

\textbf{A312) 10.\textit{\text{e}3} \textit{\text{b}6}!}

When the white bishop goes directly to e3, I think this is the strongest idea.

11.\textit{\text{cxb}6}

Other moves are no better:

11.\textit{\text{a}4} \textit{\text{d}7} 12.\textit{\text{b}5} \textit{\text{xc}3} 13.\textit{\text{bxc}3} \textit{\text{c}7} 14.\textit{\text{f}4}?! \textit{\text{xf}4} 15.\textit{\text{xc}6} \textit{\text{xc}6} 16.\textit{\text{xc}6} \textit{\text{b}xc}5 17.\textit{\text{xc}5} \textit{\text{e}6} Black had a clear positional advantage in Haritakis – Alterman, Katerini 1992.

11.\textit{\text{b}5} \textit{\text{xc}3} 12.\textit{\text{bxc}3} \textit{\text{a}5} 13.\textit{\text{cxb}6} \textit{\text{axb}6} 14.\textit{\text{e}2} \textit{\text{c}7} 15.\textit{\text{g}5} \textit{\text{e}7} 16.\textit{\text{fe}1} \textit{\text{e}6} Black's superior pawn structure gave her the better chances in Mamedjarova – C. Foisor, Plovdiv 2008.

\textbf{A32) 9.\textit{\text{xd}5} \textit{\text{xd}5}}

10.\textit{\text{b}3}

Let us take a brief look at the alternatives:

10.\textit{\text{g}5} \textit{\text{h}6} 11.\textit{\text{e}3} \textit{\text{e}6} 12.\textit{\text{d}2} \textit{\text{h}7} Black has quite a comfortable set-up. 13.\textit{\text{e}4} \textit{\text{a}5}! Swapping queens is a standard idea for the side playing against an isolated pawn. 14.\textit{\text{fd}1} Ozgibcev – Novik, Sochi 2005. Now the simple 14...\textit{\text{xd}2N} 15.\textit{\text{xd}2} \textit{\text{b}6} would give Black the better chances.

10.h3 \textit{\text{b}6} The plan of fianchettoing the light-squared bishop offers Black a healthy game, for instance: 11.\textit{\text{c}4} \textit{\text{xc}3} 12.\textit{\text{bxc}3} \textit{\text{a}5} 13.\textit{\text{d}3} \textit{\text{c}7} 14.\textit{\text{a}3} \textit{\text{d}8} 15.\textit{\text{c}1} \textit{\text{e}6} 16.\textit{\text{e}2} \textit{\text{b}7} Black had a pleasant position in Pierna Manzano – Hoffman, Aviles 1992.

10.\textit{\text{e}1} \textit{\text{f}5} (10...\textit{\text{e}6} is also quite good) 11.\textit{\text{g}5} \textit{\text{h}6} 12.\textit{\text{e}3} \textit{\text{c}8} 13.\textit{\text{b}3} \textit{\text{xe}3} 14.\textit{\text{xe}3} \textit{\text{e}5}! After this strong idea White will experience difficulties on the dark squares. 15.\textit{\text{d}5} \textit{\text{e}4} Black had the initiative in Wright – Stean, Canterbury 1973.

10...\textit{\text{e}6}!
This move effectively refutes White's queen manoeuvre.

11.\texttt{\textbf{W}}xb7 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}xd4 12.\texttt{\textbf{Q}}xd4 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}xd4

Black has carried out a favourable exchange of his b7-pawn for the white d-pawn, and enjoys a pleasant edge.

13.\texttt{\textbf{R}}d1

13.\texttt{\textbf{Q}}h6 is strongly met by: 13...\texttt{\textbf{B}}b8 14.\texttt{\textbf{A}}a6 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}xb2! 15.\texttt{\textbf{Q}}xd5 \texttt{\textbf{K}}xd5 16.\texttt{\textbf{Q}}xf8 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}xf8 With great play for the exchange, Black clearly has the better chances. 17.a4? Klyunen – Siebrecht, Duisburg 1999. Black could now have decided the issue with the tactical trick: 17...\texttt{\textbf{B}}b6N 18.\texttt{\textbf{A}}xa7 \texttt{\textbf{B}}b1!–+

13...\texttt{\textbf{B}}b8 14.\texttt{\textbf{A}}a6 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}b4! 15.\texttt{\textbf{A}}a4 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}b6

Black was clearly better in G. Gonzalez – Goldenberg, Mar del Plata 1961.

A33) 9.\texttt{\textbf{E}}e1 \texttt{\textbf{G}}g4

White now decides whether to advance his c-pawn or exchange it: A331) 10.c5 or A332) 10.cxd5.

A331) 10.c5

This type of position is already familiar from previous lines.
I was not satisfied with Black's position following: 13...\(\text{c}5\) 14.\(\text{ab}1\) e6 15.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{xf}3\) 16.\(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{c}4\) 17.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{f}6\) Ernst – L'Ami, Netherlands 2006. Here 18.g3N would maintain White's advantage; in the long term his c-pawn could well become a dangerous passed pawn.

14.\(\text{a}3\)

Black need not fear 14.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{xf}3\) 15.gxf3 \(\text{fc}8\) and the pin is not dangerous.

14...e6

I am not sure about the position which arises after 14...\(\text{bxc}5\) 15.\(\text{dxc}5\) e5 16.\(\text{ad}1\), as the d5-pawn is a bit vulnerable.

15.h3 \(\text{xf}3\) 16.\(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{bxc}5\) 17.\(\text{dxc}5\) \(\text{ab}8\)

Black's chances are not worse.

A332) 10.\(\text{cxd}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 11.h3 \(\text{e}6\)

11...\(\text{f}5\) is also reasonable, but I prefer the e6-square.

12.\(\text{fl}\)

The main alternative is:

12.\(\text{g}5\) h6 13.\(\text{e}3\)

White has also tried 13.\(\text{h}4\), but this allows the black knight to jump to the f4-square:

13...\(\text{f}4\) 14.\(\text{f}1\) g5 15.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{xd}4\) 16.\(\text{xf}4\) \(\text{gxf}4\) 17.\(\text{e}4\) Tisdall – Ostenstad, Norway 1994. Now I recommend: 17...\(\text{f}5\)N 18.\(\text{xf}4\) \(\text{xd}1\) 19.\(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{fd}8\) Black's bishop pair gives him the advantage in this endgame.

13...\(\text{a}5\) 14.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xe}3\)

Now is the right time to capture this bishop, to avoid wasting a tempo defending the h6-pawn.

15.\(\text{xe}3\) \(\text{ad}8\) 16.a3 \(\text{b}3!\)

Black prevents b2-b4 and at the same time clears the way for ...e5.

17.\(\text{d}1\)

This was Steinbrecht – Hennig, Hamburg 1997. Black should now continue:

17...\(\text{c}4\)N 18.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{xe}2\) 19.\(\text{xe}2\)

After 19.b4 \(\text{c}7\) 20.\(\text{xe}2\) e5 Black also obtains good play.

19...e5 20.d5 e4!

Black takes over the initiative.

12...\(\text{c}8\) 13.\(\text{g}5\) h6 14.\(\text{e}3\)

This position has occurred more than a dozen times, and practice shows that Black has an excellent game. Black can choose from various plans, and I like the straightforward:

14...\(\text{xc}3\) 15.\(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{a}5\)

Black has the c4-square at his disposal, and of course the c3-pawn is a clear target.

16.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{h}7\) 17.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{c}4\) 18.\(\text{e}5\)

Also harmless is: 18.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{xf}1\) 19.\(\text{xf}1\) e6 20.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{d}5\) 21.\(\text{g}7\) \(\text{g}7\) 22.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{c}4\)+ 23.\(\text{gl}\) b6+ Eljanov – Strelnikov, Kharkov
2000. White doesn’t have enough compensation for the weakness of his queenside pawns.

10.**c5**

White has also tried:

10.\\(Qg5 Qf5 11.\\(Qe3 dxc4 12.\\(Qxc4 Qa5 13.\\(Qe2 Qd5

13...Qc8 is also fine for Black.

14.\\(Qxd5 Qxd5 15.\\(Qa4

I also examined 15.\\(Qc1 when it’s dangerous to accept the pawn sacrifice, but Black can continue 15...Qac8 16.\\(Qa4 Qc6 17.\\(Qc4 Qd6 with a comfortable game.

15...Qd7 16.\\(Qa3

This happened in Sahovic – Milanovic, Belgrade 2001. Now Black should play:

16...Qc6N 17.\\(Qf3 Qb5

The exchange of light-squared bishops is clearly in Black’s favour, and meanwhile grabbing the e-pawn doesn’t help White.

18.\\(Qxe7 Qxe7 19.\\(Qc5 Qxc5 20.dxc5 Qc4

Black has the better game.

10.\\(Qg5 Qa5!!

This renews the threat to the c4-pawn.

11.\\(Qb3?! An unfortunate move, after which White is soon in trouble. 11...dxc4 12.\\(Qxb7 (12.\\(Qxc4 runs into 12...Qxd4! 13.\\(Qxd4 Qxc4 14.\\(Qxc4 Qxg5 with an extra pawn for Black) 12...Qxc8 13.\\(Qb5 Qxb5 14.\\(Qxb5 Qab8=)

Hebden – Cavendish, Eastbourne 1990.

10.cxd5 Qxd5 11.\\(Qe1 Qc8 This is very comfortable for Black, for instance: 12.\\(Qf1 Qxc3 13.bxc3 Qa5 14.\\(Qa4? Qxc3! 15.\\(Qd2
\(16.\text{b}5\) (16.\text{b}4 is strongly met by 16...\text{xf}3! 17.\text{gx}f3 \text{c}6 18.\text{xb}7 \text{xd}4) 16...\text{c}4! 17.\text{b}4 \text{c}6\text{f} Bosboom – Van der Sterren, Wijk aan Zee 1989.

10...\text{e}4 11.\text{c}3

Other possibilities:

11.\text{f}4 \text{b}6 12.\text{b}5 \text{xc}3 (12...\text{a}5 is worth considering) 13.\text{xc}3 \text{a}5 14.\text{c}6? (White should have played 14.\text{xb}6 \text{ax}b6 15.\text{e}1 \text{d}7 16.\text{d}3 \text{c}8, maintaining a balanced position) 14...\text{e}8! Now White loses his c-pawn. 15.\text{e}2 \text{xc}6 16.\text{fe}1 \text{c}8 Black was clearly better in Vragoteris – Tukmakov, Kavala 1991.

11.\text{b}5 The plan of exchanging this bishop for the c6-knight only helps Black strengthen his centre. 11...\text{a}5 12.\text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 13.\text{e}2 \text{f}6 14.\text{e}1 \text{d}7 15.\text{d}2 \text{ab}8 Black had an excellent game in Rajan – Mahjoob, New Delhi 2008.

12.dxc5 \text{d}4 13.\text{xd}4 \text{xd}4 14.\text{f}3 \text{c}8 15.\text{d}5 \text{xd}5 16.\text{xd}4 \text{e}5 17.\text{e}3 \text{c}4 18.\text{xd}8 \text{fx}d8 19.\text{d}1 \text{f}5

Black was better and went on to win in Adly – Ponomariov, Khanty-Mansiyisk 2005.

B) 6.\text{d}2 \text{c}5

7.dxc5

Black is very comfortable after 7.\text{cxd}5 \text{cxd}4 8.\text{xd}4 \text{xd}5. Here is one illustration of how play may proceed: 9.\text{e}2 \text{c}6 10.\text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 11.\text{e}1 \text{b}8 12.\text{b}3 Borges Mateos – E. Garcia, Sharjah 1985. Now 12...\text{b}4N 13.0–0 \text{c}6 would be promising for Black.

7...\text{a}6 8.\text{c}5

The alternative is harmless: 8.\text{e}1 \text{xc}5 9.\text{cxd}5 \text{xd}5 10.\text{xd}5 \text{xd}5 11.\text{b}4 (11.\text{c}4 runs into 11...\text{d}3\text{f}! and only Black can be better) 11...\text{e}1 12.\text{xd}1 \text{b}6 13.\text{b}3 \text{a}5 14.\text{xc}5 \text{xc}3 15.\text{d}2 \text{bxc}5 16.\text{c}4 \text{a}4 White may have chances to hold, but the bishop pair means that Black is clearly better, Bender – Zelic, Sibenik 2010.

8...\text{c}5 9.\text{c}4 \text{a}6

Black sometimes chooses 9...\text{f}5 10.0–0 \text{c}8, which is of similar value and should also be sufficient for equality. But I have a preference for including the moves ...\text{a}6 and \text{a}2–\text{a}4.

10.\text{a}4

White can hardly manage without this move, but he sometimes tries:

10.b4 \text{ce}4 11.\text{c}1 \text{f}5N (this seems to be more logical than 11...\text{b}5 or 11...\text{g}4, the
moves which have been played here) 12...b3 
Wd6 13.a3 eac8 14.0-0 Bd8 Black has very 
active pieces and has full compensation for the 
pawn; he intends to attack the c3-knight next 
by moving his knight from f6.

10.0-0 b5 11.e2 a7 12.e1 e8 Black will regain the pawn at a suitable moment, 
with the better chances, Taimanov – Kamsky, 

10...d5 11.0-0
11.e2 has no independent value. 11...f4 
12.0-0 e8 transposes to the main line.

11...e8
Black continues his mobilization, planning 
...d3 next.

12.e2
The main alternative is: 12.d4 d3 
13.xd3 xd3 14.b3 c5 15.a2 d7 Black simply intends to continue with ...d8 
and regain the pawn. (I prefer this to the more 
popular 15...ce4.) 16.fd1 Bd8 17.b3 
Kahn – Pioch, corr. 1977. Now 17...d3!N 
would give Black a pleasant edge, for example: 
18.b1 f5 19.el exe1 20.xf5 xf5 21.exe1 xd5

12...f4

White has some other possibilities:

13.d4 results in a more or less forced line:
13...xd2 14.xd2 e4 15.xe4 xe4 
16.b4 xd4 17.exd4 xd5 18.xd5 xd5 
19.xe7 fe8 20.a3 Clearly only Black can 
fight for an advantage here. It seems to me that 
his best chance is 20...e2N 21.e1 d2= 
and White still has some work to do in order 
to reach a peaceful result.

13.xe4xe4 14.b4 xd5 15.f1 b6 
16.xc5 xc4 17.xb6 xe2 18.e2 (White 
has also tried 18.e7 xb2 19.b1 Gulko – 
Navrovszyk, Moscow 1971, and now 
19...a3N 20.xb7 c4 21.a5 e8 would 
lead to an unpleasant endgame for White, since 
Black’s bishop pair is very powerful.) 18.e4 
19.h3 c6 (19...xe8? deserves attention) 20.a5 
b5 21.d4 xd4 22.exd4 The opposite-
coloured bishop endgame is of course drawish, 

13.xc3 14.xc3 xc3 15.xc3 e4 
16.e4
Otherwise White would be worse: 16.b1 
a5 17.xd4 xc3 18.e1 e4= The d-pawn 
is falling next, Haygarth – A. Williams, 

16.a5 17.e1
An important line is: 17...\texttt{d6}!N After 17...\texttt{xc3} 18.\texttt{ad1 d6}! 19.\texttt{e5 e4} 20.\texttt{d3 xd3} 21.\texttt{xe1 xd3} CZubak–Hueser, e-mail 2008. Now the simple 21...\texttt{a1}† 22.\texttt{ad1 c1} would give Black the better chances.

17...\texttt{d6}?!N

I believe that this logical novelty allows Black to fight for an advantage. After 17...\texttt{xc3} 18.\texttt{d3 xe1}† 19.\texttt{xe1 c3} Fehmers–Brinkmann, Germany 2001, White should play: 20.\texttt{xf5} gxf5 21.d6 exd6 22.f1 His activity should enable White to obtain a draw without too much difficulty.

18.\texttt{d3}

Another line I examined is: 18.\texttt{f1 xc3} 19.\texttt{xc3 xe1} 20.\texttt{d2 e2} 21.e4 \texttt{d7} The endgame is slightly better for Black.

18...\texttt{xd3} 19.\texttt{xd3 c4}!

Reminding White that the a4-pawn is also weak.

20.\texttt{d2 xa4}

Black has the better chances in a complex middlegame.

C) 6.\texttt{d3 c5} 7.0–0

It is inaccurate to play:
7.dxc5 dxc4 8.\texttt{xc4 xd1}†

After 8...\texttt{xa5} 9.0–0 \texttt{xc5} Black has no problems, but with the text he is fighting for an advantage.

9.\texttt{xd1}

No better is: 9.\texttt{xd1 e4} 10.0–0 \texttt{c6} Black has much the better game, due to the superiority of his dark-squared bishop. In Gomes–Santos, Brazil 1993, White lost very quickly: 11.\texttt{b1}! \texttt{xc5} 12.\texttt{b4} \texttt{f5}+ 9...\texttt{bd7}

Due to the misplaced white king, Black's chances are higher.

10.c6 bxc6 11.\texttt{e2 b6} 12.\texttt{d3 fd5} 13.\texttt{xd5}

13.\texttt{d2 b4}! secures an edge for Black.

14.a3 \texttt{xd3} 15.\texttt{xd3 a6}+ 16.\texttt{c2 fd8} 17.\texttt{e1 d3}† 18.\texttt{c1 c4}† S. Kasparov–Aronian, Minsk 1998.

13...\texttt{xd5} 14.\texttt{d1}

This position has occurred in a couple of games. Black should play the natural:

14...\texttt{b8}N

White is struggling to equalize.

7...\texttt{xd4} 8.\texttt{xd4}

8.\texttt{xd4} allows Black to grab space in the centre: 8...\texttt{e5} 9.\texttt{b3} e4 10.\texttt{e2 dxc4} 11.\texttt{xc4 c7} 12.\texttt{e2 c6} 13.\texttt{b5 b8} 14.\texttt{d2 d8} 15.\texttt{d5 d4 e5} 16.h3 b6 17.\texttt{c1 b7} Black had more space and the better chances in T. Fischer–Steinmacher, Baunatal 1996.
8...\textbf{\textit{\textit{a}}6 9.h3}

This is necessary prophylaxis. After 9.\textbf{\textit{\textit{g}}5 \textit{\textit{g}}4 the pin is highly unpleasant: 10.\textit{xf6 \textit{xd5 11.\textit{xe2 \textit{g}7 13.\textit{e3 \textit{e}}6 Black was much better in Sterliagova – Pogonina, Serpukhov 2002.}

9...\textit{dxc4}

Black has other playable moves, but this seems to be the most logical.

10.\textit{xc4 \textit{a5}

11.\textbf{\textit{\textit{d}}3

White has also tried the more passive:
11.\textbf{\textit{e2 \textit{e6 12.\textit{e1}
12.\textbf{\textit{g5 \textit{c8 13.\textit{e1 \textit{c4 14.\textit{xc4 occurred in two games. There is now an important improvement: 14...\textit{xc4N 15.\textit{d2 \textit{e8 16.\textit{ac1 \textit{d5= Black has no problems. 12.\textit{e5 \textit{c8 13.\textit{f3 \textit{d5 14.\textit{e4 \textit{b4 15.\textit{c3 Heberla – Vehi Bach, Plovdiv 2008. The simple 15...\textit{b6N followed by ...\textit{fd8 would secure an advantage for Black. 12...\textit{ac8 13.\textit{e5 \textit{d5 14.\textit{d2 \textit{c6!}

As is well known, swapping pieces is favourable for the side playing against the isolated pawn.
15.\textit{xc6 \textit{xc6 16.\textit{f3 \textit{c4

Black was better in Zhukova – Beshukov, Berlin 1995.

11...\textit{e6 12.\textit{e1

If White plays 12.\textit{e2 \textit{c8 13.\textit{g5 Levitt – Beaumont, Birmingham 1999, then Black has the strong: 13...\textit{c6N 14.\textit{ad1 \textit{b4! White has to give up his light-squared bishop.

12...\textit{c8 13.\textit{g5

Black must be ready for the thematic positional exchange sacrifice: 13.\textit{xe6 \textit{xe6 14.\textit{e2 \textit{h8 15.\textit{g5 (15.\textit{xe6 \textit{d6\textit{f}) 15...\textit{c6 16.\textit{b5 Lputian – Magerramov, Daugavpils 1978. Now strong is: 16...\textit{e5N 17.\textit{e6 \textit{d5 18.\textit{xf8 \textit{xf8 19.\textit{c3 \textit{xd4 20.\textit{e3 \textit{d6\textit{f} Black is doing fine, with an extra pawn in the centre, although White has some compensation.
13...\(\text{c6!}N\)
An unexpected change of direction. Black has previously tried 13...\(\text{c4}\) or 13...\(\text{c4}\), but the text looks more promising.

14.\(\text{c2 b6!}\)
Everything comes with tempo.

15.\(\text{b3}\)
Neither 15.d5? \(\text{xd5}\) 16.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 17.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{b4}\) nor 15.xe6 fxe6 16.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{a5}\) is any good for White.

15...\(\text{xb3}\) 16.\(\text{xb3}\) \(\text{xb3}\) 17.\(\text{xb3}\) \(\text{fd8}\)
The endgame is favourable for Black.

D) 6.cxd5 \(\text{xd5}\) 7.\(\text{c4}\)
By far the most popular continuation. Other possibilities are:

7.\(\text{c2 c5}\) 8.0-0 \(\text{c6}\) 9.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{e6!}\) 10.\(\text{xb7}\) cxd4 11.exd4 transposes to line A32.

7.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 8.bxc3 \(\text{c5}\) 9.\(\text{a3}\)
9.\(\text{e2 c6}\) was examined in A2.
9...\(\text{cxd4}\) 10.\(\text{cxd4}\) \(\text{c6}\) 11.\(\text{e2 a5}\)!
White has problems completing his development.

12.\(\text{d2}\)
Clearly bad is: 12.\(\text{f1?}\) \(\text{e6}\) 13.\(\text{b2}\) Steele – Blomquist, corr. 1991. Now simplest is 13.b5\(N\) 14.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{b4}\) and Black has a big advantage.

12...\(\text{e6}\)
In Szekely – Porreca, corr. 1963, Black tried a remarkable piece sacrifice: 12...\(\text{xd4}\) 13.\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{xd4}\) 14.\(\text{b2}\) \(\text{d8}\)? It is very interesting, but a bit risky.

13.\(\text{b2}\)
This position occurred in Kreiman – Shipov, Internet 2001. Black can now seize the initiative by:
13.\(\text{fd8N}\) 14.\(\text{c1}\) \(\text{b6}\) 15.\(\text{c4!}\) \(\text{xc4}\) 16.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{e5}\)
13.\texttt{\texttt{d}d1} \texttt{\texttt{c}c8} 14.\texttt{e}e4 White has some pressure, Nikolaev – Zhelesny, Moscow 1999.

11.\texttt{a}a4 \texttt{a}a5
Also reasonable is 11...\texttt{\texttt{c}c6} 12.\texttt{a}a5 \texttt{\texttt{c}c8} followed by ...\texttt{\texttt{d}d6}.

12.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}b5 \texttt{\texttt{c}c6} 13.\texttt{e}e4 \texttt{\texttt{e}e6} 14.\texttt{f}f4 \texttt{\texttt{x}xd1} 15.\texttt{\texttt{x}xd1}
Spassky – Gligoric, Niksic 1983.

9...\texttt{\texttt{w}x}d1† 10.\texttt{x}d1
10.\texttt{\texttt{x}d1} Miteitelu – Stoica, Bucharest 1971, is not accurate as it allows: 10...\texttt{\texttt{a}a}4†N 11.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}2 \texttt{\texttt{d}d}8†

10...\texttt{\texttt{d}d}7 11.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}5
Another try is: 11.\texttt{\texttt{a}a}4 \texttt{\texttt{a}a}6 12.\texttt{c}6 bxc6 Black’s activity fully compensates for the problems with his pawn structure. 13.0–0 (Just bad is 13.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}2? \texttt{\texttt{a}a}5 14.\texttt{\texttt{x}xc}6 \texttt{\texttt{a}a}5 15.\texttt{e}e2 \texttt{\texttt{x}xb}2 16.\texttt{\texttt{b}b}1 \texttt{\texttt{b}b}8 and Black has won a pawn for no compensation, Dake – Smyslov, Lone Pine 1976.) This was Burmakin – Khalifman, St Petersburg 1996, and now Black should play 13...\texttt{\texttt{b}b}8N 14.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}4 \texttt{\texttt{b}b}7 followed by ...c5 at the right moment. I prefer Black’s position.

11...\texttt{\texttt{c}c}6 12.\texttt{\texttt{a}a}4
Black has no problems after: 12.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}4 13.\texttt{\texttt{e}e}7† \texttt{\texttt{h}h}8 14.\texttt{\texttt{x}xc}8 \texttt{\texttt{x}xc}8 15.exd4 16.0–0 \texttt{\texttt{x}xc}5† Bobotsov – Hort, Lugano 1968.

White doesn’t have 13.\texttt{\texttt{x}xc}6 bxc6 14.\texttt{\texttt{x}xe}7? \texttt{\texttt{a}a}7, as the knight would be trapped on e7.

13...\texttt{\texttt{e}e}6 14.\texttt{\texttt{x}xc}6 bxc6 15.\texttt{\texttt{b}b}4 \texttt{\texttt{x}xc}5 15...\texttt{\texttt{b}b}7!N may be even stronger, but the game continuation is also good enough.

16.\texttt{\texttt{x}xc}6 \texttt{\texttt{a}a}6 17.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}1 \texttt{\texttt{d}d}3!
Black has excellent compensation for the pawn, Letelier – Gligoric, Havana 1967.

This retreat is much less challenging, but still a bit tricky.

9.0–0
White has also tried:

9.dxc5
This is hardly a good decision, as it opens the long diagonal for the black bishop.

9...\texttt{\texttt{d}d}7 10.\texttt{\texttt{e}e}4
10.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}5 did not bring White success either: 10...\texttt{\texttt{a}a}6! 11.\texttt{\texttt{c}c}6 bxc6 12.\texttt{\texttt{x}xc}6 \texttt{\texttt{b}b}8 13.0–0 \texttt{\texttt{a}a}5 Black has an extremely powerful initiative for the pawn. 14.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}5 \texttt{\texttt{b}b}7 15.\texttt{\texttt{g}g}5 \texttt{\texttt{x}xf}3 16.\texttt{\texttt{g}g}xf3 \texttt{\texttt{a}a}5 White is defenceless against Black's threats, Fodor – Matlakov, Chotowa 2010.
10...\textit{c}6 11.c6
After 11.\textit{a}c2 \textit{d}xc5 12.\textit{a}xc5 \textit{a}a5+ 13.\textit{d}d2 \textit{xc}5 Black has the better chances, thanks to his pressure down the long diagonal, Gasser – Mikhalchishin, Bled 1996.

11...\textit{b}xc6 12.0-0 \textit{b}b8
Black's activity is more important than the weakness of his pawn structure.

12...\textit{d}c5 is not bad either.

13.\textit{b}b1?!
An unfortunate move, after which Black takes over the initiative.

13...\textit{c}5 14.\textit{c}2 \textit{a}6 15.\textit{e}e1 \textit{xe}4 16.\textit{xe}4 \textit{c}5 17.\textit{e}e2 \textit{d}d3+ Brujic – Vujacic, Obrenovac 2004.

9...\textit{c}xd4 10.\textit{ex}d4
10.\textit{d}xd4 \textit{g}7! This accurate move equalizes comfortably. 11.e4 (11.\textit{e}e2 \textit{c}6 12.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 13.\textit{d}d1 \textit{c}7 14.e4 has occurred a couple of times, and here I would recommend 14...e6 15.\textit{e}e3 \textit{ed}8 with equal play.) 11...\textit{c}6 12.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 13.\textit{f}f3 \textit{e}6! This important positional move restricts the white minor pieces.

14.\textit{g}3 This was Kuzmin – Jansa, Zinnowitz 1971, and now Black should play: 14...\textit{d}7!N 15.\textit{f}4 \textit{a}5 Black has good activity on the queenside and a sound position.

10...\textit{g}4
10...\textit{c}6 is more popular, but I think that the text is strong.

11.d5
Another natural line is:

11.h3 \textit{xf}3 12.\textit{xf}3 \textit{c}6 13.\textit{e}3
The most popular alternative is: 13.\textit{d}d1 a5 (I prefer this thematic idea to 13...\textit{xd}d4 14.\textit{xb}7 \textit{e}5 15.\textit{e}e3, when White retains some pressure) 14.\textit{e}e3 a4 15.\textit{c}c2 a3 (15...\textit{c}4?! is worth considering, although the text is also fine) 16.bxa3 \textit{xa}3 17.\textit{b}b3 \textit{a}5 18.\textit{ab}1 \textit{xb}3 19.\textit{xb}3 \textit{xb}3 20.\textit{xb}3 Engelbert – Kunsztowicz, Hamburg 1993. Now the simple 20...\textit{d}7!N would keep everything under control for Black.

13...\textit{d}7 14.\textit{a}d1
14.d5 \textit{d}4 15.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 16.\textit{xd}1 was played in Busche – Tkachuk, Germany 2008. Here I like the following solution: 16.\textit{xc}3?!N 17.\textit{bc}3 a5 18.\textit{e}e3 \textit{d}6 19.a4 \textit{ac}8 20.\textit{ed}4 \textit{d}7 Black is doing fine.

14...\textit{xd}4
Maintaining the tension by 14...\textit{a}5 also comes into consideration.

15.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 16.\textit{e}2
16.\textit{d}5 leads to an absolutely equal position: 16...\textit{xd}5 17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{e}6 18.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 19.\textit{xd}5 \textit{c}6=

16...\textit{e}5 17.\textit{xd}4 \textit{ex}d4 18.\textit{d}3 \textit{ad}8 19.\textit{fd}1 \textit{e}7
White regains the pawn, but meanwhile Black manages to exchange some major pieces and liquidates to an easily tenable endgame.
20.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 21.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{e1+} 22.\texttt{h2} \texttt{e5+} 23.\texttt{x4} \texttt{xf4+} 24.\texttt{xf4} \texttt{g7}

Black is ready to solve the problem of his f7-pawn by playing ...f5.

25.\texttt{d4} \texttt{e8}

The endgame is equal, Smirin - Grischuk, Rishon LeZion 2006.

11...\texttt{8d7} 12.\texttt{h3} \texttt{xf3} 13.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{c8}

Black has given up his light-squared bishop, but in return he has very active pieces and can create counterplay on the queenside. Theory considers 13...\texttt{c5} 14.\texttt{d1} \texttt{xb3} 15.\texttt{xb3} \texttt{c8} as the main line; after bringing his knight to d6 Black has a very solid position. However I prefer the text move, which I have twice played as Black.

14.\texttt{g5}

Another popular continuation is:

14.\texttt{e1} \texttt{e5} 15.\texttt{e2} \texttt{e8}

Black needs to defend the e7-pawn in order to prepare ...\texttt{ec4}.

16.\texttt{g5}

16.\texttt{d7}

A natural human move, but the computer shows that 16...\texttt{ec}N is already possible. After 17.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{d7} White has nothing better than 18.\texttt{d6} \texttt{xd6} 19.\texttt{g1} \texttt{f8} 20.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{xe7} 21.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xe7} going into a drawish endgame.

17.\texttt{e1}

17...\texttt{ac1} was played in Guichard - Collas, Belfort 2010, and now I do not see any reason to refrain from the planned: 17...\texttt{ec4N} 18.\texttt{a4} (18.\texttt{e1} \texttt{f5} 19.\texttt{h4} \texttt{e5} is excellent for Black) 18...\texttt{xa4} 19.\texttt{xa4} (Black has no problems after 19.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{a6}) 19...\texttt{xaxa4} 20.\texttt{b3} \texttt{a5} 21.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{f8} Black intends ...e6 next. The position is roughly level.

17...\texttt{ec4} 18.\texttt{d3}

18.\texttt{xc4?!} \texttt{xc4} 19.\texttt{d3} \texttt{b5} 20.\texttt{c1} \texttt{b6} 21.\texttt{ed1} \texttt{b4} 22.\texttt{e4} \texttt{b5} Black had the better chances in Erdos - Sedlak, Hungary 2009.

18...\texttt{xb2}!

A nice tactical solution.

19.\texttt{xb2} \texttt{f5}

The following play is now more or less forced.

20.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xc3} 21.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{xc3} 22.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{g5} 23.\texttt{d6} \texttt{e6}

Aleksandrov - Safarli, Moscow 2009. White should now force a draw by:

24.\texttt{c7N} \texttt{c8} 25.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{c1} 26.\texttt{b8+} \texttt{g7} 27.\texttt{xc1} \texttt{xc1+} 28.\texttt{h2} \texttt{f4+}

14...\texttt{h6}!

A very useful move, which I found over the board; it obliges White to choose a diagonal for his dark-squared bishop. Previously I played: 14...\texttt{e5} 15.\texttt{e2} \texttt{e8} Pellletier - Avrukh, Biel 2007. Here White could try 16.\texttt{a4N} \texttt{ec4} 17.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{xb6} 18.\texttt{e1} with slight pressure.
15.\textit{f4}

Of course 15.\textit{h4} is also possible: 15...\textit{e5} 16.\textit{e2} \textit{d7}! I think it is necessary to take control of the a4-square. (16...\textit{e8} was suggested by Vitaly Golod in \textit{Chess Informant} 104, but I feel uncomfortable after 17.\textit{a4}!) 17.\textit{fd1} \textit{fe8} 18.\textit{ac1} \textit{ec4} Black has a comfortable game.

15...\textit{c4} 16.\textit{xc4} \textit{xc4} 17.\textit{d6}

Golod gave 17.\textit{ae1} as deserving attention. It is a decent option, but Black has nothing to complain about after 17...\textit{e8} 18.\textit{e2} \textit{c8}.

17...\textit{exd6}

In Golod – Avrukh, Israel (ch) 2008, I played the less convincing 17...\textit{e6}.

18.\textit{xd6} \textit{e5}!

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

19.\textit{xe5}

In my calculations I had missed that White cannot play 19.\textit{d5}? in view of the beautiful: 19...\textit{d4}!! 20.\textit{xe4} \textit{f3}+ 21.\textit{gx e3} \textit{xe4} 22.\textit{xf8} \textit{xf8} Black has a clear edge.

19...\textit{xe5} 20.\textit{xb7} \textit{b8}

Black regains the pawn with comfortable equality, Castaneda – Below, Moscow 2009.

**Conclusion**

When White chooses any of 6.\textit{e2}, 6.\textit{d2} or 6.\textit{d3}, I believe that Black should immediately attack the centre with 6...\textit{c5}, obtaining good activity in each case. The most important position in the chapter occurs in line A3 after 6.\textit{e2} c5 7.0-0 \textit{cxd4} 8.\textit{exd4} \textit{d6}. White has a huge range of ninth move options here, but none of them promise him the advantage. Black’s thematic advance arrives later in line D) 6.\textit{xd5} \textit{d5} 7.\textit{c4} \textit{b6}, but there too, after either 8.\textit{e2} or 8.\textit{b3}, Black gets good play with 8...\textit{c5}. 
4. \( \text{g}f4 \)

Sidelines

Variation Index

1. \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{\&}f6 \) 2. \( \text{c}4 \) \( g6 \) 3. \( \text{c}3 \) \( d5 \) 4. \( \text{g}f4 \)

4.\( \ldots \text{g}7 \)

A) 5.\( \text{\&}b3 \)
B) 5.\( \text{\&}a4 \)
C) 5.\( \text{\&}c1 \) \( \text{\&}h5! \)
  C1) 6.\( \text{g}g5 \)
  C2) 6.\( \text{\&}e3 \)
  C3) 6.\( \text{\&}d2 \)

A) after 13.\( \text{\&}xa8 \)

C3) note to 7.e3

C3) after 18.\( \text{\&}c7 \)
Chapter 13 – Sidelines

1.d4 ডf6 2.c4 96 3.०c3 ०d5 4.०f4 ०g7

In this chapter we will consider the somewhat rare moves A) 5.०b3, B) 5.०a4 and C) 5.०c1.

A) 5.०b3

This move is unusual and looks slightly odd in connection with 4.०f4, but still it is essential to know how to respond.

5...c5

I like this thematic Grünfeld strike, especially as White has lost some control over the d4-square.

6.cxd5

6.०xd5N is objectively better, but after 6...०xd5 ०cxd5 ०xd5 ०f3 ०0-० 9.०d1 ०a5†! 10.०d2 ०b6 Black has nothing to worry about.

6...०cxd4 7.०a4†

7.०b5 ०0-० 8.०c7 does not work in view of 8...०h5 9.०g3, De Groot – Hebels, corr. 1990, and now Black could have seized a decisive initiative with: 9...०xg3N 10.०xg3 ०a6! 11.०xa8 ०a5† 12.०d1 ०f5 White can hardly expect to survive with his king on such a square.

7...०fd7

Also not bad is 7...०bd7?N 8.०xd4 ०h5 9.०d2 ०xf4 10.०xf4 0-0 with obvious compensation.

8.०b5 ०a6 9.०c1 ०0-० 10.०c7?! This move is consistent but bad. Objectively White should have tried something else, although Black has the advantage in any case.

10...०c5!
This refutes White’s idea.

11.०xc5 ०xc5 12.०a3 ०a6 13.०xa8
Here in the game Flear – Bejaoui, Tunis 2000, Black could have decided the issue by means of:
This move is unlikely to pose Black many problems. It has been tested twice by Karpov, albeit in blitz games, and he lost both times.

5...d7 6.b3 c6!

The most principled response.

7.e3

Other moves are weaker:

7.cxd5? cxd4 8.d1 b5! Already it is White who must fight for equality. 9.cxb5 bxc5 10.e4 xf1 11.xf1 0–0 12.c2 c8 13.d1 c6 Black was better in Rothman – Reshevsky, New York 1946.

7...a5 8.b4 xc4

This position occurred in Slepyo – G. Goldberg, Leningrad 1956, and now the simple 11...xb5N 12.cxb5 0–0 would have secured Black's advantage, for example: 13.e4 14.g7 g7 15.h3 d5 White has considerable problems.

9.xc4

9.xb7 has only been tried once: 9...b8 10.xa7 x2 11.xc7 x8 12.xb1 x1† 13.xb1 0–0 14.c3 c6 15.d3 (15.f3
looks better, but here too Black can use his development advantage effectively: 15...\texttt{b7} 16.\texttt{c5} \texttt{d7}! 17.\texttt{x}d5 \texttt{xd5} 18.\texttt{x}d5 \texttt{xe3} 19.fxe3 \texttt{xc7} Black has a serious initiative.)

8...

The present position was reached in Szeberenyi – Blasko, Budapest 2001, and here 15...\texttt{b7} would have been a strong improvement, for example: 16.\texttt{a5} \texttt{d7} (threatening \texttt{a8}) 17.\texttt{c5} \texttt{a8} 18.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{xc4} 19.\texttt{ge2} \texttt{xg2} 20.\texttt{g1} \texttt{c8} Black has an obvious advantage.

9...\texttt{xc4} 10.\texttt{xb7}

The most principled continuation. 10.\texttt{xc4} is playable, but in this case Black's bishop pair promises him a good game: 10...c6 11.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e6} 12.\texttt{e2} This occurred in Serrano Pertinez – Hernandez Jimenez, Barcelona 2000, and here I would recommend the following idea:

10...\texttt{b8}!

10...\texttt{b8} 11.\texttt{x}a7 \texttt{xb2} 12.\texttt{ge2} 0–0 13.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{e8} 14.\texttt{e5} looks rather unclear.

11.\texttt{xb8}+ \texttt{xb8} 12.0–0–0

12...\texttt{c6}!

Despite a fantastic score of 3½/4 on the database, I was not fully satisfied with Black's position after 12...\texttt{b7}. The problem is seen after 13.\texttt{f3} \texttt{g4}, Spiridonov – Jansa, Polanica Zdroj 1979, and now after 14.\texttt{d2}N \texttt{d7} 15.\texttt{e5}! \texttt{xe5} 16.dxe5 Black will have to fight for the draw.

13.\texttt{f3} \texttt{d5}!

I like the idea of exchanging the c3-knight, which stabilizes White's position on the queenside. The game might continue:

14.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{x}d5 15.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{b5} 16.\texttt{b1} \texttt{e4}

Preventing the e-pawn from advancing.

17.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{g2} 18.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{d7} 19.\texttt{g3} \texttt{e8} 20.b3 \texttt{d5} 21.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xc4} 22.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{xc4} 23.\texttt{b4} \texttt{b4} 24.\texttt{xb4} \texttt{xb4}=

The endgame is drawish.
5...\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{h5!}\)
This is considered the most principled answer to White's move order. The three main responses are C1) 6.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g5, C2) 6.\text{\textit{e}}\text{e3 and C3) 6.\text{\textit{d}}\text{d2.}}\)

C1) 6.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g5}\) \(\text{h6}\)
Forcing the bishop to define its intentions.

7.\(\text{\textit{h4}}\)
7.\(\text{\textit{d2}}\) is best met by: 7...dxc4! (7...c5 is possible, although compared with line C3 Black's kingside has been loosened slightly.) 8.e3 \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{6}\) By playing in this way, Black uses the free tempo ...h7-h6 to his advantage. 9.\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{3}\) c6 10.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{4}\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{5}\) 11.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{2}\) b5 12.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{5}\) This was J. Pinter – P. Popovic, Thessaloniki (ol) 1988. Now after Rowson's suggestion of 12...\(\text{\textit{xf3N}}\)
13.gxf3 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{7}\) Black should be at least equal.

7...c5
Challenging White's centre makes good sense. Another direction is 7...dxc4 8.e3 \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{6}\) 9.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{2}\) \(\text{\textit{f}}\text{6}\) with a reasonable position for Black.

8.e3
This is the main continuation, although other moves have occasionally been seen:

8.dxc5? is a mistake in view of 8...d4 9.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{5}\) g5 10.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{3}\) \(\text{\textit{xg3}}\) 11.hxg3 0–0 when Black is better.

8.cxd5? is also poor: 8...cxd4 9.\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{5}\) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{6}\) The opening of the centre is clearly favourable for Black: 10.\(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{5}\) 11.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{3}\)

Stefansson – Borge, Copenhagen 1998. At this point 11...\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{5!N}\) would have been strong;
12.e3 (12.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{3}\) \(\text{\textit{xg3}}\) 13.hxg3 \(\text{\textit{b}}\text{4!}\rightarrow\)) 12...\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{6}\) 13.\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{5}\) \(\text{\textit{f}}\text{8}\) Black is clearly better.

8.\(\text{\textit{xd5?!}}\) \(\text{\textit{c}}\text{6}\) 9.e3 has occurred twice in tournament practice, but for some reason in both games Black refrained from the natural 9...cxd4\(\text{N}\) when 10.exd4 transposes to the next note with 9.\(\text{\textit{xd5}}\).

8...cxd4 9.exd4
Chapter 13 – Sidelines

9.\( \text{d}x\text{d}5 \)?! \( \text{c}6 \) 10.\( \text{ex}d4 \) runs into the simple and strong 10...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}}}6 \) 11.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_f}}}3 \) \( 0-0 \) when Black takes over the initiative: 12.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}}}2 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_x}d}5 \) 13.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}d}5 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_x}d}5 \) 14.\( 0-0 \) \( \text{g}5 \) 15.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}}}1 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_x}d}8 \) (it is senseless to rush with 15...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}h}4 \) 16.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}c}5 \) 16.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_a}4 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}3 \} \) \( \text{This was Taboada – Klimakovs, corr. 2008, and now the simple 17...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_x}g}3 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_x}d}4 \) would have secured an extra pawn and a clear advantage for Black.}

9...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}6 \)}

9...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}c}4 \) is also a decent move.

10.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}d}5 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_f}3 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}4 \) 11.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}d}5 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_x}d}4 \) transposes to the main line.}

10...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_x}d}4 \) \( \text{Black has the better position, as demonstrated by the following encounter.}

11.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}3 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}4 \) 12.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_a}4 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}7 \) 13.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}d}1 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_f}5 \) !}

11.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}3 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}4 \) 12.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_a}4 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}7 \) 13.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}d}1 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_f}5 \) !}

Black certainly has no intention of repeating the position.

14...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_h}4 \) 15.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_x}h}5 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_f}3 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}5 \) \( \text{Black was clearly better in Paunovic – Krnic, Brezovica 1988.}

C2) 6.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}}}3 \)

It is hard to imagine that I would have paid attention to this move, were it not for the fact that it appeared in the game I. Sokolov – Smirin, St Petersburg 2010.

6...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}c}4 \) 7.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_a}4 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}6 \) 8.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}d}3 \) 0–0N \)

The aforementioned game continued 8...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}6 \) ! 9.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}5 \) when White had the better chances.

9.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}4 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}6 \) \( \text{Black tries to make use of his development advantage.}

10.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}5 \) \( \text{Other queen moves are also unimpressive.}

10.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_a}4 \) \( a6 \) 11.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}3 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_f}6 \) 12.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}2 \) (White has no time for 12.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_h}3 \) in view of 12...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}5 \) !) 12...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}4 \) 13.\( 0-0 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}3 \) 14.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_f}e}3 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_h}6 \) 15.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}1 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}5 \) Black has a great position.}

10.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}3 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}7 \) 11.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}3 \) (After 11.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}4 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}5 \) 12.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}5 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}6 \) White’s centre comes under attack and the b7-pawn is untouchable in view of the check on b4.) 11...\( \text{\textit{\text{\_f}d}8 \) White has problems with his d4-pawn. 12.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_g}2 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}4 \) 13.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}4 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}4 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}4 \) 15.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}4 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}4 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_b}5 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}4 \) 17.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}4 \) (17.0–0 \( c6 \) 18.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}7 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}c}1 \) 19.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}c}1 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}8 \) 20.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}6 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_f}e}6 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}7 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}c}8 \) 19.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}5 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}5 \) 20.\( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}5 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_b}6 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}7 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_c}7 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}c}8 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_e}c}8 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}5 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_d}5 \) \( \text{\textit{\text{\_b}6 \) \( White has problems as the black rook will penetrate to the second rank.}
10...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{W}}}d6!

The simplest solution.

11.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{W}}}xd6

11.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{E}}}e4 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{W}}}d5! 12.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{W}}}xd5 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{A}}}xd5 13.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{C}}}c5 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{D}}}d8!
is dangerous for White.

11...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{C}}}xd6 12.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{G}}}g3 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{F}}}f6 13.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{A}}}g2 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{D}}}d5+

Black has the more comfortable position.

C3) 6.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}d2

This is White's top choice according to theory.

6...c5!

Once again this typical counterattacking move works well.

7.e3

The alternatives are no better:

7.dxc5 d4 8.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}d5

8.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{E}}}e4 can be met by 8...0–0 or 8...a5\textit{\textbf{\textsc{E}}}.
8.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{a}}}a4 Komarov – V. Mikhailevski, Kiev 1995. 8...0–0\textit{\textbf{\textsc{N}}}

After this natural novelty Black can already fight for the advantage, for example: 9.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{F}}}f3 e5 10.e4 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{W}}}e8! 11.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{A}}}d3 (After 11.b4?! f5 12.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}d3 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{F}}}f6+ White cannot hold the centre.) 11...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{A}}}d7 12.b3 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{A}}}xa4 13.bxa4 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{a}}}a6 Black has a positional advantage.

8...e6 9.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}}}b4 0–0 10.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{f}}}f3 a5! 11.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}d3 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}c6

Black is ready to advance his central pawns, so White's next move is understandable. 12.e4 dxe3 13.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{A}}}xe3 e5 14.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}d2

This was Balogh – Stohl, Slovakia 1994, and here Black could have improved with:

14...f5! 15.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{f}}}f3 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{W}}}e7

White's position is critical, for instance: 16.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{A}}}e2 e4 17.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{f}}}xe4 fxe4 18.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{f}}}f2 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}f4 19.0–0

White has no good defence.

7.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}xd5 cxd4 8.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}}}b5 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{a}}}a6 9.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{W}}}b3
9.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}xd4 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{W}}}xd5 gives Black easy play.
9...0–0 10.e4

Maksimenko – David, Odessa 1990. Now Black should have played:

10...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}xe3!\textit{\textbf{\textsc{N}}}

With a clear advantage in development, Black should take the opportunity to open the position.
11. \( \text{\wedge}xe3 \text{\wedge}f6 \) 12. \( \text{\wedge}c3 \)
12. \( \text{\wedge}c4 \text{\wedge}g4! \) is strong.
12... \( \text{\wedge}a5 \) 13. \( \text{\wedge}c4 \)
13. \( \text{\wedge}xa6 \text{\wedge}xa6 \) 14. \( \text{\wedge}ge2 \text{\wedge}e6 \) does not change the assessment.
13... \( \text{\wedge}f5 \) 14. \( \text{\wedge}ge2 \text{\wedge}c5 \) 15. \( \text{\wedge}b5 \)
Also after 15. \( \text{\wedge}d1 \text{\wedge}g4 \) Black's chances are preferable.
15... \( \text{\wedge}xb5 \) 16. \( \text{\wedge}xb5 \text{\wedge}fc8 \) 17.0-0 \( \text{\wedge}a6 \) 18. \( \text{\wedge}c4 \text{\wedge}g4 \) Black is on top.

7... \( \text{\wedge}xd4 \) 8. \( \text{\wedge}xd4 \text{\wedge}xc4 \)
8... \( \text{\wedge}c6 \) 9. \( \text{\wedge}xd5 \text{\wedge}xd5 \) 10. \( \text{\wedge}ge2 \) gives White a slight plus.

9.d5
The alternative is:
9. \( \text{\wedge}xc4 \) 0-0
9... \( \text{\wedge}xd4 \) is risky: 10. \( \text{\wedge}d5 \text{\wedge}e5+ \) 11. \( \text{\wedge}e3 \text{\wedge}c6 \) 12. \( \text{\wedge}f3 \text{\wedge}d6 \) 13.0-0 0-0 14.b4! White has definite compensation.
10.d5
10. \( \text{\wedge}f3 \text{\wedge}g4 \) 11.d5 (worse is 11.0-0?! \( \text{\wedge}c6 \)
12.d5 \( \text{\wedge}d4 \) 11... \( \text{\wedge}d7 \) Black is fine.
10... \( \text{\wedge}d7 \) 11. \( \text{\wedge}f3 \text{\wedge}a6! \)
We have transposed to the main line.

9...0-0 10. \( \text{\wedge}xc4 \text{\wedge}d7 \) 11. \( \text{\wedge}f3 \text{\wedge}a6! \)
With this key move, Black intends to develop his queenside by means of ...\( \text{\wedge}b5 \) and ...\( \text{\wedge}b7 \).

Instead after 11... \( \text{\wedge}b6 \)?! 12. \( \text{\wedge}b3 \) Black's knight is clearly misplaced.

12.a4
12. \( \text{\wedge}e3 \) occurred in Venturino – Nizynski, corr. 1991, and now Black should have proceeded with his planned move:

12... \( \text{\wedge}b5 \)N Presumably he was concerned about 13. \( \text{\wedge}e2 \) intending \( \text{\wedge}d4 \) next, but after the courageous 13... \( \text{\wedge}xc3+ \)! Black gets a good position thanks to the direct attack on the d5-pawn: 14. \( \text{\wedge}xc3 \) (or 14. \( \text{\wedge}xc3 \text{\wedge}d5 \) 15. \( \text{\wedge}e3 \text{\wedge}a5+ \)!) 14... \( \text{\wedge}d5 \) 15. \( \text{\wedge}c4 \text{\wedge}xc4 \) 16. \( \text{\wedge}xc4 \text{\wedge}b7 \)
The onus will be on White to demonstrate compensation after the d-pawn perishes.

12... \( \text{\wedge}b5 \)!
Black takes a concrete approach to the position, which is justified by his lead in development.
13. axb5 a6! 14. b3 axb5 15. cxb5

After 15. cxb5 cxd5 16. cxd5 w xd5 17. c6
e6† 18. c3 b8= only Black can be better.

15... cxd5 16. 0-0 b7 17. cxd5 cxd5
18. c7

This position was reached in Lauber–Holzke, Germany 2000. Now instead of exchanging on f3 Black should have played:

Conclusion

Most of the lines in the present chapter are used by players looking to avoid theory. None of them should worry the second player, and in most cases a quick ...c5 should give Black a promising game when followed up correctly.

18... a2!N

The most ambitious, although there is nothing wrong with Krasenkow's suggestion of 18... b8 19. cxd5 xd5 with equality.

19. cxd5xd5

The rook is well-placed on the second rank, and the b-pawn is likely to become more of a weakness than a strength.
Chapter 14

4. $\mathcal{A}f4$

6.$\mathcal{A}c1$

Variation Index

1.d4 $\mathcal{Af}6$ 2.c4 g6 3.$\mathcal{D}c3$ d5 4.$\mathcal{Af}4$ $\mathcal{Ag}7$ 5.$\mathcal{D}f3$ 0–0 6.$\mathcal{A}c1$

6...dxc4

A) 7.e3 $\mathcal{A}e6$ 8.$\mathcal{D}g5$ $\mathcal{Xd}5$ 9.e4 h6 10.exd5 hxg5 11.$\mathcal{D}xg5$ $\mathcal{D}xd5$ 12.$\mathcal{D}xc4$

$\mathcal{Db}6$ 13.$\mathcal{D}b3$ $\mathcal{D}c6$

A1) 14.d5

A2) 14.$\mathcal{D}e2$

A1)

A2)

B) 7.e4 $\mathcal{Ag}4$ 8.$\mathcal{D}xc4$ $\mathcal{D}h5$ 9.$\mathcal{A}e3$ $\mathcal{D}xf3$

B1) 10.$\mathcal{D}xf3$

B2) 10.gxf3 e5! 11.dxe5 $\mathcal{D}xe5$ 12.$\mathcal{W}xd8$ $\mathcal{W}xd8$

B21) 13.$\mathcal{D}e2$

B22) 13.0–0

note to 6.$\mathcal{A}c1$

B1) after 14.$\mathcal{D}fd1$

B22) after 19.e5

16...$\mathcal{W}a3!$N

14...$\mathcal{D}f6!$N

19...f6!N
1. d4 ♞f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♞c3 d5 4. f4 ♞g7 5. ♞f3 0-0

6. ♞c1

This move is the primary subject of the present chapter.

6. ♞b3 dxc4 7. ♞xc4 ♞a6 would take us to Chapter 10.

6. e3 c5

From this position the most likely outcome is a transposition to one of the main lines considered elsewhere. Let us briefly consider a few independent possibilities.

7. dxc5

7. ♞e2 cxd4 8. exd4 ♞c6 leads to a reversed Tarrasch in which White has the extra tempo ♞c1-f4. Black should have no real problems here, considering that f4 would seldom be the bishop's preferred square in such positions.

7. ♞a5 8. ♞a4

White's best and most common continuation is 8. ♞c1, after which 8...dxc4 9. ♞xc4 ♞xc5 takes us to the starting position of Chapter 17.

The alternatives are worse, for instance:

8. cxd5? ♞xd5! 9. ♞e5 ♞xc3 10. ♞d2 ♞xe5

Black's position was already more pleasant in Levenfish – Botvinnik, Leningrad 1937.

8... ♞xc5 9. ♞b5 ♞xb5 10. ♞xb5 ♞a6

White's exchanging manoeuvre has achieved very little. Here is one illustrative example:

11. ♞d1 ♞e6 12. ♞fd4 ♞d7 13. ♞e5 ♞fc8

14. cxd5 ♞xd5 15. ♞xg7 ♞xg7

Black's position was already more pleasant in Levenfish – Botvinnik, Leningrad 1937.

The only other noteworthy alternative is:

6. cxd5?

This is not a great idea, as White seems to have forgotten about developing his kingside.

6... ♞xd5

It is worth considering two options here.

a) It has long been known that White cannot take the c7-pawn, so I just want to show you why:

7. ♞xd5? ♞xd5 8. ♞xc7 ♞c6 9. e3 ♞f5

White has tried several moves here, but in all cases the evaluation is clear: Black's superior development is more valuable than White's extra pawn.
Chapter 14 – 6...Ec1

10...Ec2
10...a3 Ec8 11...g3 runs into a powerful retort: 11...c2! 12...e2 a5 13...d2 e5 14...b5 xxb5 15...xb5 exd4 16.exd4 xxd4 17.0–0 ffd8† Shestakov – Zilberstein, Soviet Union 1974.
10...Ec8 11...g3 a5†

16...a3!N 17.d5 Ec2 White is in trouble.

b) 7...e5
This is safer, although it can hardly trouble the second player.
7...xe5 8.xe5 c5

12...d2
12...f1 has occurred in two games. 12...b4!N is the right way to develop Black’s initiative, for instance: 13...b3 Ec6 14.a3 c2 15.d1 b6 16...a2 e6 17...b1 Ec8 Black is clearly better.
12...b4 13.0–0 Ec2 14...e1 xb2 From this position Black has made a 100% score from four games. Here is one example:
15...e5 xe5 16...xe5
This is Anikaev – Giorgadze, Soviet Union 1973, and now the following improvement looks strong:

9.e3
Dubious is: 9.dxc5?! xc3 10...xd8 Exd8 11.bxc3 Tunik–Mikheev, St Petersburg 2009. Here Black missed the strong 11...e6!N 12.c1 d7 13.d3 ab8 intending ...dc8 and ...c5. White is in trouble here.
9...xc3 10.bxc3 d7 11.d3
In the event of 11.d3?! Black has a strong response: 11...cx4 12...xd4 e5! 13...e2 (Also after 13...xe5 dxe5 14...xe5 a5† 15...d2 xe5 16.d1 e6 Black has the better chances.) 13...exd4 14.exd4 xh6† White is likely to lose his central pawn, Pomar Salamanca – Jimenez Zerquera, Marianske Lazne 1965.
11...\texttt{a5}!!N
It seems to me that Black can play for more than just an equal game with 11...\texttt{b6} 12.\texttt{\texttt{e}2 \texttt{b7} 13.0-0 \texttt{c7} 14.\texttt{a4} \texttt{f6} when a draw was agreed in Akobian – Golod, Las Vegas 2004.

12.\texttt{\texttt{d}2} \texttt{b6}
White’s position is a bit uncomfortable, as shown by the following line:

13.\texttt{\texttt{e}2}
After 13.d5 \texttt{f6} 14.\texttt{c4} \texttt{xd2}+ 15.\texttt{xd2} \texttt{e6} White cannot hold his centre: 16.\texttt{e4} \texttt{e8}! 17.f3 exd5 18.cxd5 \texttt{xd5} 19.\texttt{b5} \texttt{xe6} 20.\texttt{c4} \texttt{b4} 21.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{xe6} Black will collect a second pawn for the exchange and he retains clearly better chances.

13...\texttt{f6} 14.\texttt{e5} \texttt{b7}
14...\texttt{e4} 15.\texttt{c6}! leads to a balanced position.

15.\texttt{c4} \texttt{a4} 16.0-0 \texttt{ec8}
Black has the more pleasant game.

6...dxc4
Now we reach an important crossroads where White must choose between A) 7.e3 and B) 7.e4.

A) 7.e3 \texttt{e6} 8.\texttt{g5}
It is doubtful that White has any reasonable alternative here, for instance: 8.\texttt{e5}?! c5 9.dxc5 \texttt{h5} 10.\texttt{xd8} \texttt{xd8} 11.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{xf4}

12.exf4 This was Lebreton – Spielmann, Port Barcares 2005, and now after the simple 12...\texttt{c6}N 13.\texttt{e3} \texttt{ac8} 14.\texttt{e2} \texttt{d4}+ Black regains the pawn and his bishop pair gives him clearly better chances.

8..\texttt{d}5 9.e4
The alternative is:

9.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd5} 10.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{xf4} 11.\texttt{f3}!
White’s chosen line is tricky, but Black should be doing well if he responds correctly.

11...\texttt{e6}!
Black should not be tempted to win a pawn, since after 11...\texttt{xf2}?! 12.\texttt{xg2} c6 13.h4 \texttt{a5}+ 14.\texttt{e2} White’s attack is dangerous.

12.\texttt{xf4} c5!
Black should act quickly, otherwise his opponent will generate a dangerous attack on the kingside.

13.dxc5
13.\texttt{xf7}! does not work in view of the calm reaction 13...\texttt{e7}! 14.\texttt{h6}+ (14.\texttt{e4} \texttt{xf7}) 14...\texttt{h8} when White loses material.
13...\textw a5\textf t!N.
13...\textd d7 was played in Borges Mateos – Staniszewski, Polanica Zdroj 1988, but I am a bit worried about 14.b4\textf t!N when White tries to hold onto his extra pawn.

14.\texte e2 \textd d7
This is the best square for the knight. The inferior 14...\textb b6? runs into 15.\textx x a6! \textw x a6\textf t 16.\textc c4 \textc c6 17.b3 and after 17...\textw x g2 18.\texth h4 h6 19.\textf f3 g5 20.\textw e4 g4 21.\textd d2 \textw x e4 22.\textx x e4 White is clearly better.

15.\textw h4 h6 16.\textx x e6
This looks nice for White, but it turns out that Black has everything under control.

16...g5! 17.\textx x g5
It is of crucial importance that the following line is in Black's favour: 17.\textw h3\textf t! fxe6 18.\textx x e6\textf t \texth h8 19.\textx x d7 White has won two pawns, but his exposed king will be his undoing. 19...\texta a6\textf t! 20.\textc c e1 \textw x a2 Black has a decisive attack.

17...h x g5 18.\textw x g5 \texte e5 19.\texth h d1 \texte ac8\textf t
The position is complex and unbalanced, but it seems to me that Black's chances are preferable due to his strong pieces.

9...h6 10.exd5 hxg5 11.\textx x g5 \textx x d5
11...b5?! is interesting, but I prefer the straightforward regaining of the pawn.

12.\textx x c4

12.\textw f3?! is not really a serious alternative due to 12...\textb b4\textf t!, for example: 13.\textx x c4 \textw x d4 14.\texte e2 \textw e5 15.h4 \textc c6 16.\textf f4 This was Govciyan – D'Costa, Chalkidiki 2001, and now Black could have secured his advantage by means of:

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

16...f5\textf t!N 17.\textg g3 \textf f6 White's attack is insufficient: 18.h5 g5 19.h6 \textc c d4 20.\textw c3 \textx x f4 21.h x g7 \textw x g7\textf t

12...\textb b 6 13.\textb b 3 \textc c 6

12...\textb b 6 13.\textb b 3 \textc c 6

13...\textw d 4 14.\texte e 2.

A1) 14.d5 \textd d 4 15.0-0

In this position Black can choose between two routes to an equal game.
15...\textit{Wd7}

According to theory this is the main move.

15...\textit{0xb3} 16.\textit{Wxb3} \textit{xc3}

This is equally playable and is a bit more drawish, which may be a good or a bad thing depending on one's opponent and tournament/match situation.

17.\textit{Exc3}

17.bxc3 is also possible: 17...\textit{Wxd5} 18.\textit{xe7}

18...\textit{fe8} (I would prefer to swap queens in order to eliminate the danger of being attacked on the dark squares: 18...\textit{xb3N} 19.\textit{axb3} \textit{fe8} 20.\textit{c5} \textit{d7} 21.\textit{e3} a5 22.\textit{fd1} \textit{e5=} Black has no problems.) 19.c4 This position occurred in Gershon - J. Horvath, Chalkidiki 2002, and now Black could have equalized as follows: 19...\textit{c6N} 20.\textit{fe1} \textit{c8!} 21.\textit{a3} \textit{d6} 22.\textit{b2} \textit{xe1} 23.\textit{exel} \textit{xe8} 24.\textit{exe8} \textit{xe8} 25.\textit{c3} f6 Black easily holds.

17...\textit{xd5} 18.\textit{xe7} \textit{fe8} 19.\textit{c5}

More accurate would have been 19.\textit{a3} with an equal game.

19...\textit{Ee2}!

Now Black becomes rather active and White should be careful.

20.\textit{Ed1}?! The calm 20.h3 was preferable.

20...\textit{Ee8} 21.\textit{Ee3}?

A disastrous blunder. Instead 21.\textit{c3} \textit{f5} 22.\textit{f1} \textit{d5} 23.\textit{d3} was unpleasant but probably still tenable for White.

21...\textit{xc5}

0–1 Gershon - Avrukh, Tel Aviv 2002.

16.\textit{Ee1}

16.\textit{c3} also fails to pose Black problems: 16...\textit{xb3} 17.\textit{xb3} \textit{xc3} 18.\textit{xb6} axb6 19.\textit{xc3} \textit{fd8} 20.\textit{d1} \textit{a5=} Vegh - Flumbert, Hungary 2004.

16.h4 is equally harmless: 16...\textit{ad8} 17.a3 \textit{xb3} 18.\textit{xb3} \textit{d5} 19.\textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 20.\textit{xd5} \textit{xc7} 1/2–1/2 Giorgadze - Shirov, Cala Galdana 2001.

16...\textit{fe8} 17.h4

17.\textit{e3}?! \textit{xb3} 18.\textit{xb3} \textit{xc3} 19.\textit{xc3} \textit{xd5} White has tried this sacrifice several times, but it seems to me that it is dubious due to the following variation: 20.c4 \textit{c6} 21.\textit{d4} \textit{ad8} 22.\textit{a1} f6 23.\textit{c3} This was Dreev - Sutovsky, Moscow 2002, and here I found a natural improvement:
Chapter 14 - 6...c1

14...e4 15...xc1 15...xc1

15...xc1

15...xc1 is a mistake due to 15...xc1 16...xc1...xc1 17...xc1...xc1 when Black takes over the initiative.

15...xc1 16...xc1

The position is equal.

A2) 14...e2 a5!

It is thanks to this important move that this whole variation in no longer fashionable at grandmaster level.

15.a4

The main continuation.

Clearly worse is: 15.0–0?! a4 16...c4...xc4 (16...xc4N also leads to an advantage, but 22...xe7...xe7 23...g5...c4 when Black has nothing to worry about.) 20...xb7...xc3 21...xc3 a5 The position is equal, Xu Jun - Ghinda, Timisoara 1987.

18...xa4 19...xa4

This position occurred in Bareev - Van Wely, Germany 2001.

19...c6?!N

In the game Black exchanged queens and a draw was soon agreed, but I prefer the text move slightly.

20...c6

20...e4?! is a mistake due to 20...b5 21...b4 a5! 22...c5 b4 23...xc6...xc6 when Black takes over the initiative.

20...xc6

The position is equal.

18...c6!N

White's compensation is inadequate.

Other possibilities also fail to trouble the second player.

18...c6!N 24...g3...f7 25...c2...g8

White's compensation is inadequate.

18...ad8

This position occurred in Bareev - Van Wely, Germany 2001.

19...c6?!N

In the game Black exchanged queens and a draw was soon agreed, but I prefer the text move slightly.

20...xc6

20...e4?! is a mistake due to 20...b5 21...b4 a5! 22...c5 b4 23...xc6...xc6 when Black takes over the initiative.

20...xc6

The position is equal.

A2) 14...e2 a5!

It is thanks to this important move that this whole variation in no longer fashionable at grandmaster level.

15.a4

The main continuation.

Clearly worse is: 15.0–0?! a4 16...c4...xc4 (16...xc4N also leads to an advantage, but
there is nothing wrong with the text move.) 17.\textit{Exc}4 \textit{d}5 18.\textit{Cc}1 This was Hartoch – Timman, Leeuwarden 1971, and now the forcing 18...\textit{Exd}4!? would have been very strong, since after 19.\textit{Exd}4 \textit{Exd}4 20.\textit{Exc}7 \textit{Exa}2 21.\textit{Exb}7 \textit{Eab}8! White loses the b2-pawn.

15.a3
This is a more respectable alternative.
15...a4 16.\textit{Aa}2

16...\textit{Exd}4
For players who wish to avoid the drawish main line I can recommend the following more enterprising approach: 16...\textit{Aa}5!? The possibility of activating the rook in this way constitutes one of the main advantages of advancing the a-pawn. 17.\textit{Ed}2 \textit{Eb}5! 18.\textit{Ae}3 \textit{e}6 (18...\textit{Aa}5!? looks interesting as well) 19.0–0 \textit{Ee}7 The game is complex and approximately equal, Uifelean – Clark, corr. 2007.

17.\textit{Exd}4
Playing for an attack on the kingside is not really an option for White as 17.h4 can be met by 17...\textit{Aa}5!.
17...\textit{Exd}4 18.\textit{Exd}4 \textit{Axd}4 19.\textit{Exc}7 \textit{Eac}8!
20.\textit{Exc}8
The alternatives are equally harmless:
20.\textit{Exb}7!! \textit{Ec}2 21.\textit{Exe}7 \textit{Axb}2 22.\textit{Axe}2 \textit{Efc}8 23.\textit{Exc}2 \textit{Exc}2 White already has to fight for the draw, Bergner – Packroff, e-mail 2008. 20.\textit{Exe}7 \textit{Ec}2 21.\textit{d}1! (After the inaccurate 21.\textit{Ae}2? \textit{Afc}8 White is in trouble.) 21...\textit{Exb}2 22.\textit{Ae}2 \textit{Ab}5 23.\textit{h}4 \textit{Od}5 24.\textit{Axd}5 \textit{Exd}5 25.\textit{Ed}2 f6 In this equal position a draw was agreed in Timar – Marcinkiewicz, corr. 2003.
20...\textit{Exc}8 21.\textit{Ed}2 \textit{e}6 22.\textit{Ae}3 \textit{Axe}3† 23.\textit{fxe}3 \textit{Oc}4† 24.\textit{Axc}4 ½–½ Dreev – Khalifman, Wijk aan Zee 2002. The resulting rook endgame is equal.

15...\textit{Ee}8!
I found this important move over the board in my game against Giorgadze in 1999, completely unaware that it had been played as early as 1971. It has been played in several subsequent games and practice has shown that Black is fine.

16.\textit{O–O}
Two other moves of interest are:

16.d5?! is inferior as White’s d-pawn becomes weak: 16...\textit{Ae}4 17.\textit{Cc}3 Now in the game Tibensky – Banas, Slovakia 2002, Black missed the very strong: 17...\textit{c}5!N 18.0–0 (The main tactical point is that 18.dxc6? is impossible due to 18...\textit{d}3† when Black wins.) 18...\textit{c}4 19.\textit{Ae}2 \textit{Ae}6\textit{d}5† Black is simply a pawn up.

16.\textit{Ee}3 e5 17.dxe5 (17.d5 is not dangerous: 17...\textit{Axd}4 18.\textit{Cc}3 This was Dreev – Ni Hua,
Shanghai 2001, and now it would have been a good idea to exchange White’s central pawn by means of: 18...c6!N 19.dxc6 bxc6 20.0–0 dxc4 Black is at least equal.) 17...e5N (There is also nothing wrong with 17...xd1† 18.exd1 exf5 19.exb6 cxb6 20.0–0 fd8 with equality, Giorgadze – Atalik, Batumi 1999.) 18.c2 fd6 19.0–0 be8 The position is balanced.

16...exd4

In the stem game Grigorian – Savon, Leningrad 1971, the players agreed a draw here.

17.exd4 edx4 18.xe7

White should take the opportunity to regain the pawn.

18.h3?! looks too risky: 18...e6! 19.c2 d5 (19...d7?!N is also promising) 20.ed1 be4 21.ed2 eb6 22.xd5 edx5 23.xd5 cd8 24.cf3 c6 Even after regaining the pawn White is under some pressure, Kerssemakers – Lont, corr. 1990.

18.xd1 19.exd1

19.xf3d1 does not change much: 19...xb2 20.xf8 (20.c2 be8 21.c5 be6=) 20...xc1 21.c5 g5 In this equal position a draw was agreed in Ebner – Mezera, e-mail 2007.

19...be8 20.c5

20.a3?! ef8! can only help Black.

20...cd8!

This is the last accurate move, which secures equality.

20...xb2?! would have been a mistake: 21.xb6 cxb6 22.xd7 ef8 23.xb7+ Black is under some pressure and the f7-pawn is a clear target.

21.xb6 cxb6 22.d5 xb2 23.xb7 d4=

The position is absolutely equal, Giorgadze – Avrukh, Bugojno 1999.

B) 7.e4

7...g4

This is not the only playable move, but it is the main line and the one I consider the most reliable.

8.xc4

This is almost always played.

8.e5?! is premature due to 8...h5! 9.e3 c5 10.xc5 Borges Mateos – Llobel Cortell, Albacete 2002, and now the simple 10...c6N 11.xc4 edx1† 12.xd1 xf3 13.xf3 xe5=
would have given Black the more pleasant game.

8...\texttt{e}3?! does not seem very logical. 8...c5 (8...\texttt{h}5 9.xc4 transposes to the main line, but Black should try to take advantage of his opponent’s questionable move order.) 9.dxc5 \texttt{a}5 10.c2 \texttt{e}6! 11.h3 (11.g5 runs into 11...\texttt{g}4! 12.xe6 \texttt{x}e3 13.fxe3 fxe6 14.xc4 \texttt{a}6 15.xxe6\texttt{h}8 when Black has a long-term initiative due to White’s unsafe king.) 11...\texttt{c}6 12.a3 \texttt{d}7 The initiative is with Black, Mudra – Zahour, corr. 2005.

8...\texttt{h}5

9.\texttt{e}3

This is the clear first choice, but in a few games White has deviated with:

9.g5?! \texttt{xf}3!

9...\texttt{c}6 10.e2 \texttt{xf}3 11.xf3 \texttt{xd}4 12.xh5 gxh5 13.xh5 \texttt{d}3! 14.xe2 \texttt{xe}2\texttt{f} 15.xe2 \texttt{d}4\texttt{f} 16.e6 was a convincing route to equality in Dreev – Smirin, Moscow 2002, but Black can strive for more.

10.xf3 \texttt{xd}4 11.d5

The present position was reached in Dreev – Peng Xiaomin, Shanghai 2001. At this point White’s opening concept could effectively have been refuted as follows:

11...\texttt{e}6!N 12.xc7

12.e3 \texttt{e}5 just leaves Black with an extra pawn.

12.e7\texttt{h}8 13.0–0 \texttt{e}5 White’s opening has been an obvious failure, as he is a pawn down and his knight is almost trapped on e7.

12...\texttt{e}5! 13.xa8 \texttt{g}5 14.0–0 \texttt{e}5! 15.b3 \texttt{c}6 16.xb7

Objectively 16.g3 would last longer, but after 16...\texttt{e}7 White loses his knight on a8 and Black’s material advantage should decide the game.

16...\texttt{f}4 17.g3 \texttt{h}5!

Black has a winning attack.

9...\texttt{xf}3

In this position White must choose between B1) 10.xf3 and B2) 10.gxf3.

B1) 10.xf3
Chapter 14 - 6. \( \text{c1} \)

This move is considered harmless by theory, and with good reason.

10... \( \text{\&xd4} \) 11.0-0

I also examined: 11.d1 c5 12.0-0 \( \text{\&c6} \) 13.\( \text{\&e2} \) (13.\( \text{\&h6} \) looks more challenging, but after 13...\( \text{\&e5} \) 14.\( \text{\&e2} \) Black has the elegant: 14...e6! 15.g3 [Obviously the rook is untouchable in view of the threatened 15...\( \text{\&f4} \).] 15...\( \text{\&g7} \) Black is better.) 13...\( \text{\&b8} \) 14.\( \text{\&d5} \) This position occurred in Nogues – Villanueva, Argentina 2007, and now Black should have played 14...\( \text{\&d8!N} \) with the point that 15.\( \text{\&xc6} \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 16.\( \text{\&a4} \) can be met by 16...\( \text{\&e5!} \) with a clear advantage.

11...c5 12.e5

After 12.\( \text{\&h6} \) \( \text{\&g7} \) Black has no problems.

12.\( \text{\&fd1} \) \( \text{\&c6} \) 13.\( \text{\&h6} \) can be met by the attractive 13...\( \text{\&e5} \) 14.\( \text{\&e2} \) e6!, just as in the note to move 11 above. The following is a great example of Black's chances: 15.\( \text{\&b5} \) (15.\( \text{\&xf8} \) \( \text{\&g5!!} \) gives Black a serious initiative)

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

The knight returns to the centre and takes control over some important squares. Here is an illustrative line:

15.\( \text{\&b5} \) \( \text{\&c7!} \) 16.\( \text{\&xc6} \) \( \text{\&xe3} \) 17.\( \text{\&xe3} \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 18.\( \text{\&a4} \) \( \text{\&fd8} \) 19.\( \text{\&xc5} \) \( \text{\&xd1} \) 20.\( \text{\&xd1} \) \( \text{\&e5} \)

Black's chances are clearly higher.

B2) 10.gxf3

15...\( \text{\&h4!} \) 16.\( \text{\&xd4} \) cxd4 17.\( \text{\&xf8} \) \( \text{\&f4} \) 18.\( \text{\&f1} \) \( \text{\&xf8} \)

With two fantastic knights plus a strong passed pawn, Black had more than sufficient compensation in Petukhov – Dard, e-mail 2006.

12...\( \text{\&c6} \) 13.e6 f5! 14.\( \text{\&fd1} \)

10...e5!

Immediately challenging White's centre.
11.dxe5
After 11.d5 Qf4 White can hardly hope for an advantage with such a weakened kingside, Klee – Saering, Oberwinden 2007.

11...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}\text{xe5}}\)
I did a lot of work on this system a number of years ago, when I played it quite often. For some time I considered 11...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{W}}h4?!}\) to be an interesting attempt,

based on the idea of a positional exchange sacrifice after 12.c5 \(Qc6!\) 13.Qxf8 Qxf8 with decent compensation.

However, in the following encounter White introduced an extraordinary idea which refutes Black's eleventh move: 12.Qxf7\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}\)!! Qxf7 13.e6 Qf8 14.Wb3! The key move, after which Black has no good defence against the dual threats of e7\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}\) and Qb7. 14...Qc6 15.e7\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}\) Qh8 16.exf8-WQxf8 White has a winning position although he later went horribly wrong and lost in Bosboom – Finkel, Dieren 1997.

12.Wxd8
This is the main line. Exchanging queens is logical, as White's best chances to make something of his bishop pair will come in the endgame. Nevertheless Black also has certain advantages in the form of a better pawn structure and potential knight outpost on f4. We will see that with correct play the position should be balanced, but first we should pay attention to a couple of lesser moves.

Avoiding the queen exchange with 12.Wb3?! is rather risky, as White's damaged pawn structure will render his king rather vulnerable. 12...Qc6! 13.Qxb7 Qd4 As practice has shown, Black's initiative is dangerous:

![Diagram 1](attachment:image1)

14.Qxd4 (After 14.Qd5 Qxf3\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}\) 15.Qe2 Qd4\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}\) 16.Qd3?! Qb8 17.Qa7 Qe6 White's king was in a precarious position to say the least, Barbero – Szeberenyi, Budapest 2000.) 14...Qxd4 15.Qe2 Qe5! (Black has no interest in allowing a queen exchange after 15...Qb8?! 16.Qd5.) 16.Qc6 Qb8 17.Qd1 This position occurred in J. Garcia – Pacheco, Lima 2002, and here Black missed a powerful idea:

![Diagram 2](attachment:image2)

17...Qd6!\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}\) With this move Black frees the f6-square for his queen and also sets up a potentially troublesome check on b4. 18.Qb3
White is under permanent pressure on the dark squares.

12...h6?! is met by a powerful counterargument: 12...c6! 13.xf8 xf8 After his excellent positional exchange sacrifice, Black's domination over the dark squares gives him more than enough compensation. One example continued: 14.e2 f4 15.xf4 xf4 16.e3 Rogers – Timofeev, Amsterdam 2005, and here I found a logical improvement:

Here we have two options: B21) 13.e2 and B22) 13.0-0.

13.b4?! turned out badly in the following encounter: 13...f4 14.d5?! g2?! 15.f1 xe3† 16.fxe3 c6 17.f4 cxd5 18.xd5 c6 19.fxe5 xb4† Lputian – Ivanchuk, Elista 1998.

**B21) 13.e2**

With this move White takes control over some dark squares and prepares to advance his f-pawn. When I worked on this line several years ago I considered the text move to be White's most challenging approach, but nowadays I do not find it in the least bit frightening.

13...c6 14.0-0

14.f4?! is weaker, but it demands an accurate reaction: 14...xb2 15.b1 a5! An important resource! 16.d5 (16.xb2 xc4 17.xb2 xe3 [17...f6†N was also worth considering] 18.fxe3 f6 19.e5 g4 20.g1 xe3 Black was slightly better in Relange – Palac, Bastia 1998.) 16.c6 17.xf7† xf7 18.xb2 Wichmann – Gleichmann, Leipzig 2009. Black should have considered: 18..b5†N Securing the c4-square for the knight. (18...b6N 19.g3 g7 20.e2 c5 also looks promising) 19.g3 c4 20.e2 g7 21.e2 d7 I prefer Black's position in this endgame.
14...\texttt{d4}  
I like this more than 14...\texttt{a5} 15...\texttt{d5}!  
c6 16...\texttt{xf7} 17...\texttt{xf7} 17...\texttt{b4} \texttt{c7} 18...\texttt{g5} \texttt{d6}  
19.bxa5 \texttt{xa5} 20...\texttt{fd1} \texttt{xd1} 21...\texttt{xd1} when  
Black still had some problems to solve in Wirig - Pinter, Pardubice 2008.

15...\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4}

16...\texttt{fd1}
Another game continued 16...\texttt{d5} \texttt{xe3}  
17...\texttt{xe3} c6 18...\texttt{b3} \texttt{e2} 19...\texttt{f2} \texttt{ad8} when  
Black was not worse, Beliavsky - Leko, Dortmund 1998.

16...\texttt{xe3} 17...\texttt{xe3} \texttt{\textbullet} 18...\texttt{f2} \texttt{e7} 19...\texttt{e5}
Now in Grishchenko - Belov, Sochi 2008,  
Black should have played:

19...\texttt{f6}N 20...\texttt{exf6}+ \texttt{xf6}
With a balanced endgame.

B22) 13...\texttt{0-0}

13...\texttt{d7}
This is more flexible than 13...\texttt{c6} 14...\texttt{d5} \texttt{a5} 15...\texttt{g5} \texttt{e7} 16...\texttt{b5}! c6 17...\texttt{b4} \texttt{xb5}  
18.bxa5 when White was slightly better in Drozdovskij - Eljanov, Poltava 2006.

14...\texttt{e2}
White has tried a few other moves.

14...\texttt{fd1} \texttt{b6} 15...\texttt{b3} (Or 15...\texttt{f1} c6 16.b3 \texttt{xd1} 17...\texttt{xd1} Bykhovsky - Vydeslaver,  
Beer-Sheva 1996, and here Black should have played 17...\texttt{ed8}N with a comfortable  
position.) 15...\texttt{f4} 16...\texttt{f1} c6 17...\texttt{xd8}?!  
(This exchange is premature. Instead the  
correct 17...\texttt{b1} would have maintained the  
balance.) 17...\texttt{xd8} 18...\texttt{a4} \texttt{d3} 19...\texttt{d1} \texttt{ed6}?  
White had to defend carefully to reach a draw,  

14...\texttt{c2}
White defends the b2-pawn in advance.  
Here I recommend:  
14...\texttt{b6} 15...\texttt{b3} \texttt{f4}  
Also interesting is 15...\texttt{f4}?N.
Chapter 14 - 6.c4

16...e2

The best way to meet 16.a4, Huang Qian - Gara, Khanty-Mansiysk (bl) 2010, is simply to block the a-pawn with 16...a5N. Black need not fear 17.b5, as 17...d7 keeps everything under control.

16...e2 17.e2

The position is equal, and in the following game both sides played accurately.

17.g7 18.g2 d7 19.c1 c6 20.cc2 d8 21.f4 d4 22.d2 a8!? 23.b4 c7 24.ed2 e6 25.f3 b6=  
Aalderink - M. Rubinstein, e-mail 2007.

16...xb2 15.b1

17.xc4 17.xb7 xe3

This is the most straightforward move, although Black can also consider 17...ab8?! 18.xa7 b2= with nice compensation as in Newman – Krueger, e-mail 2003.

18.xe3 d2 19.e3 c6 20.cc7 d3 21.xc6 xe3 22.d5 a3 23.e7 e8

The endgame is equal, Zubov – Timofeev, Moscow 2009.

Conclusion

Line A with 7.e3 normally leads to an unusual type of pawn structure, with Black losing his h-pawn in return for one of White's central pawns. Practice has shown that Black's active pieces should ensure the second player a pleasant game, and if White becomes too ambitious his attacking attempts could easily backfire.

In Line B after 7.e4 g4 8.xc4 h5 9.e3 xf3, White must choose between B1) 10.xf3 and B2) 10.gxf3. The former is a speculative pawn sacrifice, which allows Black to obtain a favourable position if he responds correctly. The latter normally leads to a queenless position in which the advantage of White's bishop pair is roughly balanced by the weakness of his kingside structure. Once again, there is little for Black to fear here.
5.e3 c5 – Introduction and Sidelines

Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♗f4 ♙g7 5.e3

5...c5

A) 6.♗xb8?! 173
B) 6.♗f3 cxd4 174
   B1) 7.exd4 174
   B2) 7.♗xd4 175
C) 6.dxc5 ♙a5 177
   C1) 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 178
   C2) 7.♗b3 179
   C3) 7.♗a4† ♙xa4 8.♗xa4 ♘d7 9.♗c3 ♗e4! 10.♗xd5 ♙a6 11.f3 ♘exc5 180
      C31) 12.♗g5 182
      C32) 12.♗b1 183
      C33) 12.0–0–0 184

A) after 15.0–0

B2) note to 8.♗db5

C33) note to 13.♗c7†
5...c5
From here we will consider the rare
A) 6.\texttt{AXB8}?! followed by the more respectable
B) 6.\texttt{O3} and finally the main line of C)
6.\texttt{Dxc5}.

6.\texttt{Dxc5}?!  
This is not a serious option.
6..\texttt{Dxd5}
White's last move is usually connected with
the following idea:
7.\texttt{Dxb8}
Intending to simplify to an endgame.
7.\texttt{Dxc6} is good for Black.
7...\texttt{Dxb8} 8.\texttt{Dxa4+}
8.\texttt{Dxb5} 9.\texttt{Dxd7} 9.\texttt{Dxa4} transposes.
8...\texttt{Dd7} 9.\texttt{Dxb5}
9.\texttt{Dxa7}?? \texttt{Dxb4} 10.\texttt{Dc1} \texttt{Dxd4} 11.\texttt{Dxd4} \texttt{Dxc6}
was terrible for White in Palme – Dorn, Bad Gastein 1948, and 11...\texttt{Dh6}!N would have
been even stronger.
9...\texttt{Dxc3} 10.\texttt{bxc3} \texttt{a6} 11.\texttt{Dxd7+} \texttt{Dxd7}
12.\texttt{Dxd7+} \texttt{Dxd7}
Black has the slightly better endgame, for
instance:
13.\texttt{Df3} \texttt{Dhc8} 14.\texttt{Dd2} b5

A) 6.\texttt{Dxb8}?! \texttt{Exb8}

7.\texttt{Dxa4+} \texttt{Dd7} 8.\texttt{Dxa7}
White's idea is to win a pawn. Unfortunately
the plan is much too risky and Black quickly
obtains a serious initiative.

8...\texttt{Dxd4} 9.\texttt{Dxd4}
9.\texttt{Dxd4}?! is even worse, as after 9...\texttt{Dc6}!
White will have serious difficulties completing
development. 10.\texttt{Dd1} 0–0 11.\texttt{Dxa3} \texttt{Dxc4} 12.\texttt{Dd5}
\texttt{Dxd5} 13.\texttt{Dxc4} e6 Black already has a big

9...0–0 10.\texttt{Dxd5}
10.\texttt{Dd2} does not alter the assessment:
10...\texttt{Dxc4} 11.\texttt{Dxc4} b5! Black has the makings of
a powerful initiative. 12.\texttt{Dd3} b4 13.\texttt{Dce2} \texttt{Db5}?!  
14.\texttt{Dc1}?! (Better would have been 14.\texttt{Dxb5}
although after 14...\texttt{Dxd2+} 15.\texttt{Dxd2} \texttt{Dxe4+}  
16.\texttt{Dc1} \texttt{Dxb5} 17.\texttt{Dd4} \texttt{Dc5} 18.f3 \texttt{Dd6} Black
keeps the better chances.) This position was
reached in Triana Ruiz – Tur Gutierrez, corr.
1998, and here Black missed a beautiful win:
14...\textit{\textbf{\ldots d4!!}} N 15.\textit{\textbf{\ldots x4}} \textit{\textbf{\ldots x2}} 16.\textit{\textbf{\ldots x2}} \textit{\textbf{\ldots d8}} 17.\textit{\textbf{\ldots d3}} (17.\textit{\textbf{\ldots c2}} \textit{\textbf{\ldots a4}}; 17.\textit{\textbf{\ldots d3}} f5; 17.\textit{\textbf{\ldots e1}} \textit{\textbf{\ldots xb2}} Black wins easily in all these lines.) 17...\textit{\textbf{\ldots xb2}} 18.\textit{\textbf{\ldots b1}} \textit{\textbf{\ldots xcl}} Black regains his piece while keeping an overwhelming initiative.

16.\textit{\textbf{\ldots f1}} \textit{\textbf{\ldots x3}} 17.\textit{\textbf{\ldots f3}}

16...\textit{\textbf{\ldots e4}} 17.\textit{\textbf{\ldots c2}} \textit{\textbf{\ldots bc8}} 18.\textit{\textbf{\ldots x4}} \textit{\textbf{\ldots a5!}} 19.\textit{\textbf{\ldots c6 b3}}

Black has a considerable advantage.

B) 6.\textit{\textbf{\ldots f3}}

10...\textit{\textbf{\ldots a5}}

Black’s initiative practically plays itself. The following is a good example.

11.\textit{\textbf{\ldots d2}} b5 12.\textit{\textbf{\ldots d3}} b4 13.\textit{\textbf{\ldots ce2}} \textit{\textbf{\ldots x5}} 14.\textit{\textbf{\ldots f3}} \textit{\textbf{\ldots fd8}} 15.0-0

This position was reached in Donner – Gheorghiu, Amsterdam 1969. At this point Black missed a powerful continuation:

6...\textit{\textbf{\ldots cxd4}}

There is also nothing wrong with 6...0-0, transposing to the line 5.\textit{\textbf{\ldots f3}} 0-0 6.e3 c5 as given on page 158.

After the main move White occasionally tries B1) 7.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots exd4}}} but the more important line is unquestionably B2) 7.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots xxd4}}}.

B1) 7.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots exd4}}}

15...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots g4}}} N 16.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots e1}}}

15...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots g4}}} N 16.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots e1}}}

16.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots x3}} 17.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots f3}}}}

16...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots e4}} 17.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots c2}} \textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots bc8}} 18.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots x4}} \textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots a5!}}}}}}

19.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\ldots c6 b3}}}

Black has a considerable advantage.
7...0-0 8.\texttt{\textbf{e}}e2 \texttt{\textbf{d}}c6

Black has a good version of the e3 line seen in line A3 of Chapter 12, as White's dark-squared bishop does not really belong on f4, especially at such an early stage in the game. Black's position is easy to handle, and I will just show one interesting line to illustrate how the game might develop.

9.0-0 \texttt{\textbf{g}}g4 10.h3

With this move White initiates complications which are not unfavourable to Black, but the second player was doing fine in any case.

10...\texttt{\textbf{x}}f3 11.\texttt{\textbf{x}}f3 dxc4 12.d5 \texttt{\textbf{b}}b4! 13.d6

13...\texttt{\textbf{e}}6

This is the simplest reaction, but it is not the only good move. Equally playable is:

13...\texttt{\textbf{d}}d3 14.\texttt{\textbf{x}}xb7

A remarkable situation has been reached in which Black has no less than four opportunities to sacrifice the exchange. Three of them are promising, but amazingly in practice Black has always opted for the worst option.

14...\texttt{\textbf{x}}f4?

The following alternatives deserve attention:

14...\texttt{\textbf{h}}h5N 15.\texttt{\textbf{g}}g5 \texttt{\textbf{x}}d6 16.\texttt{\textbf{x}}xa8 \texttt{\textbf{x}}a8\texttt{=};
14...\texttt{\textbf{h}}h8N 15.dxe7 \texttt{\textbf{x}}e7 16.\texttt{\textbf{x}}xb8 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xb7 17.\texttt{\textbf{d}}d6 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d8 18.\texttt{\textbf{a}}a3 \texttt{\textbf{h}}h5\texttt{=};
14...exd6N

14.d7?

White should have preferred 14.\texttt{\textbf{a}}a4 although Black is still doing fine after 14...\texttt{\textbf{b}}b6 or 14...\texttt{\textbf{d}}d5.

14...\texttt{\textbf{d}}d3 15.\texttt{\textbf{d}}d6 \texttt{\textbf{x}}d7 16.\texttt{\textbf{x}}xf8 \texttt{\textbf{x}}f8 17.\texttt{\textbf{c}}c2 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d8

With two pawns for the exchange and a monstrous knight on d3 Black is clearly better, Materniak - Slawinski, corr. 1999.

B2) 7.\texttt{\textbf{d}}xd4
This makes a lot more sense, although it is hardly likely to trouble the second player.

7...0-0 8.\text{\textit{Q}}d\text{\textit{b}5}

This is the only really challenging continuation. I doubt that White can fight for the advantage with anything else.

8.\text{\textit{W}}b3 can be met forcefully with: 8...\text{\textit{Q}}h5! 9.\text{\textit{X}}xb8 This position has occurred in three games but so far nobody has played the best move:

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

8...\text{\textit{Q}}a5!

This is the key move to remember. Now Black has no problems and can even fight for the initiative.

9.a3

9.\text{\textit{Q}}c7? \text{\textit{Q}}e4! is no good for White.

Another key line is 9.\text{\textit{C}}xd5 a6! 10.\text{\textit{Q}}c7 \text{\textit{Q}}e4 11.\text{\textit{Q}}d3 \text{\textit{Q}}xc3 12.\text{\textit{B}}xc3 \text{\textit{Q}}xc3? 13.\text{\textit{Q}}f1 \text{\textit{Q}}a7 and Black is better.

9.\text{\textit{F}}c1 dxc4 10.\text{\textit{Q}}xc4 \text{\textit{Q}}c6 11.0-0 was seen in Schmitzer – Schoenbach, e-mail 2005,

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

and here Black should have played 11...a6N with the following justification: 12.\text{\textit{Q}}c7 e5 13.\text{\textit{Q}}xa8 exf4 14.\text{\textit{Q}}d5 \text{\textit{Q}}xd5 15.\text{\textit{W}}xd5 \text{\textit{F}}b4 16.\text{\textit{Q}}c7 \text{\textit{F}}e7 17.\text{\textit{Q}}xa6 fxe3 18.fxe3 \text{\textit{F}}xb2 19.\text{\textit{F}}c2 \text{\textit{Q}}a3 White is in trouble with his knight being stranded on the edge of the board.

Perhaps White should consider 9.\text{\textit{W}}a4 at which point the game Turov – Vocaturo, Eforie Nord 2010, was immediately agreed drawn. The continuation might be 9...\text{\textit{W}}a4 10.\text{\textit{Q}}xa4 and now both 10...\text{\textit{Q}}a6 and 10...\text{\textit{Q}}d7?! look fine for Black.

9...dxc4N

With this logical novelty Black safeguards his queen and gets a pleasant position. 9...\text{\textit{Q}}d7
10.\textit{\text{c7}}! gave Black some problems in A. Mikhalevski – Greenfeld, Israel 1999.

\textbf{10.\textit{\text{xc4 dxe4 11.0-0}}}

11.b4?! only leads to problems for White: 11...\textit{\text{xc3 12.bxa5 cxd1 13.exd1 c6 14.c7 b8}} White suffers from a weak pawn on a5 and knight jumps can always be met by ...e5.

11...\textit{\text{a6 12.b4 }}

12.\textit{\text{xe4 axb5 13.d5 e6}}! is fine for Black.

\textbf{7.\textit{\text{d2?}}!} is toothless and generally results in an improved version of the main line for Black: 7.dxc4 8.xc4 xc5 9.c1 0-0 10.b3 a5 11.f3 c6 12.0-0 This position has occurred in four games, but so far nobody has played the following strong idea:

\begin{center}
\textbf{12...\textit{\text{h5!N 13.g5 h6 14.h4 g5 15.g3 xg3 16.hxg3 g4}} Black has an excellent game thanks to his two bishops.}
\end{center}
7. \( \text{c3} \)
This is a slightly unusual move order, and indeed it seems to leave the \( \text{c3} \)-knight looking vulnerable. Nevertheless the database contains approximately fifty games from this position, with even a few strong grandmasters playing the white side.

7... \( \text{e4} \)
This is the most principled reply. There is nothing wrong with 7...0-0, when the most likely outcome is a transposition to Chapter 17 after 8.\( \text{e1} \) dxc4 9.\( \text{x} \)xc4 \( \text{xc} \)5.

8.\( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 9.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 10.\( \text{d} \)2
White was relying on this move followed by the delayed recapturing on \( \text{c} \)3.

10...f6
10...\( \text{e6} \)? is an interesting alternative.

11.\( \text{f3} \) dxc4
11...\( \text{c6} \) has been more popular, but according to my analysis the text move is the cleanest route to equality.

12.\( \text{xc4} \)

12...\( \text{b4} \)?!
This is my new idea. Previously Black has tried only 12...\( \text{d7} \), Farago – Conquest, Dordrecht 1988, but I became slightly concerned about 13.\( \text{c6} \)? (After the game continuation of 13.\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{c5} \) Black equalized comfortably.) 13...bxc6 14.\( \text{c} \)1, when Black's queenside structure is a problem.

13.\( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{xc3} \)† 14.\( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 15.\( \text{b5} \)
This looks like the only challenging option, as after 15.\( \text{c6} \) bxc6 16.0-0 \( \text{b6} \) 17.\( \text{b3} \) e5 Black has comfortable equality.

15...a6 16.\( \text{a4} \)
16.\( \text{xd} \)7† \( \text{xd} \)7 17.\( \text{b1} \) can be met by the calm 17...\( \text{b8} \) followed by ...\( \text{f7} \) and ...\( \text{hc8} \) when Black has no problems.

16...\( \text{f7} \) 17.\( \text{c6} \) \( \text{c5} \) 18.\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \)
Black has promising compensation, for instance:

19.\( \text{b3} \)† \( \text{g7} \) 20.0-0 \( \text{hc8} \)
Black will regain his pawn in the near future.

C1) 7.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \)
8. \textit{\texttt{dxd5}}
Simply bad for White is 8. \textit{\texttt{c1? cxc3 9. d2}}
\textit{\texttt{dxa2 10.bxc3 d2t 11. d7. Black}}
already has a much better position, which
quickly became a winning one in the following
game: 12. \textit{\texttt{b5 0-0 13.c6 c5 14.e1 a6}}
15. \textit{\texttt{b7 bx7t}} Khanukov - Van Muenster,
Cologne 2004.

8 ... \textit{\texttt{xc3t 9.bxc3 cxc3t 10. e2 xal}}
11. \textit{\texttt{eS}}

11 ... \textit{\texttt{b1!}}?
This is an interesting winning attempt. It is
important to emphasize that Black has a forced
draw in his pocket should he desire it. The
safe theoretical recommendation is 11 ... \textit{\texttt{c1}}
12. \textit{\texttt{xh8 e6 13.b7 c2t 14.e1 c1t}}
15. \textit{\texttt{e2 c2t 16.f3 f5=}} with a draw by
perpetual.

12. \textit{\texttt{xh8 e6 13.d3 xa2t 14.g3 f6}}
To tell the truth I have never seriously
investigated this position, as no serious
opponent is ever likely to choose this line for
White in view of the aforementioned drawing
line. However, my gut reaction is that the
position looks quite promising for Black. Here
is one illustrative example:

15. \textit{\texttt{g7}}
15. \textit{\texttt{g3?! f7!}} trapped the bishop in Farago

15 ... \textit{\texttt{d7 16.g3 c8 17.h6 c5 18.f3}}
\textit{\texttt{h5! 19.f4 c5 20.d4 c2!}}
White was in trouble in Lorscheid -
Flumbort, Germany 2006.

C2) 7. \textit{\texttt{b3}}

This move is rarely seen nowadays, but
it enjoyed a brief spurt of popularity in the
early nineties thanks to the efforts of Vladimir
Akopian.

7 ... \textit{\texttt{dxc4}}
I consider this to be Black’s best continuation.
8.\textit{\textbf{f4}} 0–0 9.\textit{\textbf{b5}}

9.\textit{\textbf{f3}} causes Black no real problems as long as he plays accurately. The following is a good example: 9...\textit{\textbf{e4}} 10.0–0 \textit{\textbf{xc5}} 11.\textit{\textbf{c2}}
\textit{\textbf{c6}} 12.\textit{\textbf{ac1}} \textit{\textbf{f5}} 13.\textit{\textbf{e2}} \textit{\textbf{d8}} 14.\textit{\textbf{g4}}
\textit{\textbf{d5}} \textit{\textbf{e6}} 16.\textit{\textbf{d2}} This was Beliavsky – Timoschenko, Ashkhabad 1978, and now Black could have obtained a better position by means of 16...\textit{\textbf{c5?!}}N 17.b4 \textit{\textbf{d6}} when the d4-square makes the difference.

9...\textit{\textbf{Wfxb5}} 10.\textit{\textbf{xb5}}

10.\textit{\textbf{xb5}} \textit{\textbf{a6}} gives no problems at all.

10...\textit{\textbf{d7}}

Black’s lead in development should enable him to regain the pawn with minimal fuss.

11.\textit{\textbf{e2}}

Other moves are absolutely harmless, for example: 11.\textit{\textbf{xd7}} \textit{\textbf{fxd7}}N (I prefer not to allow the black pawn structure to be damaged, as occurs after 11...\textit{\textbf{bxd7}} 12.\textit{\textbf{c6}} \textit{\textbf{xc6}}
13.0–0–0, even though Black was not really worse in Ruzele – Sakalauskas, Vilnius 1994.)
12.\textit{\textbf{ge2}} \textit{\textbf{xc5}} 13.0–0–0 \textit{\textbf{c6}} Black has a comfortable game.

11...\textit{\textbf{c6}}

From here Black should obtain comfortable equality with a few moves, for instance:

12.\textit{\textbf{f3}}

12.\textit{\textbf{f3}} was played in Stahlberg – Lehmann, Zevenaar 1961, and here

\begin{center}
\textbf{C3)} \textit{\textbf{a4}}
\end{center}

This is the most critical of the options examined in the present chapter.

12...\textit{\textbf{fd7}}!N looks promising for Black.

12...\textit{\textbf{bd7}} 13.0–0 \textit{\textbf{xc5}}

13...\textit{\textbf{e4?!}}N deserves consideration.

14.\textit{\textbf{e5}} \textit{\textbf{d5}} 15.\textit{\textbf{xc6}} \textit{\textbf{bxc6}} 16.\textit{\textbf{xd5}} \textit{\textbf{cxd5}}
17.\textit{\textbf{ad1}} \textit{\textbf{e6}}

The position is balanced, Pachman – Yanofsky, Amsterdam 1954.

7...\textit{\textbf{xa4}} 8.\textit{\textbf{xa4}}

We have reached an important tabiya.
8...\textit{\textbf{d}7!}
Several other moves have been tried, but the text is currently the last word of theory.

9.\textit{\textbf{c}3 \textit{e}4!}
This is the point behind Black's previous move. The idea is to sacrifice a second pawn temporarily, in order to maximize the activity of the minor pieces.

10.\textit{\textbf{x}d5}
Nothing else can trouble the second player.

10.\textit{\textbf{e}c1?! \textit{\textbf{x}c3 11.\textbf{bxc3} \textbf{dxc4 12.\textit{\textbf{x}c4} \textit{\textbf{c}6!} 13.f3 \textit{\textbf{f}7 14.e4 \textit{\textbf{x}c5} Black's superior pawn structure promises him a long-term edge, Purnama - Sasikiran, Kolkata 2009.}}}

10.\textit{\textbf{xe4?! dxe4} Black will soon obtain an easy game after regaining the c5-pawn. 11.\textit{\textbf{b1?! (So far this is the only move to have been tested. 11.0-0-0 looks better although 11...\textit{\textbf{a}6 is still comfortable for Black.) 11...\textit{\textbf{a}6 12.\textbf{e}2 \textit{\textbf{xc5 13.\textit{\textbf{c}3} \textit{\textbf{x}c3} Black's superior pawn structure promises him a long-term edge, Purnama - Sasikiran, Kolkata 2009.}}}}}

10.\textit{\textbf{ge2 \textit{\textbf{xc5} After this move the weakness of the d3-square could become a factor. 11.\textit{\textbf{xd5 \textit{\textbf{ba6} (A serious alternative is 11...\textit{\textbf{d}3+??N}}}}}}}

10...\textit{\textbf{a}6}
Preventing the knight invasion on c7. Later Black might take on c5 with either knight depending on circumstances.

11.f3
This has been almost universally played.

11.\textit{\textbf{f3?! (Senseless, and after 11...e6 12.\textit{\textbf{c}7} \textit{\textbf{xc7 13.\textit{\textbf{xc7} bxc2 14.\textbf{b1} \textit{\textbf{c}2 15.\textit{\textbf{e}2}}}}}}}}
18...\textit{ex}c5 Black was much better in Houriez – Touboulic, Besancon 2006.

11.eb1

This move was played in Faldt – Hermansson, Sweden 2003. At this point I found the following interesting idea:

11...g5?!N 12.\textit{c}c7+ \textit{xc}c7 13.\textit{xc}c7 \textit{xc}8

This has only been seen in a single game thus far, but it should be taken seriously as it was by Alexey Dreev, a specialist in this line.

12.c6!

Without this White might experience difficulties, for instance: 14.a5 \textit{xf}5! 15.d3 \textit{xf}2! 16.xf5 \textit{xc}5 17.xf2 (17.c2 \textit{h}h1 18.d2 g4! Thanks to the ideas of ...g3 and ...\textit{h}h5 White is unable to trap the knight in the corner.) 17...\textit{xf}5† 18.f3 \textit{xa}5 Black has a slightly better endgame.

12...\textit{xc}7

Black also obtains good compensation after 14...\textit{xc}6 15.a5 g4! 16.e2 b6 17.b4 \textit{d}d8!.

14.cxd7+ \textit{xd}7 16.e2 0–0

Now Black has the strong idea of ...\textit{d}d2 at his disposal. His compensation for the pawn is entirely adequate, for instance:

17.h4 \textit{d}d2 18.e1 \textit{xb}2 19.e2 \textit{a}3 20.xg5 \textit{fd}8 21.g4 e6 22.h3 \textit{e}4

The position is balanced.

11...\textit{xc}5

In this position White can choose between C31) 12.g5, C32) 12.b1 and C33) 12.0–0–0.

C31) 12.g5

This has only been seen in a single game thus far, but it should be taken seriously as it was by Alexey Dreev, a specialist in this line.

12...\textit{xb}2 13.b1 f6!

Despite being surprised over the board, Black was able to find the strongest response.

14.\textit{xb}2 \textit{fg}5 15.g4

The attempt to activate the king’s rook with 15.h4 should be met by 15...g4 16.h5 g5! when Black is doing well.

15...h5! 16.h3 \textit{hxg}4 17.xg5 \textit{c}6

Black continues to play the best moves.

18.fg4?!

Having failed to obtain any advantage, White gambles with a risky piece sacrifice.

Objectively he should have preferred 18.e2N gxf3 19.xf3 e6 20.f4 when the position remains dynamically equal.

18...e6 19.e4 \textit{xd}5 20.cxd5 \textit{d}7 21.a6 bxa6 22.0–0

We have been following the game Dreev – Gopal, Zurich 2009. At this point Black should have continued:
13...e5!  
Black is fighting for a win.

**C32) 12...b1**

13...e6 13.c7†  
As we have already seen, the structure arising after 13.c3 xc3† (13...a4!? also deserves attention) 14.bxc3 f6 promises Black good long-term compensation.

13.b4?! has only been played once. I doubt that it is really dangerous, but it is certainly not stupid either. 13...exd5 (13...a4!!N looks interesting as well.) 14.bxc5 dxc4 15.d6 (After 15.xc4 xc5 16.e2 xc8 Black has a comfortable game.) 15...xc8 16.xc4 xc5 17.e2 xc6! This is the easiest way to solve the problem of Black's king. 18.g3 0-0 19.0-0 This position occurred in Faldt – Von Bahr, Hallstahammar 2002, and here I would suggest 19...e8N 20.d4 cc8 when Black has a comfortable position.

13...xc7 14.xc7 a4 15.d6 xb2  
Black must of course avoid 15...xb2? 16.xb2 a4b2 17.e5 when White wins material.

16.a3  
White must restore his material advantage, otherwise he will simply have a worse position.

16...a4 17.xb7  
17...ff8!  
This is an excellent positional move. By exchanging the dark-squared bishops Black frees his king and obtains the c5-square for his knight. These achievements in turn enable him to fight for the b-file.

18...f8
18...\texttt{b3} \texttt{xa3} 19.\texttt{xa3} \texttt{e7} is also fine.

\textbf{18...\texttt{xf8} 19.\texttt{e2} \texttt{e7} 20.\texttt{d4}}

Attempting to improve the king only leads to trouble: 20.\texttt{d2?!} \texttt{fb8} 21.\texttt{xb8} \texttt{xb8} 22.\texttt{c1} e5! White can hardly move.

\textbf{20...\texttt{c5} 21.\texttt{b4}}

The inferior 21.\texttt{b1?} was played in Rat – Okhotnik, Zalakaros 2000, and now the natural 21...\texttt{f8N} would have given White some difficult problems to solve.

21...\texttt{fb8} 22.a3

22...\texttt{b6!}

After this strong move it is White who will have to play accurately to draw.

There is nothing much wrong with 22...a5, and after 23.\texttt{xb8 axb8} 24.\texttt{b5 a4!} 25.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xb5} 26.\texttt{cxb5 d8+} 27.\texttt{c2 c8+} 28.\texttt{b3 c5+} the players agreed a draw in Novikov – Sutovsky, Koszalin 1998.

23.\texttt{d2?}

This is a clear mistake. After the correct: 23.\texttt{e2} \texttt{b8} (Delchev and Agrest recommend 23...\texttt{a6} which is also fine, although White should not be worse here either, as long as he plays accurately.) 24.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xb4} 25.axb4 \texttt{xb4} 26.\texttt{a1} White should hold the position without much trouble.

23...\texttt{a6!}

Perhaps White overlooked this move and was expecting a doubling of rooks on the b-file.

\textbf{24.\texttt{b3 d6?!}}

The rook continues to show off its mobility, and in the process Black gets a decisive advantage.

25.\texttt{e1 a5} 26.\texttt{xc5 axb4} 27.axb4 \texttt{a2}

Black was winning and he soon converted his advantage in Gerhards – Lohmann, e-mail 2003.

\textbf{C33) 12.0–0–0}

This natural move is the main theoretical continuation.

\textbf{12.e6}

12...\texttt{c8} has so far yielded a perfect score, but I consider it less reliable. In a recent high-level game Black opted for this move but failed to equalize: 13.\texttt{g5 f6} 14.\texttt{h4 f7} 15.\texttt{e2 e6} 16.\texttt{dc3 h6} 17.\texttt{f2 e5} 18.\texttt{b1±} Wang Yue – Topalov, Nanjing 2010.

\textbf{13.\texttt{c7}†}

13.\texttt{c3}

This has been played in a few games, but it should not worry the second player.
Chapter 15 – 5.e3 c5 – Introduction and Sidelines

13...\texttt{c7} \texttt{\texttt{x}c3}

As usual, this thematic reaction works well.

14.bxc3 \texttt{f6} 15.e4

In the following example White gradually slipped into a difficult position: 15.\texttt{d6} \texttt{\texttt{c}8} 16.\texttt{h}3 \texttt{\texttt{c}4} 17.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{b}6 18.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{\texttt{c}7} 19.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{\texttt{h}d}8 20.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{f5!} 21.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{a}4! 22.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{d}7 Hertneck – Ftacnik, Austria 2005. The c4-pawn is about to fall, which would leave Black in a strategically winning position. Perhaps out of desperation White sacrificed the exchange on b6 but soon lost.

15...\texttt{e5} 16.\texttt{e}3

This position occurred in Lohse – Rawlings, e-mail 2007. At this point I suggest a modest improvement:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
\end{center}

16...\texttt{c8}N

With this calm move Black prepares to target the c4-pawn.

17.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{e}6

In my estimation it is White who will have to play more carefully to avoid getting a worse position.

13...\texttt{\texttt{d}c7} 14.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{\texttt{c}8} 15.\texttt{d}6 \texttt{b}5!

This move is the key to Black’s counterplay.

16.\texttt{b}3

Obviously the b-pawn is untouchable:

16.\texttt{cxb5}? \texttt{\texttt{e}4}+ 17.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{\texttt{f}2}+

16.\texttt{e}4? is not much better: 16...\texttt{\texttt{c}xb4} 17.e5 \texttt{\texttt{a}4!} 18.\texttt{d}4 \texttt{\texttt{d}3}+ 19.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{\texttt{cxd3}+} 20.\texttt{d}2

\texttt{b}5 Black obtained a decisive advantage in Camus – Gladyszev, France 2008.

16.\texttt{d}2?! This strange move was played in Ballon – Kohlweyer, Triesen 2004. Even more strange to me was the fact that Black refrained from capturing the c4-pawn, since after 16...\texttt{\texttt{c}4}N 17.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{a}4 18.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{a}5! only Black can be better.

The attempt to block the queenside with 16.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{\texttt{xc5} 17.b4} \texttt{\texttt{c}7} 18.\texttt{c}5 is doomed to fail, as shown by the following analysis of Delchev and Agrest: 18...\texttt{c3} 19.a3 \texttt{a}5 20.\texttt{c}2 (20.\texttt{xd7} \texttt{\texttt{xd7} 21.\texttt{xb5}+ \texttt{e}7+) 20...\texttt{\texttt{b}4} 21.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{\texttt{xc}5} 22.\texttt{\texttt{a}b}4 \texttt{\texttt{c}7}+

16...\texttt{\texttt{c}4} 17.\texttt{xc4}

17...\texttt{a}4!

This important tactical nuance maintains Black’s initiative and should enable him to count on a balanced game.

18.\texttt{d}2

So far this is the only move to have been tested in practice.

I also examined 18.\texttt{\texttt{d}2}N when the simplest solution for Black is 18.\texttt{\texttt{c}3}+ 19.\texttt{\texttt{e}2} \texttt{\texttt{b}2} 20.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{\texttt{xc}4} 21.\texttt{\texttt{b}c}4 \texttt{\texttt{xc}4} with equality.
18...\textit{b}b5 19.\textit{c}c2 \textit{xc}4 20.bxc4 \textit{d}d7 21.c5
21.a3 \textit{c}c3 regains the pawn immediately, and after 22.\textit{e}e2 \textit{xe}e2\textdagger 23.\textit{exe}2 \textit{exe}4\textdagger 24.\textit{c}c2 \textit{hc}8 25.\textit{d}d1\textdagger \textit{e}e8 the position is equal.

21...\textit{Ec}6
21...\textit{f}f8\textdagger is another way to regain the pawn and reach an equal position.

22.\textit{e}e2 \textit{xc}5!\textdagger
This small finesse leads to easy equality.

23.\textit{Ed}1 \textit{hc}8
Equally effective is 23...\textit{xd}6 24.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xd}1\textdagger 25.\textit{xd}1 \textit{b}8 26.\textit{a}5 \textfrac{1}{2}--\textfrac{1}{2} Kiss – Ruck, Hungary 1998.

24.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5\textdagger 25.\textit{xc}5\textdagger \textit{e}8 26.\textit{d}d2 \textit{xc}5
Black almost has the makings of a slight endgame advantage, but White has just enough time to activate his rook.

27.\textit{b}1 \textit{a}5 28.\textit{b}8\textdagger \textit{e}7 29.\textit{b}7\textdagger \textit{e}8 30.\textit{b}8\textdagger \textit{e}7 31.\textit{b}7\textdagger \textfrac{1}{2}--\textfrac{1}{2}

\textbf{Conclusion}

Variation A is deservedly rare, and we saw that White's pawn-grabbing expedition is likely to lead to nothing but trouble for him. Variation B with 6.\textit{f}3 is a bit more respectable, but here too we saw that Black can equalize and fight for the initiative in many lines.

It follows that variation C) with 6.dxc5 \textit{a}5 is the only option that can really threaten the second player, and indeed the next two chapters will be devoted to the critical continuation of 7.\textit{c}1. In the previous pages we saw that none of White's alternatives on the seventh move should be feared. The only one that demands serious attention is variation C3) with 7.\textit{a}4\textdagger, but we saw that with the aid of an energetic pawn sacrifice Black can obtain a fine position with the kind of dynamic counterplay which is absolutely typical for the Grünfeld.
4. $\text{g}f4$

7. $\text{c}c1$ – Sidelines and 9. $\text{d}ge2$

Variation Index

1. $d4 \text{f}6$ 2. $c4 \text{g}6$ 3. $c3 \text{d}5$ 4. $f4 \text{g}7$ 5. $e3 \text{c}5$ 6. $\text{dxc5} \text{a}5$ 7. $\text{c}1 \text{dxc4}$ 8. $\text{xc4}$

8...0–0

A) 9. $\text{a}3$

B) 9. $\text{d}ge2 \text{xc5}$ 10. $\text{b}3 \text{c}6$ 11. $\text{b}5 \text{h}5$

B1) 12. $\text{c}7$

B2) 12. $\text{g}3 \text{h}4$ 13. $\text{c}7 \text{e}5!$

B21) 14. $\text{xe5}$

B22) 14. $\text{g}5 \text{xe5}$

B221) 15. $\text{x}a8$

B222) 15. $\text{h}4$

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note to 8. $\text{xc4}$

B1) after 15. $\text{xf7}$

B222) after 21. $\text{d}6$
1. d4 ��f6 2. c4 g6 3. ��c3 d5 4. ��f4 ��g7 5. e3 c5 6. dxc5 ��a5 7. ��c1

Finally we reach the most critical battleground of the 4. ��f4 system.

7...dxc4

7...��e4 is a valid alternative, but the text move is the main line and the one I like the most.

8. ��xc4

The only other move to have been tried is:

8. ��a4† ��xa4 9. ��xa4 ��d7 10. ��xc4?! White should have preferred 10. ��c3 although Black equalizes easily: 10...��a6 11. ��xc4 ��xc5 12. ��f3 0–0 13. 0–0 ��ac8 14. ��e5 ��e6 15. ��xe6 ��xe6= McMichael - Hjelm, Hallsberg 1991.

10...0–0 11. ��f3

11...��c6? Black can also fight for the advantage with 11...��c8 12. ��c3 ��c6 13. ��e5 ��e6 14. ��xc6 ��xc6 15. ��b4 Gunawan - Dorfman, Sarajevo 1988, and now after the strong 15...��h5!N 16. ��xb7 ��xf4 17. ��xf4 ��xc5 Black is better.

12. ��c1 ��d5 Black has the initiative. Here is one possible continuation.

13. ��b5 Briet - Schrader, France 1998. Now Black should have played:

13...a6!N 14. ��c4

14. ��e2 runs into the strong 14...��cb4! with advantage to Black.

14...��cb4 15. ��c3 ��xf4 16. ��xf4 ��ac8 White will have to fight for a draw.

16...0–0
A well-known mistake would be 8...\textit{wx}c5?, after which 9.\textit{b}b5 \textit{b}4† 10.\textit{f}f1! wins material.

From this position we will examine two moves in the present chapter: A) 9.a3 and B) 9.\textit{g}e2.

The most frequently played option has been 9.\textit{f}3, which will form the subject of the next chapter.

9.\textit{a}4 \textit{xc}5 10.\textit{b}5 is simply a dubious idea in view of: 10...\textit{d}5! 11.\textit{e}2 \textit{a}6! 12.\textit{b}3 \textit{xf}4 13.\textit{xf}4 \textit{b}4† 14.\textit{c}3 \textit{xb}3 15.\textit{xb}3 Farago – Schmidt, Bagneux 1980. Black could have secured his slight edge with the nice positional move 15...\textit{e}6+N.

A) 9.a3

9...\textit{c}6!
Black has to postpone taking on c5, as 9...\textit{xc}5?! would allow the awkward 10.\textit{b}5, when 10...\textit{e}6 is necessary if Black is to avoid material losses.

From this position Black need not fear 11.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}5 12.\textit{c}7, as played in Nikolov – Delchev, Pamporovo 2001, as after 12...\textit{a}5†N 13.\textit{f}1 \textit{c}6 14.\textit{xa}8 \textit{xa}8 he has decent compensation for the exchange.

However, after the superior 11.b4!N \textit{c}6 12.\textit{xe}6 \textit{xb}5 13.\textit{c}4 White's bishop pair gives him some advantage.

B) 9.\textit{g}e2

In the event of 10.\textit{b}3, as played in Almeida Quintana – Bacallao Alonso, Santiago de Cuba 2009, I do not see any problem with 10...\textit{xc}5N. From this position 11.\textit{b}5?! does not work due to 11...\textit{d}5†, and even after the superior 11.\textit{b}5 \textit{xb}5 12.\textit{xb}5 \textit{h}5! only Black can be better.

10...\textit{xc}5 11.\textit{b}5
This is the only way to try and make sense of the early a2-a3.

11.\textit{h}5 12.b4 \textit{d}7 13.\textit{b}3 \textit{ac}8 14.0–0 \textit{a}6 15.\textit{bc}3 \textit{b}5
Black was doing fine in Almeida Quintana – Jerez Perez, Canovelles 2008.

This is a much more serious move than 9.a3, and has yielded a higher statistical score for White than the 'official' main line of 9.\textit{f}3, which will be examined in the following chapter.

9...\textit{xc}5 10.\textit{b}3
This is firmly established as the main continuation, but a few other moves have been tried.

10.\textit{b}3 is harmless, for instance: 10...\textit{c}6 11.0-0 \textit{a}5 12.\textit{d}4 \textit{d}7 13.\textit{g}3 \textit{xd}4 (13...\textit{ad}8N also comes into consideration) 14.exd4 This position was reached in Lund – Teplyi, Silkeborg 2009, and now after the natural 14...\textit{c}6N 15.\textit{e}5 \textit{fd}8 16.\textit{e}2 e6 Black has a comfortable game.

10.\textit{b}5?!  
This looks principled, but it does not hold up to the hard scrutiny of analysis. 10...\textit{b}4†! 
Much better than 10...\textit{e}6? 11.\textit{b}3 when Black is in trouble. 11.\textit{f}1

11...a6!  
This is not the only playable move, but it is the strongest one, and effectively refutes White's play. 12.a3 \textit{xb}2 13.\textit{b}1  
After 13.\textit{c}2 \textit{xc}2 14.\textit{xc}2 \textit{axb}5 15.\textit{xb}5 \textit{xa}3! 16.\textit{b}2 (16.\textit{xb}8? \textit{a}1† 17.\textit{c}1 \textit{f}3→) we reach the same position. 13...\textit{xb}1!  
With this elegant queen sacrifice Black obtains the advantage. 14.\textit{xb}1 \textit{axb}5 15.\textit{xb}5

15...\textit{xa}3!  
This move and the associated tactics provide the justification for Black's queen sacrifice. 16.\textit{b}2  
White had better avoid 16.\textit{xb}8? \textit{e}4 when he will suffer heavy material loses due to the weakness of his back rank: 17.\textit{xe}4 (17.\textit{e}1 \textit{a}1 18.\textit{c}1 \textit{c}3 19.\textit{d}1 \textit{b}2→) 17...\textit{a}1† 18.\textit{c}1 \textit{xc}1† 19.\textit{e}2 \textit{xl} Black was winning in Zaja – Brkic, Omis 2005. 16...\textit{a}8 17.\textit{e}5 \textit{c}6 18.\textit{xc}6 \textit{bxc}6 19.h3†  
Dydyshko – Begun, USSR 1990. Although White's opening was far from a success, he should still be able to hold the position.

10.\textit{d}4  
This has only been seen in two games, neither of which featured the strongest reply: 10...\textit{a}5†!
enough compensation for the sacrificed pawn in Istratescu – Iordachescu, Predeal 2006.

11.b4

Otherwise Black will gain an important tempo with ...\(\text{\&c6}\).

11...\(\text{\textit{\&a3!}}\)

On this square the queen is quite safe and indeed rather disruptive for the opponent.

12.\(\text{\textit{\&xb8}}\)

In the event of 12.b5 \(\text{\textit{\&f5}}\) 13.0–0 \(\text{\textit{\&bd7}}\)

Black's pieces are much better placed.

12...\(\text{\textit{\&xb8}}\) 13.0–0 \(\text{\textit{\&g4!}}\) 14.\(\text{\textit{\&e4 \&f5}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{\&xe7 \&f6}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{\&d6 \&e5}}\)

Black regains his pawn and his two bishops provide him with an ongoing initiative.

10...\(\text{\textit{\&c6}}\)

This natural move is unsurprisingly the main line. For those who wish to investigate a different path I can point you in the direction of 10...\(\text{\textit{\&a5}}\), as played by Carlsen in 2009.

11.\(\text{\textit{\&b5}}\)

White's entire opening strategy is centred around this move and the subsequent invasion on c7. Other continuations are harmless, for instance: 11.0–0 \(\text{\textit{\&a5}}\) 12.\(\text{\textit{\&b5 \&xc4}}\) (There is also 12...\(\text{\textit{\&xb5}}\) 13.\(\text{\textit{\&xb5 a6}}\) 14.\(\text{\textit{\&d3 \&d7}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{\&c6}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{\&b1 \&e6}}\) with equality, Kakageldyev – Sasikiran, Esfahan 2005.) 13.\(\text{\textit{\&xa5}}\)

13.b6?N (Black needs an improvement over 13...\(\text{\textit{\&e6?!}}\) 14.\(\text{\textit{\&fd1 b6}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{\&a3t}}\) when his queen is misplaced, Godesar – Gerfaut, corr. 1993) 14.\(\text{\textit{\&a3 \&e8}}\) White is unable to take advantage of the apparently vulnerable queen on c4, for instance 15.\(\text{\textit{\&e5 \&b7}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{\&fd1 \&g4}}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{\&g3 \&h5}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{\&h3 \&e6}}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{\&h2 \&ec8}}\) and the position is balanced.

11...\(\text{\textit{\&h5}}\)

We will pay attention to the tricky though ultimately unimpressive B1) 12.\(\text{\textit{\&c7}}\) followed by the main line of B2) 12.\(\text{\textit{\&g3}}\).

12.\(\text{\textit{\&a3?!}}\) was seen in the game Dreev – Sutovsky, Internet (blitz) 2002, but the idea makes little sense, and after the logical 12...\(\text{\textit{\&a6}}\)N 13.\(\text{\textit{\&c7 \&a7}}\) the knight invasion to c7 has accomplished nothing.
Objectively not great, but it took some time before the best response was discovered.

12...\texttt{Bb8}

The tempting 12...\texttt{Qa5}?! as seen in the game Piket – Van Wely, Monte Carlo (blindfold) 2001, can be met strongly by 13.\texttt{Wxa3!N} \texttt{Qxc4} 14.\texttt{Bxc4 Bb8} 15.\texttt{Qg3} \texttt{Wg4} 16.\texttt{Ed4}! with some advantage for White.

13.\texttt{Qd5}

13.\texttt{Qa6}! is unimpressive: 13...\texttt{Wxa5}† 14.\texttt{c3} \texttt{Bc8} 15.\texttt{Qc7} e5! 16.\texttt{Qxa8} \texttt{exf4} 17.0–0 fxe3 18.fxe3 \texttt{Qe5} 19.\texttt{Qd5} \texttt{Qg4} 20.g3 \texttt{Qa5}† Black's advantage was close to decisive in Perun – Shishkin, Kiev 2005.

The tempting 13.\texttt{xf7}†? \texttt{xf7} 14.\texttt{xc6} allows a clever rebuttal:

14.\texttt{xf6}†?! White should have settled for the less ambitious 14.\texttt{g3N}, although after 14...\texttt{Qe4} Black has no problems whatsoever.
14...\texttt{xf6} 15.\texttt{xf7}†

This was White's idea. It is too late to turn back with 15.\texttt{g3}, as after 15...\texttt{a5} Black is much better.

We have been following the game Lukacs - Szeberenyi, Budapest 2000. At this point Black could have refuted his opponent's idea with:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
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16.\texttt{g3} \texttt{xf7} 17.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{bxc6} 18.\texttt{xb8} \texttt{a6} 19.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e4}!

Black has a serious initiative. One possible continuation is:

20.\texttt{f2} \texttt{exf3} 21.\texttt{gf3} \texttt{b7} 22.\texttt{c8} \texttt{w5} 23.\texttt{e1} \texttt{e7}

White is in trouble as he is losing all his queenside pawns.

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13.\texttt{c7}

White's previous play has been directed towards this invasion, so it is too late for him to back out of the complications.

13...\texttt{e5}!

13...\texttt{b8}? allows 14.\texttt{xf7}† \texttt{xf7} 15.\texttt{xc6} when White is clearly better.

13...\texttt{g5} is a playable alternative, but the text move is my preference. The most recent games and analysis indicate that Black should be doing fine.

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\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
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\texttt{a} & \texttt{b} & \texttt{c} & \texttt{d} & \texttt{e} & \texttt{f} & \texttt{g} & \texttt{h} \\
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B2) 12.\texttt{g3}

Although the previous variation should be studied closely, the present line is where the serious work begins.

12...\texttt{h4}

The queen might look precariously placed, but she is in no real danger.

B21) 14.\texttt{xe5} and B22) 14.\texttt{g5}.

We have reached a major crossroads. White is poised to win the rook on a8, but his dark-squared bishop is a goner and he must decide on the best way to lose it. His main choices are
14.\( \text{a}8? \) exf4 would open the position in Black's favour.

14.\( \text{a} h6?! \)
According to the database this has only been played once. It is unlikely to become popular as it enables Black to activate his dark-squared bishop. The following game provides a remarkable example of how Black may develop his initiative.

14...\( \text{x}h6 \) 15.\( \text{a}xa8 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 16.\( \text{c}7 \) \( \text{d}4! \)
Black takes full advantage of the position of his bishop.

17.\( \text{a}3 \)
I examined a few other moves as well:
17.\( \text{c}3?! \) deserved attention. Black should respond by calmly bringing another piece into play with 17...\( \text{d}8 \), when White's king remains rather uncomfortable.

17.\( \text{b}4?! \) looks riskier due to 17...\( \text{xe}3! \) 18.\( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{x}h2 \) when Black has a dangerous attack. Here is a nice illustrative line: 19.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xg}3! \) 20.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{g}4! \) 21.\( \text{xe}2 \)

21...\( \text{f}1!! \) 22.\( \text{x}f1 \) \( \text{d}3+ \) 23.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{xe}2+ \)
24.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{xf}1 \) Black emerges with healthy extra pawn.

17...\( \text{f}5! \)
With this move Black brings huge pressure to bear on the e3- and g3-squares.

18.\( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{gxe}3! \) 19.\( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{xe}3 \)

20.\( \text{xf}7+? \)
This is just agony, but even after the superior 20.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{g}5 \) 21.0-0 \( \text{d}4 \) Black regains the sacrificed exchange and remains with a clearly better position.

20...\( \text{x}f7 \) 21.\( \text{b}3+ \) \( \text{f}6 \) 22.\( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{g}3 \)
White was completely busted and resigned a few moves later in Piskov – Dvoirys, Podolsk 1992.

B21) 14.\( \text{xe}5 \)
With this move White grabs as much material as he can, but the drawback is that he opens additional lines for Black's already active pieces.

14...\textit{\textgreek{d}xe5} 15.\textit{\textgreek{d}xa8}

\textbf{15...b6?}
This is actually a bit unusual, but it has scored well and my analysis has convinced me that it is at least as good as the more popular 15...\textit{\textgreek{d}d7} 16.\textit{\textgreek{c}c7} \textit{\textgreek{c}c6}.

16.\textit{\textgreek{c}c7}
So far this is the only move to have been tested, but I would like to share my analysis of a few other possibilities.

Firstly it should be noted that 16.0-0? is already a fatal error in view of 16...\textit{\textgreek{b}b7} 17.\textit{\textgreek{c}c7} \textit{\textgreek{f}g4}! 18.h3 \textit{\textgreek{f}f3}†! 19.\textit{\textgreek{h}h1} \textit{\textgreek{g}g5} with a crushing attack.

16.\textit{\textgreek{b}xb5?!N} is quite a serious alternative, but I found what I believe to be a nice idea for Black: 16...\textit{\textgreek{f}d7}†? The knight is heading for c5, from where it will restrict the white queen while preparing ideas of ...\textit{\textgreek{a}a6} or ...\textit{\textgreek{d}d7}. Here is an illustrative line: 17.0-0 \textit{\textgreek{c}c5} 18.\textit{\textgreek{c}c7} \textit{\textgreek{g}g4} 19.h3

19...\textit{\textgreek{d}xf2†}. This tactical strike is obvious but pleasing nonetheless. 20.\textit{\textgreek{d}xf7†} \textit{\textgreek{e}e7} 21.\textit{\textgreek{d}xf2} \textit{\textgreek{g}g3} 22.\textit{\textgreek{e}e8†} \textit{\textgreek{f}f8} 23.\textit{\textgreek{f}f8†} \textit{\textgreek{f}f8} 24.\textit{\textgreek{x}xc5} \textit{\textgreek{b}xc5} 25.\textit{\textgreek{c}xc8} \textit{\textgreek{x}xe3††} White will have to fight for a draw.

16...\textit{\textgreek{b}7}

17.\textit{\textgreek{d}d5}
White has tried a few other moves here.

17.\textit{\textgreek{d}d5} \textit{\textgreek{d}xd5} 18.\textit{\textgreek{d}xd5} \textit{\textgreek{a}a6} 19.\textit{\textgreek{a}xc5} just transposes to the main line.

17.\textit{\textgreek{b}b5} \textit{\textgreek{x}xe2} 18.\textit{\textgreek{d}xe5} \textit{\textgreek{f}f4} 19.\textit{\textgreek{b}5}
19.\textit{\textgreek{d}d6} \textit{\textgreek{x}h1} 20.\textit{\textgreek{x}h1} \textit{\textgreek{c}c3} requires additional investigation, although my initial impression is that the queen is better on b5.

19...\textit{\textgreek{x}h1} 20.\textit{\textgreek{x}h1} \textit{\textgreek{c}c3}
I also examined 21...\texttt{g3N} which is probably White's best continuation: 21...\texttt{xh2} 22.\texttt{xf7+} This seems to lead to a forced draw after an incredible line: 22...\texttt{xf7} 23.\texttt{e8+} \texttt{f8} 24.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{g1+} 25.\texttt{e2} \texttt{xf2+}! 26.\texttt{d3} (26.\texttt{xf2?} \texttt{xcl} is winning for Black as the c7-knight will soon drop) 26...\texttt{g2} 27.\texttt{c2}! This is the only move which allows White to escape. 27...\texttt{xcl} 28.\texttt{e6+} \texttt{h8} 29.\texttt{f6+} The game ends in a perpetual.

21...\texttt{xf7} 22.\texttt{e8+} \texttt{f8} 23.\texttt{xe3}

This position occurred in Lysyj – Kurnosov, Russia 2008, and here Black should have played:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
  \node at (0,0) {
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    \end{tabular}
  
  \end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

23...\texttt{e7+}!N 24.\texttt{e6} \texttt{g4!}

Regaining the piece with an obvious advantage.

17.f3

Surprisingly this natural-looking move has only been played once. My preferred response would be:

17...\texttt{f4N}

17...\texttt{e8} was Black's choice in Ludwig – A. Hunt, France 2009. Here I found a remarkable improvement for White: 18.\texttt{xf7+}!N \texttt{xf7} 19.0-0 \texttt{h6} 20.\texttt{h1} In this strange position White's chances are slightly higher.

18.\texttt{d5}

18.\texttt{fg4}? \texttt{xg2} is not a serious option for White.

The main alternative is 18.\texttt{e2} but after 18...\texttt{h2} 19.\texttt{f2} Black has a strong continuation: 19...\texttt{d8}! 20.\texttt{h1} This is forced. 20...\texttt{d1} 21.\texttt{xf1} \texttt{xxf3} 22.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{xcl} 23.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{h2+} 24.\texttt{f1} \texttt{g3} Black has a dangerous initiative.

18...\texttt{xd5} 19.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{h2} 20.\texttt{f2}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
  \node at (0,0) {
    \begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
    \hline
    a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
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20...\texttt{eg4+}! 21.\texttt{fg4} \texttt{xg4+} 22.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e5+}
23.\textit{g}f2 \textit{g}4\dagger

From here White should probably take the repetition, as the attempt to play on would be risky:

24.\textit{g}g1
24.\textit{f}3=

24...\textit{x}g3 25.\textit{f}1 \textit{h}5 26.\textit{h}3 \textit{d}6\textit{c}8

Black has ongoing compensation for the small material sacrifice. Overall I prefer Black’s position, as the white king will remain vulnerable for a long time to come.

17...\textit{d}xd5 18.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 19.\textit{xd}5 \textit{d}8

20.\textit{b}3

Clearly worse is 20.\textit{e}4? \textit{d}d3\dagger 21.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}6! 22.\textit{xd}3 \textit{xd}3 23.\textit{xd}3 \textit{xb}2 when the position of White’s king gives him cause for concern.

20...\textit{d}d3\dagger 21.\textit{e}2 \textit{xc}1\dagger

Black should not be too hasty in regaining his pawn: 21...\textit{f}6?! 22.\textit{f}4 \textit{xc}1\dagger 23.\textit{xc}1 \textit{xb}2\dagger 24.\textit{xb}2 \textit{xb}2 25.\textit{c}7 Black faces a difficult endgame despite having level material.

22.\textit{xc}1

22...\textit{e}5!

With this strong move Black covers the c7-square against a rook invasion while also increasing his influence over the kingside.

23.\textit{b}5

Now there are two routes to equality.

23...\textit{b}8?!

23...\textit{x}g3 is also fine: 24.\textit{hx}g3 \textit{g}4\dagger 25.\textit{e}1 \textit{e}4 26.\textit{d}1 This is tantamount to a draw offer. (White achieves nothing with other moves: 26.\textit{c}6 \textit{d}3 27.\textit{e}3 \textit{d}5 regains the pawn; 26.\textit{f}1 \textit{d}2 27.\textit{g}1 \textit{g}7 Black’s activity fully makes up for his small material deficit.) 26...\textit{xd}1\dagger 27.\textit{xd}1 \textit{b}1\dagger 28.\textit{d}2 \textit{xa}2 29.\textit{e}8\dagger \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2} Govciyan – Negi, Coubertin 2009.

24.\textit{c}6 \textit{x}g3 25.\textit{hx}g3 \textit{h}5\dagger 26.\textit{f}3

26.\textit{e}1 \textit{h}1\dagger 27.\textit{e}2 \textit{h}5\dagger repeats the position.
26...h2 27.f4 hxg3 28.fxg3 h4=

Golod - Nesterovsky, Israel 2009. The players kept fighting for another twenty moves, but the position remained balanced until a draw was agreed.

15...e4!

This move is positionally useful and tactically essential in order to keep the a8-knight caged in.

16.0–0

Thanks to Black's last move 16...c7?? is impossible due to 16...a5†.

16...e5

16...h5 has been more popular, but I rather like the text move in conjunction with a new idea on the following turn.

17.e2

White has to counter the threat of ...b8 trapping the knight, so he prepares the rebuttal of cxc6.

Other moves are likely to lead to trouble for White, for instance 17.fd1?! g4 18.e2 xe2 19.xe2 e7† and the knight is doomed.

17...h5?!N

This is my new idea, with which Black commences his counterplay on the kingside.

In the one previous game to reach this position Black opted for 17...e7?? but soon got into trouble: 18.a3 e5 19.b4! White is able to
save his knight by tactical means. 19...\textit{d}d7 20.b5 \textit{xa}8 21.bxc6 \textit{xc}6 22.\textit{fd}1 {\textit{Kuzubov - Swinkels, Neuhausen 2007}}.

\textbf{18.h4}

It would be risky for White to allow the h-pawn to advance further, for instance: 18.\textit{fd}1 h4 19.\textit{f}1 h3 20.g3 (After 20 gxh3 Black has the strong manoeuvre 20...\textit{h}7! 21.\textit{g}3 \textit{g}5 with good attacking chances.) 20...\textit{g}4 21.\textit{x}g4 \textit{x}g4 22.\textit{xb}?

22...\textit{d}8!! Now White has to swap queens in order to prevent the deadly knight manoeuvre ...\textit{d}8-e6-g5-f3. 23.\textit{c}7 \textit{e}6 24.\textit{x}e5 \textit{xe}5 25.\textit{d}2 \textit{xa}8 26.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xb}2 With two minor pieces for the rook, Black stands better.

\textbf{18...\textit{e}7 19.\textit{a}3}

19...\textit{d}8!! After this accurate move it seems to me that the logical outcome should be a draw by repetition.

\textbf{20.\textit{b}3}

20.b4?! is too risky in view of 20...\textit{g}4! 21.b5 \textit{xe}2 22.\textit{xe}2 \textit{g}4 with a powerful attack.

20.\textit{fd}1?! is also inadvisable due to 20...\textit{d}7 winning the knight on a8.

\textbf{20...\textit{c}7}

It would be risky to play on with 20...\textit{d}7?!, as after 21.\textit{xb}7 \textit{xa}8 22.\textit{xa}8 \textit{xa}8 23.\textit{b}5 \textit{e}5 24.\textit{xd}7 \textit{exd}7 25.\textit{c}7 White's extra rook and pawn are stronger than Black's two minor pieces.

\textbf{21.\textit{a}3 \textit{d}8=}

Neither side has an advantageous way to avoid the repetition.

\textbf{B222) 15.h4}

This has been slightly the more popular of the two options, although statistically White has done less well with it.

15...\textit{g}4 16.\textit{xa}8 \textit{a}5!
This was Black’s choice in the first game which reached the present position. Since then both 16...e4 and 16...xd7 have been tested (the latter most notably by Topalov), but I strongly prefer the text move.

17.\textit{b}5

White has never played 17.\textit{b}4 and rightly so, since after 17...e6! 18.\textit{xa}5 \textit{xc}4 19.\textit{c}7 \textit{h}5! 20.\textit{d}2 \textit{xg}3 21.\textit{fxg}3 \textit{f}6! Black obtains slightly better chances with ...\textit{d}8 on the way.

17...\textit{xc}4 18.\textit{xc}4

18...\textit{d}7!

This tactical finesse justifies Black’s play.

19.\textit{b}4

19.\textit{e}5 e4 20.\textit{c}7 \textit{c}6 21.\textit{d}6 merely transposes to the main line.

19...e4 20.\textit{c}7

In the very first game in this line White preferred:
20.\textit{xb}7 \textit{e}6 21.\textit{ed}4

But Black equalized comfortably with:
21...\textit{d}7! 22.\textit{xd}7

I also examined: 22.\textit{xe}4 \textit{c}5 23.\textit{ex}g4 \textit{xb}7 24.\textit{eb}4 \textit{c}5 25.\textit{xb}5 (25.0-0?\textit{xa}8\textit{e}7) 25...\textit{d}3\textit{f} 26.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}4 Black’s initiative is enough for a draw after the following forced sequence: 27.\textit{c}7 \textit{e}5\textit{f} 28.\textit{d}2 \textit{xb}5 29.\textit{xb}5 \textit{b}8 30.\textit{a}4 \textit{a}6 31.\textit{d}4 \textit{xb}2\textit{f} 32.\textit{c}2 \textit{c}4\textit{f} 33.\textit{d}3 \textit{e}5\textit{f} 22...\textit{xd}7

23.\textit{c}7

In a more recent correspondence game White deviated but never got close to an advantage:
23.0-0 \textit{e}6 24.\textit{c}7 \textit{xa}2 25.\textit{xe}4 \textit{wh}4 26.\textit{ed}1 \textit{wh}7 27.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}5 28.\textit{xa}2 \textit{h}2-\textit{f}2 Müllhaupt – Killer, corr. 2010.

23...\textit{e}5 24.0-0 \textit{wh}4

Mamedyarov – Eljanov, Gothenburg 2005. The position is complex and unclear, but it seems to me that it is White who will have to be more careful. At any rate, Black’s eventual defeat should certainly not be attributed to his opening play.

20...\textit{c}6
21. \( \text{d}6 \)

So far this is the only move to have been tested in practice, but I also considered two alternatives.

21.0-0N \( \text{W}xh4 \) (It is worth considering the positional approach with 21...\( \text{d}8! \) when \( \text{b}7 \) becomes possible.) 22.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 23.\( \text{d}5 \) \( f5 \) 24.\( \text{e}7^{+} \) \( \text{h}8 \) 25.\( \text{x}c6 \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 26.\( \text{d}7 \) \( f4 \) 27.\( \text{e}xf4 \) \( \text{xf2}^{=} \) Black forces a perpetual.

21.\( \text{W}e7 \)N can be met by: 21...\( \text{d}7 \) 22.0-0 (22.\( \text{xc}6 \)! does not quite work: 22...\( \text{bxc6} \) 23.\( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 24.\( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{b}8 \)!) Surprisingly White's knight is still in danger. 25.\( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 26.\( \text{c}7 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 27.\( \text{a}6 \) \( \text{c}5^{+} \) Black has emerged with a comfortable position and a slight plus.) 22...\( \text{f}6^{+} \)? (22...\( \text{e}5 \) also leads to a level position according to my analysis: 23.\( \text{e}8 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 24.\( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 25.\( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 26.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 27.\( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{a}4=\) 23.\( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 24.\( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 25.\( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 26.\( \text{c}6 \) \( \text{c}8 \) The endgame is balanced.

21...\( \text{h}5^{+} \)N

This interesting move was mentioned by Ruslan Sherbakov in New In Chess Yearbook 93. I decided to recommend it as my main line, although it is important to emphasize that it is by no means the only playable move.

21...\( \text{d}7 \)

This also leads to a decent position for Black.

22.\( \text{d}5 \)

22.\( \text{f}3?! \) runs into 22...\( \text{e}5! \) 23.\( \text{xf}8^{+} \) \( \text{xf}8 \) 24.\( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 25.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{xc}7 \) when Black's three pieces are stronger than White's two rooks.

22...\( \text{e}5 \) 23.\( \text{e}7^{+} \)

Worse is 23.\( \text{xe}5?! \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 24.\( \text{f}6^{+} \) \( \text{g}7 \) 25.\( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 26.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 27.\( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{f}5 \) with a better endgame for Black, Matveeva – Danelia, Rijeka 2010.

After the knight check a draw was agreed in T. Schmidt – Krzyzanowski, corr. 2010, but it is useful to see how the game might have continued.

23...\( \text{h}8^{+} \)

23...\( \text{g}7?! \) is a mistake, although it would be difficult to spot the reason over the board:

24.\( \text{b}4 \) a5 25.\( \text{xa}5 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 26.\( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{d}6 \)
27.\textit{\textsc{Fx}}d6! In view of the potential check on f5, Black must settle for 27...\textit{\textsc{Ex}}c4 28.\textit{\textsc{Qxc}}6 \textit{\textsc{E}}c1† 29.\textit{\textsc{Qd}}1 \textit{\textsc{Ex}}c6 30.0-0 when White is a healthy pawn up.

24.\textit{\textsc{Qb}}4

24.\textit{\textsc{Qa}}3 also leads to a draw: \textit{\textsc{Qe}}6 25.\textit{\textsc{Qxc}}6 \textit{\textsc{Ex}}c4 26.\textit{\textsc{Qxe}}5 \textit{\textsc{E}}c1† 27.\textit{\textsc{Bxe}}2 \textit{\textsc{E}}c2†=

24...\textit{\textsc{a}}5!

It is important to chase White’s queen away from the b4-square.

25.\textit{\textsc{Qb}}3

Another line leading to equality is: 25.\textit{\textsc{Qxa}}5 \textit{\textsc{Ee}}6 26.\textit{\textsc{Qxc}}6 \textit{\textsc{Ex}}c4 27.\textit{\textsc{Qxe}}5 \textit{\textsc{E}}c1† 28.\textit{\textsc{Qe}}2 \textit{\textsc{Exb}}2† 29.\textit{\textsc{Qd}}2 \textit{\textsc{E}}b5† 30.\textit{\textsc{E}}d3 \textit{\textsc{E}}xd3† 31.\textit{\textsc{Qxd}}3 \textit{\textsc{E}}b2† 32.\textit{\textsc{Qd}}2 \textit{\textsc{E}}b5†=

25...\textit{\textsc{Exg}}3 26.\textit{\textsc{Qxc}}6 \textit{\textsc{Bxc}}6 27.\textit{\textsc{Qxg}}3 \textit{\textsc{Exe}}5 28.\textit{\textsc{Qc}}3 \textit{\textsc{f}}6 29.0-0 \textit{\textsc{Exc}}4 30.\textit{\textsc{Exc}}4 \textit{\textsc{Exg}}3 31.\textit{\textsc{Qxe}}4 \textit{\textsc{Exg}}7=

The position is drawish.

22.\textit{\textsc{Bb}}3 \textit{\textsc{Ec}}8 23.\textit{\textsc{a}}4

23.\textit{\textsc{f}}3 allows a lovely queen sacrifice: 23...\textit{\textsc{Exf}}3! 24.\textit{\textsc{Qxg}}4 \textit{\textsc{Qxg}}4

Black has powerful compensation and White had better take the opportunity to force a draw by means of: 25.\textit{\textsc{Qd}}5! \textit{\textsc{Exd}}5 26.\textit{\textsc{Qxf}}3 \textit{\textsc{Qf}}8! 27.\textit{\textsc{Qf}}4 (The bishop is untouchable: 27.\textit{\textsc{Qxd}}5? \textit{\textsc{b}}4† 28.\textit{\textsc{Qe}}2 \textit{\textsc{Ec}}2† 29.\textit{\textsc{Qd}}3 \textit{\textsc{Ed}}2† 30.\textit{\textsc{Qc}}4 \textit{\textsc{Qxe}}3† 31.\textit{\textsc{Qxb}}4 \textit{\textsc{Qxd}}5†=) 27...\textit{\textsc{h}}6 28.\textit{\textsc{Qd}}6 \textit{\textsc{Qf}}8 The game ends in a repetition.

23...\textit{\textsc{a}}6

Black has good positional compensation for the exchange and it is not clear how White should improve his position. The following is a plausible continuation:

24.\textit{\textsc{Qe}}7 \textit{\textsc{Qd}}5 25.\textit{\textsc{Qxd}}5 \textit{\textsc{Qxd}}5 26.\textit{\textsc{Qxc}}8\textit{\textsc{Exc}}8 27.\textit{\textsc{Qxe}}4 \textit{\textsc{E}}c1† 28.\textit{\textsc{Qe}}2 \textit{\textsc{Qb}}2† 29.\textit{\textsc{Qf}}1

After 29.\textit{\textsc{Qf}}3?! \textit{\textsc{Qf}}6† 30.\textit{\textsc{Qf}}5 \textit{\textsc{Qc}}3 31.\textit{\textsc{Qe}}8† \textit{\textsc{Qf}}8 32.\textit{\textsc{Qc}}8 \textit{\textsc{Qxf}}5 only Black can be better.

29...\textit{\textsc{Qa}}1†=

The game ends in perpetual check.

\textbf{Conclusion}

It is clear that line A with 9.\textit{\textsc{Qa}}3 is not in the least bit threatening to Black. On the other hand, variation B with 9.\textit{\textsc{Qe}}2 is a serious option which some would argue is a more critical try for an advantage than the more classical 9.\textit{\textsc{Qf}}3 of the next chapter. Black must react with great precision and be willing to sacrifice at least an exchange, relying on his superior development and active piece play to provide dynamic compensation. According to the latest games and analysis Black’s resources appear fully adequate; perhaps the only disappointing thing is that so many of the critical lines have been analysed all the way through to a perpetual check or drawn endgame, although in terms of the theoretical dispute this can at least be considered a moral victory for the Grünfeld.
Chapter 17

4. \( \texttt{f4} \)

9. \( \texttt{f3} \)

Variation Index

1. \( \texttt{d4 \texttt{f6}} \) 2. \( \texttt{c4 \texttt{g6}} \) 3. \( \texttt{\texttt{c3 \texttt{d5}}} \) 4. \( \texttt{\texttt{f4 \texttt{g7}}} \) 5. \( \texttt{e3 \texttt{c5}} \) 6. \( \texttt{\texttt{xc5 \texttt{a5}}} \) 7. \( \texttt{\texttt{c1 \texttt{xc4}}} \) 8. \( \texttt{\texttt{xc4}} \) 0–0 9. \( \texttt{\texttt{f3}} \)

9... \( \texttt{\texttt{xc5}} \)

A) 10. \( \texttt{\texttt{b5 \texttt{e6}}} \)
   A1) 11. \( \texttt{\texttt{c7??}} \)
   A2) 11. \( \texttt{\texttt{xe6}} \)

B) 10. \( \texttt{\texttt{b3}} \)

C) 10. \( \texttt{\texttt{b3 \texttt{c6}}} \) 11. 0–0 \( \texttt{\texttt{a5}} \)
   C1) 12. \( \texttt{\texttt{e2}} \)
   C2) 12. \( \texttt{\texttt{h3 \texttt{f5}}} \)
      C21) 13. \( \texttt{\texttt{g5}} \)
      C22) 13. \( \texttt{\texttt{e2 \texttt{e4}}} \)
         C221) 14. \( \texttt{\texttt{xe4 \texttt{xe4}}} \)
         C222) 14. \( \texttt{g4??} \)
         C223) 14. \( \texttt{\texttt{d5 \texttt{e5}}} \)
            C2231) 15. \( \texttt{\texttt{g5}} \)
            C2232) 15. \( \texttt{\texttt{xc6}} \)
            C2233) 15. \( \texttt{\texttt{h2 \texttt{e6}}} \)
               C22331) 16. \( \texttt{\texttt{xc6}} \)
               C22332) 16. \( \texttt{\texttt{fd1}} \)
1. d4 d5 2. c4 g6 3. c3 d5 4. f4 g7 5. e3 c5 6. dxc5 w a5 7. c1 dxc4 8. xc4 0-0

This classical knight development can at least historically be considered the ultimate main line of the 4.f4 system.

9. cxc5

I do not see any point in allowing White an extra option with 9... c6?! 10. 0-0 c5, since here instead of 11. b3 he can try the assault 11. b5?! with reasonable chances for an advantage.

After the text move there are three main moves to consider: A) 10. b5, B) 10. b3 and C) 10. b3. Other moves are sometimes seen, but none of them should worry the second player.

10. b3

This is a pet line of the Israeli IM Alexander Mikhalevski as well as some of his students. Mikhalevski is a good player but objectively the move is harmless.

10... c6 11.0-0 g4 12. h3 d8 13. e2 xf3 14. xf3 a5

After a series of natural moves, Black has obtained a comfortable position in which the bishop pair is unlikely to hurt him.

15. e4

In the following encounter White played too extravagantly and soon found himself in a worse position: 15. g4? a8 16. g3 e6 17. b1 wa2+ A. Mikhalevski - Greenfeld, Tel Aviv 2001.

15... xe4 16. xe4 e6

With this solid positional move Black neutralizes the unopposed light-squared bishop.

17. a4 a6 18. d1 a8

The game was balanced in Porat - Wittmann, Budapest 2004.

10. d4

This has also been used by some strong players, but it too is absolutely harmless.

10... h5!

With this move Black attempts to seize the initiative.

If Black wishes to play it safe then the following alternative is absolutely fine:
10...\text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash a}}}}} a5 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}}} e5 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash c}}}}} c6 12.\text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} a5 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} a5}}} The endgame is harmless for Black, for example: 13.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} e2 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} e6}}} 14.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d4 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d7}}} 15.0-0 \texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash ac}}} ac8=} Bu Xiangzhi -- Peng Xiaomin, HeiBei 2001.
11.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xb8 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xb8}}} 12.\text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} a7}}

This position was reached in Golod -- Ma Tseitlin, Ashdod 2004, and here I found a remarkable idea for Black:

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12...\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash h}}} h3!N}

In the aforementioned game Black easily obtained a draw after 12...\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash g}}} g4} 13.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} e2 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d5}}} 14.0-0 \texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash ac}}} ac8} 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xb7 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} c3}}} 16.bxc3 \texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} fb8} 17.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash w}}} c6 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} c8}}} 18.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash w}}} b7 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} cb8}}} with a repetition, but he has every reason to be more ambitious.

13.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash f}}} f1}

Also after 13.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash g}}} gxh3 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash w}}} xf3}}} 14.0-0 \texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash w}}} xh3 15.f3 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash g}}} g4}}}! Black has a strong initiative.
13...\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d5!} 14.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d4 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xc3}}} 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} exc3 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash w}}} d5}}} 16.f3 \texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} e6}

Black has great compensation for the pawn.

A) 10.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash b}}} b5}

This is the first of White's three 'serious' options, but it should certainly not worry a well-prepared Grünfeld player.

10...\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} e6}

10...\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash b}}} b4} is also fine according to theory, but I have chosen to recommend the text move, after which White has two main options: A1) 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash c}}} c7?! and A2) 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xe6}. 

11.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d3?! is ineffective: 11...\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash b}}} b4} 12.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d2 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash c}}} c6}}} 13.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash c}}} c7} This occurred in Lenic -- Predojevic, Portoroz 2005, and now Black should have played 13...\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash w}}} xd2} 14.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xd2 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} ad8}}} 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xe6 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash f}}} fx6}}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} e2 \text{\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d5}}} when he has the better chances.

A1) 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash c}}} c7?!}

12.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d2} b5 13.b3 (13.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xa8 is not much better: 13...\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d5}! 14.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xc4 bxc4} 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash w}}} a4} Eitel -- Bensch, Bavaria 2003, and now after the simple 15...\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} fx4} 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} xf4} \texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} e8} 17.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}} c2} c3 18.0-0 \texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash c}}} c6} 19.bxc3 \texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xa8} Black is clearly better.)

12.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}} xc4} 12.b3

White has tried two other moves.

12.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}} d2} b5 13.b3
13...\(\text{c}d5\) (A very ‘human’ move, but even stronger would have been 13...e5!N 14.\(\text{a}x\text{a}8\) \(\text{e}x\text{f}4\) when White is in serious trouble.) 14.\(\text{a}x\text{a}8\) \(\text{c}c3\) 15.\(\text{x}x\text{c}3\) \(\text{x}x\text{c}3\) 16.\(\text{b}x\text{c}4\) \(\text{w}x\text{c}4\) 17.\(\text{e}e2\) \(\text{x}x\text{d}2\) 18.\(\text{w}x\text{x}d2\) \(\text{c}c6\) Black was winning in Popchev – Lalic, Sarajevo 1988.

12.\(\text{a}x\text{a}8\) \(\text{w}a5\)

13.\(\text{w}d2\)
I checked two other moves as well:
13.\(\text{c}d2\) \(\text{a}x\text{a}2\) 14.0–0 \(\text{c}c6\) Black is clearly better.
13.\(\text{b}x\text{b}4\) \(\text{w}x\text{b}4\) 14.\(\text{d}d2\) \(\text{x}d2\) 15.\(\text{x}x\text{d}2\) \(\text{x}a2\) 16.\(\text{a}a1\) \(\text{c}c6\) 17.\(\text{e}x\text{a}2\) \(\text{e}a8\) With two connected passed pawns for the exchange, Black has good winning chances.
13...\(\text{a}x\text{a}2\) 14.\(\text{e}e5\)
14.\(\text{b}x\text{b}4\) was played in Boudignon–Baruchel, corr. 1994,

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at which point Black missed the strong 14...b5!N which leads after 15.\(\text{a}a3\) \(\text{a}x\text{a}3\)

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20...\(\text{d}d8\)!
Keeping the king boxed in.
21.\(\text{f}f3\) \(\text{c}c5\) 22.\(\text{a}a1\) \(\text{d}d3\) 23.\(\text{e}e2\) \(\text{b}4\)
Black was clearly better in Hartnack – Haar, e-mail 1995.

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12...\(\text{a}5\) 13.\(\text{d}d2\) \(\text{x}d2\) 14.\(\text{e}x\text{d}2\) \(\text{d}d3\)
15.\(\text{a}x\text{a}8\) \(\text{d}d5\)!
The key move, which solidifies Black’s compensation for the exchange. Thanks to the powerful bishop on d3, he has a strong and easy-to-handle initiative.

16.\(\text{c}c7\) \(\text{c}c8\)
17. \( \text{d}3 \)

17.\( \text{d}3 \)N would have been White's best chance to survive, for instance: 17...\( \text{xf}4 \) 18.\( \text{ex}f4 \) \( \text{b}2 \) 19.\( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 20.\( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{xc}7 \) 21.\( \text{xd}3 \) \( \text{c}1\text{t} \) 22.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{xe}1 \) 23.\( \text{d}8\text{t} \) \( \text{g}7 \) 24.\( \text{xb}8 \) \( \text{hx}2 \) 25.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 26.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 27.\( \text{b}7 \) White should be able to hold the endgame.

17...\( \text{xf}4 \) 18.\( \text{ex}f4 \) \( \text{b}2 \) 19.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{xc}1\text{t} \) 20.\( \text{xc}1 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 21.\( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{xc}1 \) 22.\( \text{xc}1 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 23.\( \text{gxf}3 \) \( \text{c}6\text{t} \)


\[ A2) \] 11.\( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xb}5 \)

Here White is playing less ambitiously than in the previous line; on the other hand he is less likely to fall into trouble.

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

12.\( \text{b}3?! \) is worse, and after 12...\( \text{c}6 \) White has difficulties arranging castling. After the further 13.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{b}4\text{t} \) 14.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{xd}2\text{t} \) 15.\( \text{xd}2 \) \( \text{h}5 \) Black had clearly taken over the initiative in Dlugy – Kasparov, Saint John 1988.

12...\( \text{xb}2 \) 13.0-0 \( \text{c}6 \) 14.\( \text{a}4 \)

14.\( \text{a}1?! \) was played in F. Portisch – Kaposzta, Lohmar 1999, and here Black should have replied with: 14...\( \text{a}3\text{N} \) 15.\( \text{c}1 \) (The main point behind Black's last move is that 15.\( \text{xb}7? \) can be refuted by 15...\( \text{a}5 \) 16.\( \text{c}7 \) \( \text{e}8\text{!} \) winning material.) 15...\( \text{xc}1 \) 16.\( \text{fx}c1 \) \( \text{a}5 \) and Black remains a pawn up.

14...\( \text{d}7\)!

This is not the only playable move, but it is the most accurate.

15.\( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{b}6 \)

Also 15...\( \text{f}6 \) 16.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 17.\( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xa}4 \) 18.\( \text{g}7 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 19.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{a}5 \) leads to easy equality for Black.

16.\( \text{xb}2 \) \( \text{xa}4 \) 17.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{a}5 \)
White could and should have maintained the balance with 18.\texttt{b4N} \texttt{xc4} 19.\texttt{xa4}!, when the endgame is equal.

18.\texttt{xc4} 19.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{c3!+}

Black's powerful knight gave him the advantage in Boehnke – Brendel, Berkel 2003.

\textbf{B) 10.\texttt{b3}}

Compared with the analogous position occurring after 9.\texttt{ge2}, as seen in the previous chapter, this queen development fails to create real problems for Black. The difference is due to the fact that in the present position the c1-rook is unprotected.

10...\texttt{c6} 11.\texttt{b5}

This looks tempting, but it fails to achieve the desired effect for the reason already mentioned. Other moves are also harmless.

11.\texttt{g5} e6 12.0=0 \texttt{a5} 13.\texttt{b5} \texttt{xc4} 14.\texttt{xa5} b6 15.\texttt{a3} \texttt{b7} 16.\texttt{e7} \texttt{a6}! With this slightly odd-looking but effective move, Black neutralizes his opponent's activity and starts putting his bishop pair to work. 17.\texttt{e5} \texttt{ae8} 18.\texttt{b4} h6 19.\texttt{h3}

This position occurred in Tachikart – Guilleux, La Roche sur Yon 2008, and now Black could have obtained an excellent game with 19...\texttt{d5!}, for instance 20.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xe5} 21.\texttt{c7} \texttt{xc7} 22.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{c8} 23.\texttt{xc8} \texttt{xc8} with a clear advantage.

11.\texttt{b5} \texttt{xb5} 12.\texttt{xb5} \texttt{d7} The queenless position is absolutely harmless for Black and he equalizes without any difficulties. 13.0=0 a6 (A worthy alternative is 13...\texttt{ac8} 14.h3 \texttt{fd8} 15.\texttt{fd1} \texttt{f8} with balanced play, Olsen – Brinck Claussen, Naestved 1991.) 14.\texttt{e2}
This was Ricardi – Barbosa Valdes, Santiago de Chile 2005, and here the simplest continuation for Black would have been 14...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash d}8N 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash f}d1 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash f}5!}} when Black is in no way worse.

11.0-0 White can hardly aspire to an advantage by giving up the bishop pair. 11...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}5! 12.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}5 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c4 13.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}a5 b6 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}3}}}}

14...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}8! Black has a healthy position with good chances to make his bishop pair count in the long run, for instance: 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash f}d1 (15.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}5 can be met by 15...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}6}}) 15...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}6 16.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}3 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}6 17.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}5 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash c}4 18.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}4 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash ac8 19.h3 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}7}}}}}}}}}}}

Here we see the big disadvantage of the knight's position on f3 instead of e2. The text move is only possible thanks to the undefended rook on c1.

12.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash c}7}

It is too late for White to back out now: 12.0-0?! \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}5 13.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}e6? (The lesser evil was 13.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}3, but even here after 13...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}a3 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}a3 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c4 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c4 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash fc8}} the endgame is clearly better for Black.) 13...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}b3 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c5 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c5 Black was already winning in Somogyi – Nogrady, Budapest 1996.}})}}}

12...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c4 13.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c4 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}5+ 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}2 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash ac8 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash h}c1}}}}}}}

White had to play 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}b7! and after 15...e5 16.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c6 exf4 17.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash h}c1 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}a2 18.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}6!}}}} he holds on for equality.

We have been following the game Z. Almasi – Hracek, Germany 2003. At this point Black could have seized the advantage by means of:

15...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash h}5!N 16.\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}5 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}f4+ 17.exf4 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}6+}}}}}

Black is better coordinated, his king is safer and ...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}5 is a serious threat.
This natural move is the clear first choice.

10...c6
There is no need to move the queen yet, as any discovered attacks can be met by a check on a5 or b4.

11.0-0 a5
Sometimes Black tries 11...h5 but after 12.h3 e5 13.h2 d8 both 14.e2 and 14.d2 promise White good chances for an advantage.

After the text move White sometimes plays C1) 12.e2 but the main line by far is C2) 12.h3.

White gets nowhere with other moves, for instance 12.d5?! cxd5 13.xd5 xxb2 14.b1 g7 15.fc1 f5 16.e4 g4 and White has a hard time demonstrating compensation, Tikkanen – Hermansson, Gothenburg 2005

C1) 12.e2 h5!
It is not by accident that the main line C2 involves creating a retreat square for the dark-squared bishop.

13.g5
13.d5 is hardly a serious alternative, and after 13...xf4 14.exf4, Somogyi – Boros, Budapest 2000, 14...e6N 15.e3 b4 16.c4 e7 only Black can be better.

13...g4
Better than 13...h6 14.h4 g5 15.fd1! when White has promising play.

14.h4
White has also tried two knight moves.

14.e4?! f5 15.c2 e6 (15...xf3 16.gxf3 h3 17.a4 was unclear in Hauser – Connelly, e-mail 2008.) 16.b1
This position occurred in Levin - Shirov, Dagomys 2009, and now Black could have obtained an excellent position with:

16...\(\text{xf}3!\)N 17.gxf3 (After 17.\(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{xb}2\) 18.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{g7}\) White does not have enough compensation.) 17...\(\text{h}3\) 18.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{h}6\) 19.\(\text{xh}5\) \(\text{hx}5\) White might encounter serious problems along the h-file.

14.\(\text{d}5\)?! \(\text{e}6\) 15.\(\text{e}7\) \(\text{h}8\) 16.\(\text{xc}6\)

16...\(\text{g}5!\) 17.\(\text{g}5\)

17.\(\text{cd}4\) is best met by: 17...\(\text{xd}4!\) (17...\(\text{e}7\) is enough for comfortable equality, but Black can play for more.) 18.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{f}4!\) 19.\(\text{e}5\)\(\text{t}\) Roussel Roozmon - V. Mikhailievski, Montreal 2005, and now Black could have created problems for his opponent by means of: 19...\(\text{f}6\)N 20.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{xf}3\) 21.\(\text{gxf}3\) \(\text{fe}8\)\(\text{t}\)

17 ...\(\text{xe}2\) 18.\(\text{fe}1\) \(\text{xb}2\) 19.\(\text{c}2\)

14...\(\text{g}5!\)?

With this move Black aims for a more complex game in which he has chances to take over the initiative.

There is also a clear route to equality with 14...\(\text{b}4\) 15.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{xc}4\) 16.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{xf}3\) 17.\(\text{gxf}3\) \(\text{f}6\)- as seen in Yusupov - Leko, Essen 2002, and a number of other games.

15.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{d}xg3\) 16.\(\text{hxg}3\)

16.\(\text{f}x\)3 \(\text{ad}8\) (16...\(\text{h}6\)?\(\text{N}\) also looks sensible)
was pleasant for Black in Gretarsson – Hellers, Sweden 2000.

This position was first reached in Szymczak – Ogaard, Lublin 1975, and has since been repeated in several other games. Usually Black has opted for 16...\textit{b}ad8, but I would like to propose a modest deviation.

16...h6\textit{N}

It is useful to stabilize the kingside before determining the position of the rook.

17\textit{W}c4

After 17.\textit{W}e4 \textit{W}b6 19.\textit{W}fc1 \textit{b}ad8 the idea of ...\textit{W}d3 is unpleasant for White.

17...\textit{W}b4!

Now that the g5-pawn is securely defended, Black can afford to offer a queen exchange. In the resulting position his bishop pair gives him some chances to take over the initiative.

13.\textit{W}d4

This logical developing move is the clear number one choice for Black. Now we will analyse C21) 13.\textit{g}g5 and C22) 13.\textit{W}e2.

C21) 13.\textit{g}g5

13.\textit{W}d4 has been considered harmless for Black ever since the following game: 13...\textit{W}d7 14.\textit{W}e2 \textit{W}xd4 15.exd4 \textit{e}6 16.\textit{g}e5 \textit{f}c6 17.\textit{f}d1 \textit{f}d8 Black has a comfortable position thanks to his firm control over the d5-square. 18.\textit{W}e3 \textit{d}7 19.\textit{g}g5 \textit{W}d8 Black has defended against White's only active idea. Although the position is objectively equal, Black is a bit more comfortable and in the game Petursson – Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 1989, he eventually managed to win.

13...e5

Certainly the most active and principled response. Morozevich preferred 13...\textit{a}6?! but after 14.e4 the initiative is very much with White.
Out of the two possible bishop retreats, this one looks more logical as the resource of g2-g4 might be useful. We will also consider the retreat to g3 after first looking at a few forcing continuations.

14.\textit{xf7}? does not work, as after 14...\textit{h8} 15.e4 (or 15.g3 h6) 15...exf4 16.exf5 h6+ Black wins material.

14.\textit{xf7}?! is also premature. 14...exf4 15.e4 From here Black's objectively strongest continuation is 15...c8! 16.e5 e8 when White lacks an effective discovered check. However, if Black yearns for safety then 15...\textit{xe4}? is quite playable, and after 16.\textit{xe4} \textit{xe4} 17.g5+ h8 18.\textit{xe4} \textit{ad8} only Black can be better.

14.e4 This move is not dangerous, but it can lead to interesting complications. 14...\textit{xf4} 15.exf5 \textit{ad8} 16.\textit{xf7}+ Otherwise the white queen lacks a decent square.

16...\textit{h8}? (The game continuation was not bad either: 16.\textit{xf7} 17.b3 \textit{dd7} 18.fd1 \textit{xf5} 19.xd7 \textit{x} 20.b5 \textit{d5} 21.xf7 \textit{xb3} 22.axb3 \textit{xf7} 23.d6+ e7 24.xb7 e5 The ending was more or less equal in De Blois Figueredo – Bortnik, corr. 2010.) The justification for the cheeky king move is revealed in the following line: 17.b3 \textit{xf5} 18.f3 a5! 19.e6 \textit{xf7} 20.xf7 d7 The queen is caught, so Black regains the sacrificed material with interest. 21.h4 \textit{xf7} 22.xf5 gxf5 23.b5 d4 24.c8+ f8 25.xa7 xc8 26.xc8 \textit{xb2} In the resulting endgame Black's minor pieces are stronger than White's rook.

14.\textit{g3}

This is the only serious alternative to the main line, although it does have the drawback of blocking the g2-pawn, as noted previously.

14...\textit{ad8}!

Black has no reason to fear the ensuing complications.

15.\textit{xf7}+

If White refrains from this move then Black has no problems at all, for instance: 15.\textit{xf3} h6 16.ge4 xe4 17.xe4 \textit{b4} 18.c3 e4 (18...\textit{d2}?N 19.d5 \textit{a5} also deserves attention) 19.e2 This position occurred in Wang Li – Tan Zhongyi, Hefei 2010, and here I recommend:
19...\(\textsf{ddd}3\)N 20.\(\textsf{d}d5\) \(\textsf{ddd}2\) 21.\(\textsf{x}xd2\) \(\textsf{xd}d2\) 22.\(\textsf{cc}2\) \(\textsf{xc}2\) 23.\(\textsf{xc}c2\) \(\textsf{dd}8\) 24.\(\textsf{dd}d1\) \(\textsf{df}8\) Black has no problems at all.

15...\(\textsf{xf}7\) 16.\(\textsf{wb}3\)

Now Black must find the right way to deal with the pin.

The position is complex and unbalanced, but in my opinion Black should be at least equal and has realistic chances to take over the initiative. Here is an illustrative line:

19.\(\textsf{hh}4\) g5 20.\(\textsf{bb}5!\) \(\textsf{fe}4\) 21.\(\textsf{dd}d6\) \(\textsf{xd}d6\) 22.\(\textsf{xd}d6\) \(\textsf{gg}6\) 23.\(\textsf{gg}3\) \(\textsf{ff}8\) 24.\(\textsf{dd}d7\) \(\textsf{wb}4\)

Following the queen exchange Black is by no means worse.

14...\(\textsf{aad}8!\)

This is a clear improvement over 16...\(\textsf{cc}7?\) as played in Grigore – L’Ami, Bratto 2010. In that game White missed the strong 17.e4!N which would have more or less forced Black to accept a clearly worse position by taking on e4, as 17...\(\textsf{cc}8?\) leads to even bigger problems: 18.\(\textsf{dd}5\) \(\textsf{dd}7\) 19.\(\textsf{fd}d1\) \(\textsf{dd}4\) 20.\(\textsf{xd}d4!\) \(\textsf{ex}d4\) 21.\(\textsf{dc}7\) \(\textsf{xd}d5\) 22.\(\textsf{xd}d7\) \(\textsf{fd}d7\) 23.\(\textsf{ee}6!\) White has a huge advantage.

17.\(\textsf{fd}d1\) \(\textsf{hh}6!\)

This is the best way to force White to take on f7.

18.\(\textsf{xf}7\) \(\textsf{xf}7\)

Once again Black should not fear the complications which result from White’s next move.

15.\(\textsf{xf}7\)

15.\(\textsf{f}3\) does not lead anywhere special for White: 15...h6 16.\(\textsf{gg}e4\) (Not dangerous is 16.\(\textsf{xf}7\) \(\textsf{xf}7\) 17.\(\textsf{fd}1\) \(\textsf{fd}8\) intending ...\(\textsf{hh}7)\;) 16...\(\textsf{xe}4\) 17.\(\textsf{xe}4\) \(\textsf{wb}4\) (It was worth considering 17...\(\textsf{dd}3??\) with the tactical threat of ...\(\textsf{dd}d4\)) 18.\(\textsf{cc}4\) \(\textsf{ee}7\) Black was doing fine in Littlewood – Conquest, Torquay 2009.

15...\(\textsf{xf}7\) 16.\(\textsf{bb}3\) \(\textsf{dd}8!\)

I prefer this square for the rook, as 16...\(\textsf{dd}d7\), which was played in Garcia Gil, Barbera del Valles 2009, can be met by 17.\(\textsf{fd}d1N\) when 17...\(\textsf{bb}4\) allows White to regain his piece by means of 18.\(\textsf{xb}4\) \(\textsf{xb}4\) 19.\(\textsf{g}4!\).
17.e4?
This poor move allows the black knight to take up a dominating position on d4.

An obvious improvement is 17...d1N when I analysed the following line: 17...a6 I like this prophylactic move, which stops White's idea of b5-d6. (In the event of 17...h6 18.xxf7 c8 19.g4 c8 20.b5 e6 21.xe6 xb5 22.c2 the position looks rather unclear.)

18.g4 c8 19.a4 b5 20.xb5 axb5 21.xxf7 xf7 22.c5 f8 Black is doing fine without queens.

17...d4 18.c4 b5 19.d3
This position was reached in Ristovic – Haessel, Calgary 2009, and here Black missed a good opportunity:

19.xe4!N 20.xe4 d7
Despite the level material, Black has an obvious advantage thanks to his superbly-placed pieces.

C22) 13.e2

With this, the main line, White continues to mobilize his forces before embarking on any direct action.

13..e4
Black offers a knight exchange and opens the long diagonal for his dark-squared bishop. In response White may choose C221) 14.xe4, C222) 14.g4! or C223) 14.d5.

C221) 14.xe4 e4
White develops his final piece and tries to make the tempting \( \text{g5} \) more dangerous for Black.

The immediate knight jump is unimpressive:

15. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{d5} \) 16. \( \text{c7} \)

16. \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 17. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{ac8} \) 18. \( \text{fd1} \) \( \text{a5} \)

cannot be dangerous for Black, and after the inaccurate 19. \( \text{f3?} \) \( \text{e5} \) 20. \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{e4} \) he took over the initiative in Orsag – Oral, Czech Republic 2002.

16... \( \text{xc7} \) 17. \( \text{xd5} \)

16... \( \text{Wa5!} \) 17. \( \text{xc6} \)

Black need not worry about 18. \( \text{xf7?} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 19. \( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 20. \( \text{c4?} \) \( \text{f8} \) when his king is quite safe, and after 21. \( \text{fd1} \) \( \text{f6} \) 22. \( \text{fd5} \) \( \text{b6} \) I prefer Black’s position.

18... \( \text{xc6} \) 19. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xa2} \) 20. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 21. \( \text{exd4} \) \( \text{e6} \) 22. \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{ab8=} \)

The position should be a draw, but Black can press for a win without taking any risks, M. Horvath – Serner, corr. 1996.

15. \( \text{d2} \)

Retreating the knight is also unlikely to trouble the second player.

15... \( \text{d5} \) 16. \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 17. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{fd8} \)

18. \( \text{fd1} \)

Now my slight preference is:

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

18... \( \text{e4} \) should also be absolutely fine.

15... \( \text{h5?!} \)

This is my preferred solution, although the alternatives 15... \( \text{ad8} \) and 15... \( \text{f3} \) seem reliable enough as well.
16.\( \text{Bd7} \)
\[ 16.\text{Bc2} \text{ Bxf3} \] This well-timed exchange completely solves Black's opening problems.
\[ 17.\text{Bxf3} \text{ Bxf3} 18.\text{gxf3} \text{ Bxd8} 19.\text{Bxe4} 19...\text{Bxb2} \]
\[ 20.\text{Bxd8} \text{ Bxd8} 21.\text{Bc2} \text{ Bf3} 22.\text{Bxc6} \text{ Bxc6} \]
\[ 23.\text{Bxc6} \text{ Bf6} \] Black has equalized comfortably, Portisch - Arakhamia-Grant, Roquebrune 1998.

16...\( \text{Bac8}! \)
Such strong players as Shirov and Roiz have preferred 16...\( \text{e6} \), but the text move is better. The immediate threat is ...\( \text{Bd4} \).

17.\( \text{Bcd1} \text{ e6} 18.\text{Bd2} \)
The lesser evil would have been 18.\( \text{Bd4}! \) although after 18...\( \text{Bxe2} \) 19.\( \text{Bxe2} \text{ Bf5} \) White will have to work hard to equalize.

\begin{center}
\textbf{C222) 14.g4?}
\end{center}

This aggressive continuation has become quite fashionable recently. White is willing to accept some weaknesses in his position in order to drive Black's pieces away from their active positions.

\[ 14...\text{\( \text{Dxc3} \)} 15.\text{Bxc3} \text{ \( \text{Dd7} \)} 16.\text{Bfd1} \text{ \( \text{Ead8} \)} 17.\text{Bd5} \]

17...\( \text{Bxa3}! \)
This is stronger than 17...\( \text{Bb6} \) 18.\( \text{Bb1!} \text{ Bc8} \), Kasimdzhanov - Svidler, San Sebastian 2009, at which point the unexpected 19.\( \text{Bg5}!N \) would have underlined the unfortunate position of Black's queen.

18.\( \text{Bcd1} \text{ Bc6} \)
It is essential to exchange some pieces in order to dampen White's initiative. In the event of 18...c8 19.e4 White retains some pressure.

19.exd8 Qxd8 20.b5 a6
It is best to insert this move, as in certain positions the pawn will be slightly less vulnerable on a6 than a7.

21.b6 Qxb3
In an ideal world Black would prefer not to unite his opponent's queenside pawns, but vacating the e6-square for the knight is a much more pressing concern.

22.axb3 Qe6

23.c4
This is the most ambitious idea at White's disposal.

23.xb7? is unattractive in view of 23...Qxf4 24.exf4 Qxc3.

23.e5 enables Black to play: 23...Qc5! 24.Qxc5 Qxc5 25.b4 This position occurred in Sachdev – Safarli, Delhi 2010, and now the most precise continuation would have been 25...Qxe5N 26.Qxe5 Qe4 27.Qd7 f6 28.Qd3 Qf7 29.c4 ±c8 30.c5 ±b8 with equality.

23...a5!
Commencing counterplay.

24.Qxb7
We have been following the game Mamedyarov – Sutovsky, Bursa 2010. At this point Black should have played:

24...Qb2!N
Activating the queen and threatening ...a4. The position is just as dangerous for White as for Black, and according to my analysis the game should end in a draw after accurate play from both sides.

25.Qb5 Qe2 26.Qd5 Qc2!
Continuing to target the b3-pawn. Now 27.Qg3 ±xb3 28.Qd3 ±b4 is fine for Black.

27.Qd3 ±b1† 28.Qg2
28...\(\text{bxc5!}\)
This small finesse seals the fate of the b3-pawn.

29.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{xb3}\) 30.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 31.\(\text{xe5}\)
From here the following line looks like a logical end to the game:

31...\(\text{a4}\) 32.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{b2}\) 33.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{xa1}\) 34.\(\text{xe7}\)
\(\text{b1}\) 35.\(\text{d7}\) \(\text{a8}\) 36.\(\text{f6}\)\(\text{g7}\) 37.\(\text{e5}\)
\(\text{b7}\)\(\text{g7}\) 38.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{a3}\) 39.\(\text{d5}\)\(\text{g8}\) 40.\(\text{f6}\)

The game ends in perpetual check.

15...\(\text{xc5}\) 16.\(\text{xg5}\) \(\text{d8}\!\)
This key defensive move is the only way to parry the dual threats of \(\text{xc6}\) followed by \(\text{e7}\), and \(\text{g4}\) followed by \(\text{f3}\).

17.\(\text{h4}\!\)
This is White's latest try, and the only way to set Black any problems.

After 17.\(\text{xf7}\) \(\text{xf7}\) 18.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{e7}\) the players agreed a draw in Gustafsson – Lindinger, Hamburg 1999, but Black is clearly better in the final position.

17.\(\text{d3}\)
This has been the most popular choice, but it is much too timid.

17...\(\text{e4}\!\) 18.\(\text{d2}\)
18.\(\text{h2}\) occurred in Lev – Alterman, Israel 1992, and a couple of subsequent games. Despite Black's good results I would like to recommend a new move, which seems to me like the most logical: 18...\(\text{e5}\)!\(\text{N}\) 19.\(\text{cd1}\) \(\text{g5}\) 20.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{f8}\) Black is clearly better.

18...\(\text{g5}\) 19.\(\text{f4}\)
This position was reached in Meins – Kaufeld, Dortmund 2001, and here Black missed a good opportunity:

19...\(\text{xd4}\)!\(\text{N}\) 20.\(\text{exd4}\)
20.\(\text{xc4}\) should be met by 20...\(\text{ad8}\)!, rather than 20...\(\text{f3}\)\(\text{f3}\) 21.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{exf3}\) 22.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{xb2}\) 23.\(\text{cd1}\) when White has some compensation for the pawn.
20...\textit{Wxf4} 21.\textit{We3} \textit{\texttt{h}h6}

Black has the advantage.

In the game he needlessly sacrificed material with 22...\textit{fxe4}? and went on to lose.

23.\textit{gx5}

Worse is 23.\textit{\texttt{c}c5}! \texttt{fxg4} 24.\texttt{fxg4} \textit{\texttt{c}c8} when White's compensation is questionable.

23...\textit{\texttt{axf5}}

We have reached a rich position in which White has sufficient compensation to maintain the balance, but not enough to claim an advantage.

\texttt{C2232) 15.\textit{\texttt{xc}c6}}

17.\textit{h6} 18.\textit{g4}

This is the only move with which White can hope to justify his previous play.

18...\textit{\texttt{d}d7} 19.\textit{\texttt{e}e4} \textit{\texttt{xh}x4} 20.\textit{f3}

White's play looks a bit crazy, but his active minor pieces provide some compensation for the pawn.

20...\textit{\texttt{a}a8} 21.\textit{\texttt{g}g2} \texttt{f5} 22.\textit{\texttt{h}h1}

Lysyj – Salem, Biel 2009. Here Black should have gone for the calm approach:

22...\textit{\texttt{d}d8} N

This exchange sacrifice is well-known, having most famously been used by Karpov in the eleventh game of his third match against Kasparov from London/Leningrad 1986.

15...\textit{\texttt{b}bxc6}

According to the latest theory this is the soundest response.

Kasparov preferred 15...\textit{\texttt{exf}f4} 16.\textit{\texttt{c}c7} and the game was eventually drawn after both sides missed some chances. Modern analysis indicates that White has good chances to obtain an advantage here.

16.\textit{\texttt{e}e7} \texttt{f}f8 17.\textit{\texttt{xc}c6}
Chapter 17 - 9.\textit{f3}

The careless 17.\textit{x}xe5? does not lead to a transposition in view of 17...\textit{x}xe5! 18.\textit{xc}6 \textit{d}2, and after the further 19.\textit{xd}2 \textit{xd}2 20.\textit{xe}5f6 21.\textit{c}3 \textit{xf}1 Black had won a second exchange and obtained a technically winning position in I. Sokolov – Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 1999

17...\textit{wb}6 18.\textit{c}xe5
White must avoid 18.\textit{fx}e5? f6 when he loses material.

19.\textit{x}xe6
Other options are not dangerous, but still we need to examine a few of them.

19.\textit{c}4 \textit{a}6 20.\textit{d}4 \textit{d}5 21.\textit{c}1 \textit{ac}8 gave Black a fine position in Shliperman – Ashley, Manhattan 1999.

19.\textit{d}4 \textit{xb}3 20.\textit{xb}3 \textit{we}6 By chasing the enemy knight away from the centre, Black easily solves his problems. 21.\textit{f}3 \textit{ac}8 22.\textit{d}1 \textit{fd}8 23.\textit{xd}8+ \textit{xd}8 24.\textit{fd}4 This was Karlzen – Carlhammar, Gothenburg 2004, and now the natural 24...\textit{d}5\textbf{f}N would have retained all the pluses of Black’s position.

19.\textit{xc}2 \textit{xb}3 20.\textit{xe}4
After 20.axb3 \textit{xb}7 Black can feel happy playing against the weakened queenside pawns.

20...\textit{e}6 21.\textit{g}5 \textit{g}8!
The best defensive move.

22.\textit{c}6 \textit{xa}2 23.\textit{d}6
This interesting position occurred in Gavrikov – Kochyev, Tallinn 1987. The white knights look quite dangerous, but Black could have solved all his problems with the following precise continuation:

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

18...\textit{e}6
Of course it is essential to neutralize White’s pressure along the a2-g8 diagonal.

19.\textit{xe}6
Other options are not dangerous, but still we need to examine a few of them.

I would also like to mention: 20.b3 \textit{ac}8 21.\textit{d}3 (After 21.\textit{c}4 \textit{fd}8 22.\textit{g}5 \textit{g}x5 23.\textit{x}g5 \textit{fd}5 only Black can be better, Heinig – Schulze, Bad Koenigshofen 2007.) This position was reached in Tarczykowski – Bugalski, Sepolno Kraj 2006, and now Black could have exploited the recent weakening of the c3-square by means of:

23...\textit{ae}8\textbf{N} 24.\textit{wa}4 \textit{d}5! 25.\textit{e}7+ \textit{xe}7 26.\textit{xe}7 \textit{b}8
Black may be a pawn down, but his bishops are superb.

27.\textit{a}3 \textit{b}7 28.\textit{f}4 \textit{h}6 29.\textit{c}3 \textit{ac}8
Black has full compensation.

19...\textit{xe}6 20.\textit{c}2
This is White’s main attempt to fight for the advantage.
20...f5!
This active move is stronger than 20...d6, as confirmed by both analysis and tournament praxis.

21.a4
With this move White defends the a2-pawn while at the same time gaining some space on the queenside.

21.c4
This knight retreat is playable, but it is hardly dangerous for Black.

21...a8 22.b3 d8
Black is unlikely to experience any problems after deploying his pieces so harmoniously.

23.e1 g8

By removing the king from the long diagonal Black stops his opponent's main idea of d4 followed by f3.

Also worthy of consideration is 23...e7!N 24.d4 h4!.

24.e5
The passive 24.e1? occurred in Shtryrenkov – Grandelius, Pardubice 2007, and here Black should have switched to active play on the kingside by means of 24...e7!N 25.h2 g5! when his chances are higher.

After the superior text move I discovered the following beautiful line:
24...xe5 25.fxe5 d2! 26.b1 e2 27.f3 e7 28.fxe4 g5 29.g4! fxg4 30.f1 gxh3 31.xe2 d8 32.xh3 g2† 33.e1 g1†=

We finish with a common scenario, as accurate play from both sides has resulted in a draw by perpetual check.
21...\texttt{ac8}

I do not see much point in entering the complications resulting from 21...g5 22.\texttt{h2} g4 23.hxg4 fxg4 24.\texttt{xe4} gxf3 25.gxf3.

22.\texttt{xa7}

One other game continued:

22.\texttt{d4} \texttt{e8} 23.\texttt{ec6}?

With this unfortunate move White self-pins his knight and enables Black to generate strong play without any difficulties.

The correct continuation was: 23.\texttt{xe8} \texttt{fxe8} 24.\texttt{ec6} \texttt{xd4}?! (I like this move, although there is also nothing wrong with the calm 24...g5 25.\texttt{h2} a6.) 25.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{g8} Black is doing fine in this endgame; his plans include ...g5, ...f4 and ...\texttt{f6-d5}.

23...g5! 24.\texttt{h2} f4

Advancing the kingside pawns is often a strong plan for Black in this variation.

24...\texttt{f6}?N 25.\texttt{c1} f4 was also very strong.

25.\texttt{exf4} gxf4

White is in serious trouble, Kosyrev – Sakaev, Internet 2004.

22...\texttt{a8} 23.\texttt{b7} \texttt{xa2} 24.\texttt{d4} \texttt{a7}

The position is equal, Meins – Holzke, Germany 1999.

This calm retreat has been White's most popular choice.

15...\texttt{e6}

Black has experimented with several alternatives, but I strongly prefer the old and classical approach. Now we reach a final division between C22331) 16.\texttt{xc6} and C22332) 16.\texttt{fd1}.

16.\texttt{c3}?! is unimpressive: 16...\texttt{xb3} 17.axb3 \texttt{c5}! Immediately attacking the newly-created weakness. 18.\texttt{c4} \texttt{b4}! 19.\texttt{xb4} \texttt{xb4} 20.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xb3} 21.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xe7} 22.\texttt{cd1} \texttt{fd8}=? Dziuba – Swinkels, Deizisau 2009. Black has the better chances in view of his potential to create a passed pawn on the queenside.

The simplest reaction to 16.\texttt{c4} would be 16...\texttt{f6} 17.e4 (or 17.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 18.\texttt{c2} \texttt{xb3} 19.\texttt{xb3} \texttt{b6=}) 17...\texttt{fd8} and here White has nothing better than 18.\texttt{fd1}, transposing to line C22332 below.

C22331) 16.\texttt{xc6}

We have already encountered this thematic exchange sacrifice, but this time the slight change in the position leads me to prefer a different reaction.
16...\textit{xd5!}

16...bxc6 is less appealing, as after 17.\textit{e}7\textit{h}8 18.\textit{x}e6 \textit{fxe}6 19.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xa}2 20.\textit{xe}5 we reach a rather unbalanced position in which I prefer White’s chances.

17.\textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 18.\textit{c}7 \textit{ac8} 19.\textit{c}2

This position occurred in Soln – Perus, Bled 2001, and now Black could have obtained a slight advantage by means of:

19...\textit{xc}7N 20.\textit{xc}7 \textit{f}6t

White’s position is a bit uncomfortable due to his misplaced bishop.

C22332) 16.\textit{fd}1

19...\textit{xc}7N 20.\textit{xc}7 \textit{f}6t

White’s position is a bit uncomfortable due to his misplaced bishop.

16...\textit{fd}8 17.\textit{c}4

This has been an almost universal choice. 17.\textit{e}1 has been tried in a couple of games, but White cannot expect to achieve much with this timid move. 17...\textit{xe}1t (17...\textit{f}8!?N also looks interesting) 18.\textit{xe}1 \textit{a}5 19.\textit{c}7? A serious mistake. (White should have opted for 19.\textit{e}7t \textit{f}8 20.\textit{x}d8t \textit{xd}8 21.\textit{xc}6 \textit{fxe}6 22.b4 \textit{xe}7 23.\textit{bxa}5 \textit{d}2, although even here his position is a bit unpleasant.) 19...\textit{xb}3 20.\textit{xa}8 \textit{xd}1 0–1 UrdayCaceres – Rytshagov, Yerevan 1996.

17...\textit{f}6t 18.\textit{e}4 \textit{ac8}

19.\textit{g}5

This is the consistent and principled follow-up to White’s previous play, and is justified by some tactical ideas.

The queenless position resulting from 19.\textit{c}5 \textit{xc}5 20.\textit{xc}5 is perfectly playable for Black, who can adopt a concrete approach to force further simplifications: 20...\textit{xe}4 21.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6! 22.\textit{e}7t \textit{f}8 23.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xd}1t 24.\textit{xd}1 \textit{bxc}6 25.\textit{c}2 \textit{d}5! This seems like the easiest solution. 26.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 27.\textit{xe}5 This position occurred in Cardon – Goormachtigh, Sas van Gent 1988, and now after 27...\textit{c}5N 28.a3 \textit{e}7 29.\textit{f}1 \textit{e}6 Black’s more active pieces easily make up for the slight weakness.
of his queenside pawns. Overall his position is slightly preferable, although it should be a draw of course.

19...\(\text{d4}\) 20.\(\text{c7}\)\(\text{b8}\)
Black must certainly avoid 20...\(\text{h8}\)??
21.\(\text{fxe6}\) fxe6 22.\(\text{f7}\) mate!

21.\(\text{xe6}\)\(\text{xe7}\) 22.\(\text{xd8}\) \(\text{xc4}\) 23.\(\text{xc4}\)
The position appears wildly complicated, but like many such variations, it has all been analysed out to a forced draw.

23...\(\text{xe4}\) 24.\(\text{xf7}\) \(\text{b6}\)!
There is not much that White can do about the impending raid on the f2-square.

25.\(\text{xe5}\)
It is not too late for White to go astray:
25...\(\text{xe5}\)?? \(\text{f3}\)† 26.\(\text{gf3}\) \(\text{xf2}\)† 27.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{xf3}\)†
28.\(\text{h2}\) \(\text{f2}\)† 29.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 30.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{g3}\)#

25...\(\text{xe5}\) 26.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{f3}\)†
Leading to a trivial draw.

27.\(\text{gf3}\) \(\text{xf2}\)† 28.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{xf3}\)† 29.\(\text{h2}\) \(\text{f2}\)†
30.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{f3}\)†
\(\frac{1}{2}\)–\(\frac{1}{2}\)

So far five subsequent games have ended in the same way.

Conclusion

The 9.\(\text{f3}\) system has been White's most popular method of handling the 4.\(\text{f4}\) variation. White develops his pieces classically and will usually focus his energy towards the centre, although we have seen over the course of the chapter that the battle might play out across any and all areas of the board.

The unusual options of A) 10.\(\text{b5}\) and B) 10.\(\text{b3}\) should not be ignored, although neither will present much of a threat against a well-prepared opponent. The main line of C) 10.\(\text{b3}\) is more serious, and leads to rich positions in which both sides will face plenty of challenges. The list of variations requiring particularly careful study involves the tricky C21) 13.\(\text{g5}\), the presently fashionable C222) 14.g4??, the two versions of the thematic exchange sacrifice, C2232) 15.\(\text{xc6}\) and C22331) 16.\(\text{xc6}\), and finally the classical C22332) 16.\(\text{fd1}\) which can lead to a forced draw.

We have reached the end of our investigation into the entire scheme of development starting with the move 4.\(\text{f4}\). The theoretical verdict looks perfectly healthy for Black at present, and although some improvements and refinements will inevitably be found for both sides, I am confident that the Grünfeld will continue to prove its soundness.
4.\textit{\$g5}

\textbf{Sidelines}

\textbf{Variation Index}

1.d4 $\textit{\$f6}$ 2.c4 $g6$ 3.$\textit{\$c3}$ d5 4.\textit{$g5$}

4...$\textit{\$e4}$

A) 5.$\textit{\$f3}$

B) 5.h4

C) 5.cxd5 $\textit{\$xg5}$ 6.h4 $\textit{\$e4}$! 7.$\textit{\$xe4}$ $\textit{\$xd5}$ 8.$\textit{\$c3}$ $\textit{\$a5}$

C1) 9.$\textit{\$a4}$

C2) 9.e3

C3) 9.$\textit{\$f3}$

C4) 9.h5

D) 5.$\textit{\$xe4}$ dxe4

D1) 6.$\textit{\$a4}$

D2) 6.f3

D3) 6.e3

D4) 6.$\textit{\$d2}$ $\textit{\$g7}$ 7.e3 c5

D41) 8.$\textit{\$e2}$

D42) 8.$\textit{\$d5}$ $\textit{\$b6}$!

D421) 9.0–0–0

D422) 9.$\textit{\$b1}$

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1. d4 d6 2. c4 g6 3. c3 d5 4. g5

A) 5. f3

It is hard to imagine that White can achieve much by giving up the dark-squared bishop, and indeed Black obtains a comfortable game with minimal fuss.

5... dxe5 6. dxe5 dxc4

Having obtained the advantage of the two bishops so early in the game, Black begins to open the centre.

7. a4

7. e3 may be a slight improvement, although Black should have few problems in any case, for instance: 7... e5 8. f3 exd4 9. xd4 g7 10. xc4 0-0 11. 0-0 Illichmann – L. Hoffmann, Hambuehren 2002, and now after 11... c6N or 11... d7N Black can look towards the middlegame with confidence thanks to his strong pair of bishops.

7... d7 8. xc4 e6 9. f3 g7 10. e3

10. b5 can be met strongly by 10... c5! 11. dxc5 (or 11. d6† e7 12. dc5 xb2†) 11... 0-0 12. 0-0-0 a6 13. d6 a5 when Black has the initiative.

10... 0-0 11. e2

This position occurred in Lautner – Jansa, Passau 1999, and here it would have been good for Black to play:
12.d5
Otherwise Black will improve the scope of his powerful bishop by taking on d4.

12...b6! 13.b3
13.c5 is well met by 13...e4 14.d4 e8 intending ...e5.

13...e4 14.xe4 xd5
Black’s bishop pair gives him the better chances.

B) 5.h4

Initially I was not going to cover this move, but when I saw that Jobava had played it recently I decided to pay more attention to it.

5...g7
Amazingly this natural move has only been played a couple of times. The whole variation is quite rare, but in the majority of games Black has exchanged on c3 or g5.

6.cxd5 xc3 7.bxc3 xd5 8.e3
8.b3 was tried in Naumov - Kanter, Kazan 2008, and here I like 8...e6!N when I do not see how White can pose his opponent any problems, for instance 9.xd5 xd5 10.f3 f5! (10...c4?) 11.e3 e5 and Black has an excellent game.

8...c5
A natural improvement, since White managed to obtain a slight plus in the following game: 8...h6 9.f4 e5 10.xe5 xe5 11.dxe5 xe5 12.d4 c6 13.b5 d7 14.f3 xd4 15.cxd4 Jobava - Safarli, Aix-les-Bains 2011.

9.f3 cxd4!
9...c6 gives White the extra option of 10.b3!?, as well as 10.e2 when 10...xd4 11.cxd4 reaches the main line.

10.cxd4 c6 11.e2 a5!
With this move Black highlights the negative side of White’s fifth move.

12.d2
12.d2 is well met by 12...h6 13.f4 e5! 14.dxe5 0–0 when Black has the better game.
12...\(\text{hxg}2\)\(\text{+}\) 13.\(\text{D}\text{x}d2\)

In the analogous position that may arise after the main line of 5.\(\text{h}4\), White can obtain a pleasant endgame after recapturing with his king. In the present position the same idea suffers from a flaw: 13.\(\text{D}\text{x}d2\) \(\text{f}6\)! Black can take advantage of the fact that the bishop is still on g5. 14.\(\text{D}\text{f}4\) e5! 15.\(\text{D}\text{g}3\) exd4 16.\(\text{D}\text{x}d4\) \(\text{D}\text{x}d4\) 17.exd4 \(\text{e}6\) White will have to play carefully to equalize.

13...\text{e}5!

This freeing move is a key idea for Black in this type of pawn structure.

14.\(\text{D}\text{e}4\)

14.dxe5 \(\text{D}\text{xe}5\) 15.\(\text{D}\text{b}1\) h6 16.\(\text{D}\text{f}4\) \(\text{D}\text{x}f4\) 17.exf4 \(\text{D}\text{d}4\)! is good for Black.

14...\(\text{e}6\)

I have chosen to focus on this move, although Black has other reliable options as well.

15.\(\text{D}\text{b}1\)

15...\text{h}6!

This move leads to mild complications which soon peter out to equality.

16.d5

16.\(\text{D}\text{f}6\) is also not unfavourable to Black: 16...0–0 (16...\(\text{D}\text{x}f6\)? 17.d5! \(\text{e}7\)! 18.dxe6 \(\text{f}5\)

leads to a highly unclear position.) 17.\(\text{D}\text{x}g7\) \(\text{D}\text{x}g7\) 18.\(\text{D}\text{c}5\) exd4 19.\(\text{D}\text{x}e6\) \(\text{fxe}6\) 20.\(\text{D}\text{b}7\) The endgame is drawish.

16...\(\text{D}\text{x}d5\) 17.\(\text{D}\text{f}6\) \(\text{D}\text{x}f6\) 18.\(\text{D}\text{f}6\) 0–0

19.\(\text{D}\text{b}7\)

19...\(\text{D}\text{d}4\)!

The most accurate way to force a draw.

20.\(\text{D}\text{d}7\) \(\text{D}\text{x}g2\) 21.\(\text{D}\text{g}1\) \(\text{D}\text{f}3\) 22.\(\text{D}\text{x}f3\) \(\text{D}\text{x}f3\) 23.\(\text{D}\text{x}g6\) White had better take the draw while he has the chance.

23...\(\text{f}xg6\) 24.\(\text{D}\text{g}7\)\(=\)

The game ends in perpetual check.

C) 5.\(\text{c}xd5\)
This is not fully correct, but it could be an effective surprise weapon if Black is unprepared.

5...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}xg5\texttt{}}\texttt{}} 6.h4 \texttt{\texttt{D}e4!}
This important move takes the sting out of White's idea.

7.Dxe4 \texttt{\texttt{W}xd5}
I do not believe White has enough activity to compensate for the absence of his dark-squared bishop, which is a key piece in the Grünfeld.

8.Dc3
8.Dd3
This was tested in one recent game against a world-class player.
8...Dg7 9.Df3 0–0\texttt{N}
Black is also okay after the game continuation of 9...Dc6, but this move interferes with my principal concept of preparing the ...c5 advance in order to activate the Grünfeld bishop. The game continued 10.Dc3 Wa5 11.e3 0–0 12.Db5! when White had a reasonable position, Ezat – Jakovenko, Bursa 2010.
After my suggested improvement, I examined the following line:

10.h5
This must be the critical test of Black's decision to castle.
10...Dd8 11.Dc3 Wa5 12.hxg6 hxg6 13.0–0–0

In this position 13.Db5 is less effective in view of 13...Dxb5 14.Dxb5 Da6! intending ...c5 when Black stands better.
13...c5 14.Df3 Da6
Black has the makings of a powerful initiative on the queenside.

8...Da5
White's main options are C1) 9.Da4\texttt{t}, C2) 9.e3, C3) 9.Df3 and C4) 9.h5.

C1) 9.Da4\texttt{t}

The queen exchange is not really consistent with the overall spirit of the present variation, but it has been tested in a few games.

9...Dxa4 10.Dxa4
White's opening play has not been particularly threatening, but if he can develop smoothly and stabilize the centre then he might obtain a decent position with chances to press on the c-file. Fortunately Black has a convincing way to prevent any of this from happening.

10...Dc6! 11.Df3 e5!
With this key move Black ensures that his dark-squared bishop will enter the game.

12.Dxe5
12.Dxe5 Dg7 also looks promising for Black.
12...\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}d4\)}} 13.0-0 \texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}e6\)}} 14.e3 \texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}g7\)}}

15.\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}f3\)}}

We have been following the game Meduna – Votava, Lazne Bohdanec 1996. At this point the best way for Black to proceed with his development would have been:

15...\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}d7\)}}N 16.e3 \texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}c5\)}}

Black’s strong bishop pair gives him the better chances.

15...\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}d7\)}}N 16.e3 \texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}c5\)}}

C2) 9.e3

10.\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}d5\)}} reaches the note to White’s tenth move in line C3 below.

10.\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}b3\)}} 0-0 11.h5 c5

In positions in which White has allowed his dark-squared bishop to be exchanged for a knight, a good rule of thumb is that if Black can arrange to attack the centre with ...c5, without suffering any immediate consequences, then he will almost always obtain an excellent game.

12.hxg6 hxg6 13.\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}b5\)}}

Objectively this may well be the best move, but it is obvious that Black’s bishop pair stands him in excellent stead for the endgame.

10...\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}xg6\)}} 14.e3 15.\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}xg6\)}}

15...\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}d8\)}}!

This strong move secures Black’s advantage.

16.\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}c4\)}}

The tactical justification for Black’s play can be seen in the following variation: 16.e5\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}xg6\)}} 17.\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}xg6\)}} axb5 18.e6 axb6 19.dxc5 \texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}xb2\)}} 20.e1 \texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}c3\)}}+ 21.\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}f1\)}} a1\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}a2\)}}+

The text move is not much of an improvement for White though...

16...\texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}c6\)}} 17.dxc5 \texttt{\textipa{\(\text{Q}xb2\)}}

Black is clearly better, Gavariev – Brendel, St Petersburg 2006.

10...c5

Once again this central strike offers excellent prospects to Black.
Black keeps everything under control, and his extra pawn and bishop pair give him excellent winning chances.

11.\textit{\textbf{b3}} 0–0 12.\textit{\textbf{Ge2}} \textit{\textbf{cxd4}} 13.\textit{\textbf{exd4}} \textit{\textbf{c6}} 14.\textit{\textbf{h5}}

At first glance it appears as though White has some attacking chances, but in reality he cannot create any serious threats as Black’s mighty dark-squared bishop controls all the important squares.

14...\textit{\textbf{dxd4}} 15.\textit{\textbf{dxd4}} \textit{\textbf{hxg6}} 16.\textit{\textbf{hxg6}} 17.0–0–0

This position was reached in Canal – Gligoric, Dubrovnik 1950, and here the most accurate continuation would have been:

9...\textit{\textbf{g7}} 10.\textit{\textbf{a4}}\textsuperscript{t}

White has also tried (without much success): 10.e3 c5 11.\textit{\textbf{c4}} (11.\textit{\textbf{b5}}\textsuperscript{t}N should be met by 11...\textit{\textbf{d7}}) 11...\textit{\textbf{cxd4}} 12.\textit{\textbf{dxd4}} \textit{\textbf{c6}} Black already has the upper hand. 13.\textit{\textbf{de2}} 0–0 14.\textit{\textbf{h5}} \textit{\textbf{e5}} 15.\textit{\textbf{b3}} At this point a draw was agreed in Mititelu – Sehlstedt, Varna 1958, but of course after 15...\textit{\textbf{xc4}}N 16.\textit{\textbf{xc4}} \textit{\textbf{e6}} 17.\textit{\textbf{e4}} \textit{\textbf{f6}} Black is clearly better.

10...\textit{\textbf{xha4}} 11.\textit{\textbf{xa4}}

Here it looks interesting for Black to try:

11...\textit{\textbf{d7}}??N

Black develops modestly and leaves the light-squared bishop at home, hoping to exploit the power of the bishop pair later in the game.

In the following game Black equalized without difficulty, but never had a chance to take over the initiative either: 11...\textit{\textbf{g4}} 12.e3 \textit{\textbf{d7}} 13.\textit{\textbf{c1}} c6 14.\textit{\textbf{c5}} \textit{\textbf{xc5}} 15.\textit{\textbf{xc5}} \textit{\textbf{xf3}} 16.\textit{\textbf{xf3}} h5 17.f4 e6 18.\textit{\textbf{g2}} \textit{\textbf{d7}}= Voloshin – Smjkal, Mlada Boleslav 1994.
Black is ready to break open the centre with ...e5, so the following line looks natural:

13. c5 dxc5 14. exd5 e6 15. a3 d5 16. e3 0-0-0

The position is close to equal, but Black can still hope to make something of his bishop pair.

C4) 9.h5

Black has easy play, and in the following game the absence of White's dark-squared bishop soon made itself felt.

10...c5 11. dxc5 dxc6 12. e4 e6

clear that White's opening has been a failure, Shianovsky - Suetin, Kiev 1958.

10.e3 c5 11.hxg6 hxg6 12. exh8+ xh8 13. c1 cxd4 14. exd4 c6 15. d5 d4 16. ge2 This position was reached in Meister - Michelsen, Germany 1992, and now the simple 16...f5N 17. d2 d7 would have given Black a clear advantage.

10...c5 11. dxc5 dxc6 12. e4 e6

Black has easy play, and in the following game the absence of White's dark-squared bishop soon made itself felt.

D) 5. dxe4 dxe4
This variation leads to rather irregular positions - it is not often that one encounters such a pawn structure in the early stages of the game. From the present position White has tried practically every legal move, but I only consider the following four to be worthy of serious investigation: D1) 6.\texttt{a4}†, D2) 6.\texttt{f3}, D3) 6.e3 and D4) 6.\texttt{d2}.

\begin{center}
\textbf{D1} 6.\texttt{a4}†
\end{center}

This move has seldom been played, but according to the database it is one of the very few options from the previous position to have yielded a score of at least 50\% for White. Nevertheless if Black responds correctly he has nothing to fear.

6...\texttt{d7}!!

The most popular reply has been 6...\texttt{c6}, but the text move seems like the simplest route to a good game.

7.\texttt{c2}

Another game continued: 7.\texttt{b3} \texttt{g7} 8.e3 \texttt{c5} 9.\texttt{e2}?! Wensch - Auburger, Mittelfranken 2009, and here Black could have obtained an excellent position with 9...\texttt{a5}†!N 10.\texttt{c3} \texttt{xc3}† 11.bxc3 \texttt{c6} when he has easy play against the doubled pawns.

\begin{center}
\textbf{D2} 6.\texttt{f3}
\end{center}

The present position was reached in Hirn - Reitzler, Fuerth 2000, and here Black should have played a strong temporary pawn sacrifice:

8...\texttt{g7}†!N 8.\texttt{xe4}

8.e3 \texttt{c5} 9.\texttt{e2} \texttt{a5}†! gives Black a great position.

8...\texttt{c5}!

Black's lead in development gives him a strong initiative, for example:

9.\texttt{dx}\texttt{c5} \texttt{xb2} 10.\texttt{d1} \texttt{a6}

White's position is already becoming precarious.
This move is less than impressive, as White's centre will quickly come under fire.

6...\textit{g7} 7.e3 \textit{c5} 8.fxe4

8.\textit{e2} is not much of an improvement:
8...exf3 9.gxf3 cxd4 10.exd4 (10.\textit{xd4}?? \textit{xa5}⁻⁺ Weirowski – Bornschein, Kiel 2000) 10...\textit{c6} 11.\textit{e3} 0–0 Black is already more comfortable in view of White's weakened kingside, Theodorakis – Gustafsson, Ailos Liosia 2000.

8...\textit{xd4}
8...\textit{a5}⁺ is also good.

9.exd4 \textit{xd4} 10.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 11.0–0–0 \textit{c6} 12.\textit{f3}

This position was reached in Br. Miller – G. Nunes, Sackville 2001, and here I found a modest improvement.

12...\textit{b6}N

In the game Black opted for 12...\textit{g7} and was doing fine, but I prefer to post the bishop on a different diagonal.

13.\textit{e2} \textit{e6}N

Black's position is preferable in view of his more compact pawn structure and active prospects on the queenside.

\textbf{D3} 6.e3

This natural move has been White's most popular choice.

6...\textit{g7} 7.\textit{e2}

Once again it is risky for White to go after the central pawn: 7.\textit{c2}?! \textit{c5} 8.0–0–0 cxd4 9.\textit{xe4} (No better is 9.exd4 \textit{a5}! 10.\textit{e3} \textit{xa2} 11.\textit{xe4} \textit{c6} 12.\textit{b1} \textit{a5} 13.\textit{f3} \textit{b4} when Black obtained a decisive attack in Pirrung – Heinelt, Germany 1989.) 9...\textit{c6} 10.exd4

Now in Palsson – Helgadottir, Reykjavik 2008, Black could have seized the initiative with 10...\textit{a5}N 11.d5 \textit{xa2} 12.\textit{b1} \textit{a5}! when White's vulnerable king gives him problems.

7...\textit{c5}
White's best continuation is 8.\textit{W}d2, which transposes to variation D41 beginning with 6.\textit{W}d2. The text move is the most significant independent try.

8...\textit{a}d7 9.\textit{c}a3 cxd4 10.\textit{c}xd4

10.\textit{c}xd4 \textit{a}c6 11.\textit{a}d1 occurred in Granda Zuniga – Kekki, Embalse 1981, and here Black missed a strong idea in 11...\textit{a}a5!N intending ...\textit{b}b4 when it is hard to see how White completes development.

The present position was reached in Guilbert – Platel, Le Touquet 2005. At this point Black should have developed naturally by means of:

10...\textit{b}c6N

This should ensure a comfortable game, as shown by the following analysis.

11.\textit{c}x\textit{c}6 \textit{c}x\textit{c}6 12.\textit{e}e2

I also examined: 12.\textit{d}d1 \textit{c}c7 13.\textit{f}f4 (White cannot play 13.\textit{e}e2? in view of 13...\textit{e}e5 14.\textit{h}h4 g5 15.\textit{g}g3 \textit{xb}2 winning a pawn.) 13...\textit{b}b6 14.b4 \textit{a}a6! 15.\textit{xa}6 \textit{a}c3\text{#} 16.\textit{e}e2 \textit{bxa}6 17.a3 a5 18.b5 \textit{d}d7 Black has strong counterplay on the queenside.

12...0–0 13.\textit{b}b1

13.\textit{xe}7? \textit{xb}2 only leads to trouble for White, and 13.0–0? allows 13...\textit{d}d2! winning material. Therefore White has to spend time securing his queenside before completing development.

13...\textit{e}e8 14.0–0 \textit{d}d2 15.\textit{fe}1

Once again Black can take advantage of the fact that the e7-pawn is indirectly defended.

15...\textit{h}6!

After 16.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xb}2 White’s split queenside pawns might become weak in the long run.

16...\textit{g}5 17.\textit{g}g3 a5

Black has a good game.
This has only been White's second most popular move, although it often leads to the same positions as 6.e3. The present move order has been the most common choice amongst higher-rated players.

6...\textit{\textit{g7}} 7.e3
A frequently-played alternative is:
7.0-0-0
It looks logical to prevent \textit{\textit{h6}} by means of:
7...h6 8.e3
Another option is: 8.f4 \textit{\textit{c6}}! Usually it would not be a good idea to block the c-pawn, but due to the position of the white bishop it makes more sense to prepare ...e5. 9.d5 (After 9.e3 e5 10.dxe5 \textit{\textit{x}d2}+ 11.\textit{\textit{x}d2} \textit{\textit{x}e5} Black has an excellent game.) 9...\textit{\textit{e5}} 10.\textit{\textit{c}2} Now in the game M. Brodie – Martinovsky, USA 1994, Black could have ventured a promising pawn sacrifice:

10...0-0N 11.\textit{\textit{x}e5} (11.\textit{\textit{x}e4} \textit{\textit{f}5}) 11...\textit{\textit{x}e5} 12.\textit{\textit{x}e4} \textit{\textit{g}7} The powerful dark-squared bishop gives excellent compensation.
8...b5!
This energetic move enables Black to obtain promising play on the queenside.
9.f3
9.\textit{\textit{c}xb5} a6 gives Black a promising initiative.
9...\textit{\textit{b}xc4} 10.\textit{\textit{f}xe4}
This position was reached in Kempinski – Urban, Lubniewice 1995. At this point it looks good for Black to play:

10...\textit{\textit{d}7}N 11.\textit{f}3 \textit{\textit{b}7} 12.e5 \textit{\textit{b}6}$^+$
I would evaluate Black's chances as somewhat higher in this complex middlegame.

7...\textit{\textit{c}5}
In this position White's main options are D41) 8.\textit{\textit{e}2} and D42) 8.\textit{d}5.
10...exd4?!
Recapturing with the e-pawn will make it harder for White to complete his development.

10...exd4 would have been the lesser evil, although Black has no problems here either:
10...c6!?N (There is also 10...0–0 11.d5, K. Savage – Kern, e-mail 2002, 11...g5N 12.g3 b6 with unclear play.) 11.cxd6 (Too risky is 11.0–0–0?! b6 when the white king can hardly feel safe on the queenside.) 11...fxd6 12.exd6 bxc6 13.c2 a5= Black’s pressure on the long diagonal fully compensates for his structural defects.

10...0–0 11.d5
This seems to be the best way to solve the problem of the d4-pawn, but Black is well placed to meet it.

11.g5 12.g3 f5!
This active approach is fully justified.

13.f4
17...\h5\!N 18.\h5\!N 18.e6 is unsatisfactory in view of 18...\x6\!N J8.i.e2.

18...\h5\!N J8.i.e2 19.\h5\!N J8.i.e2 \h7\!N 20.\h5\!N \h7\!N 21.\h5\!N \h7\!N

From a materialistic point of view the situation is more or less balanced, but the quality of Black's position is higher. A logical continuation would be:

21...\h7\!N 22.\h5\!N 23.g4 \d7\!N

Black's extra knight is more valuable than White's three pawns.

8...\h6\!N

With this strong move Black forces his opponent to decide how to deal with the threat to the b2-pawn. The alternatives are weaker, for instance 8...\d7\!N 9.\h5\!N \h5\!N 10.\h5\!N f5 11.\h5\!N and White has reasonable chances to fight for the advantage.

We will examine two responses: D421) 9.0-0-0 and D422) 9.\h1\!N.

D421) 9.0-0-0

This has been the higher-scoring of the two moves, but Black should be happy to see it.

9...\h6\!N

This strong move gives Black promising play on the queenside.

10.\h5\!N

In the following game White quickly got into trouble: 10.f3?! \h5\!N 11.b1 b6 12.h4 g5 13.g3 \f5\!N H. Meyer - Lihtonen, corr. 1957.

10...\h5\!N

This tempting idea is an obvious improvement over 10...\h5\!N 11.a3 h6 12.f4 when the position was rather unclear in Groszpeter - Pridorozhni, Zalakaros 1999.
11. \(\text{c}3 \text{g}4!\)
Exploiting the fact that a bishop exchange on e2 would leave the d3-square too weak.

12. \(\text{e}1 \text{a}5\) 13. a3
White has no comfortable way to defend the a2-pawn, because 13. \(\text{b}1\) runs into the following interesting line: 13... \(\text{xa}2!\) 14. \(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{b}4\) 15. \(\text{c}3\) h6 16. \(\text{h}4\) \(\text{d}8\) 17. \(\text{g}3\)

17... \(\text{d}7!\) The bishop is heading for a4 and b3, from where it will create decisive threats. 18. \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{a}4\) 19. \(\text{c}7!\) This is the only way to survive, but after 19... \(\text{xc}7\) 20. \(\text{xa}4\) b5! White faces a powerful attack.

13... \(\text{xc}3\)
The bishop was a strong piece, but it is worth taking the opportunity to weaken the enemy pawns.

14. \(\text{bxc}3\) \(\text{d}3!\)
14... \(\text{xa}3!\) is less convincing: 15. \(\text{b}2\) \(\text{xb}2!\) 16. \(\text{xb}2\) \(\text{d}3!\) 17. \(\text{xd}3\) \(\text{exd}3\) 18. \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}7\) 19. \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{a}4\) 20. \(\text{a}1\) \(\text{c}2\) 21. \(\text{a}5\) \(\text{d}7\) 22. \(\text{xc}5\) a6 23. \(\text{e}3\) \(\text{hc}8\) 24. \(\text{xc}8\) \(\text{xc}8\) 25. c5 White is OK.

15. \(\text{xd}3\) \(\text{exd}3\)

Black has the advantage.

\[\text{D422) 9. b1}\]

12... \(\text{a}3\)
This is a more reliable continuation, but it is not particularly threatening.

9... \(\text{d}7\) 10. \(\text{e}2\) \(\text{e}5\) 11. \(\text{c}3\) h6
I like the idea of driving the bishop away from the h4-d8 diagonal in order to remove
the pressure on the e7-pawn. Another idea is 11...f5 12.\textit{\&}e2 \textit{\&}d7 13.0-0 \textit{\&}f6 with an unclear position.

12.\textit{\&}h4 g5 13.\textit{\&}g3 \textit{\&}f5 14.\textit{\&}e2

18...h5!
This is the correct moment for Black to commence his kingside counterplay.

19.\textit{\&}xe5
19.h3 h4 20.\textit{\&}xe5 \textit{\&}xe5 21.\textit{\&}c1 \textit{\&}fd8 leads to similar play.

19...\textit{\&}xe5 20.a4 \textit{\&}d7 21.a5 h4
Black's chances are not worse in this complicated position.

\textbf{Conclusion}

In this chapter we have dealt with all of White's sensible options after 4.\textit{\&}g5 \textit{\&}e4 which do not involve retreating his bishop. The rare options of A) 5.\textit{\&}f3 and B) 5.h4 should not cause Black too much concern, although the latter is not a bad move at all. The temporary piece sacrifice C) 5.cxd5 is tricky, but we saw that Black's bishop pair should stand him in excellent stead.

Of the four options examined in the present chapter, variation D with 5.\textit{\&}xe4 dxe4 is by far the most significant. The resulting positions with doubled e-pawns are a bit irregular, but we saw that in most lines Black can obtain good counterplay by means of an early ...c5, making full use of the Grünfeld bishop.
4. \( \texttt{g5} \)

5. \( \texttt{f4} \)

Variation Index

1.d4 \( \texttt{f6} \) 2.c4 \( \texttt{g6} \) 3.c3 d5 4.\( \texttt{g5} \) \( \texttt{e4} \) 5.\( \texttt{f4} \)

5...\( \texttt{xc3} \) 6.bxc3 \( \texttt{g7} \) 7.e3 c5 8.\( \texttt{f3} \) 0–0

A) 9.\( \texttt{xb4} \)
B) 9.\( \texttt{b3} \)
C) 9.cxd5 cxd4 10.cxd4 \( \texttt{xd5} \) 11.e2 \( \texttt{c6} \) 12.0–0 \( \texttt{sf5} \) 13.\( \texttt{a4} \) \( \texttt{a5} \)

C1) 14.\( \texttt{xa5} \)
C2) 14.\( \texttt{b3} \)

note to 7.e3

A) after 16.\( \texttt{b4} \)

C2) note to 16.\( \texttt{c4} \)

8...\( \texttt{a5} \)!!

16...\( \texttt{d5} \)!!

20...\( \texttt{cxd4} \)!!
1.d4 g6 2.e4 g7 3.d2 c6 4.e5 d5 5.d4

This variation has been tested in numerous high-level games.

5...c4 bxc3 6.bxc3 g7

It is important to understand that in the present position Black should avoid 6...dxc4?!, as in that case the white bishop will be much more effective on f4 than h4. White has at least two good replies:

a) 7.a4+ d7 (or 7..c6 8.xc4 g7 9.g3) 8.xc4+ Compared with the 5.h4 variation Black has no time for ...b6 followed by ...a6 as the c7-pawn is hanging.

b) White can also play 7.e3 g6 8.a1 and once again Black cannot continue in the same way as in the 5.h4 variation, as there is no time for the ...d7-b6 manoeuvre due to the vulnerable c7-pawn.

7.e3

This is the usual continuation, but there are some minor options as well.

7.g3 c5 usually transposes to a main line, for instance 8.cxd5 (8.e3 transposes immediately) 8...dxd5 9.b4 cxd4 10.cxd4 c6 11.e2 0-0 and we have reached the main position after move 11 in variation C below.

7.cxd5 vx5 8.b3 (8.e3 c5 transposes to the main line.) So far in all games Black has gone for the queen exchange, but a much more purposeful idea would have been:

8.a4+N The queen exerts useful pressure along the a5-e1 diagonal. 9.e3 0-0 10.g3 c5 11.c4 (11.e2 e6! is nice for Black, and illustrates another point behind avoiding the queen exchange.) 11...d4 12.exd4 When White recaptures with the e-pawn instead of the c-pawn, it practically ensures Black of a good game. 12..c6 13.0-0 a5! White must deal with the attack on the bishop, after which c6 will eliminate his light-squared bishop.

7.a4+ d7 8.a5 is not dangerous for Black. The simplest solution seems to be:

8.e5! 9.xe5?! This natural move gives Black chances to fight for the initiative. (Safer would have been 9.dxe5N dxc4 10.g3 c6 11.c5 e7 12.xe7+ e7 although Black
is comfortably equal here.) 9...\( \text{c6} \)
10.\( \text{Wxd5} \) \( \text{\text{x5}} \) \( \text{11.dxe5} \) \( \text{\text{e7}} \) 12.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{\text{c6}} \) 13.\( \text{a5} \) \( \text{\text{xf3}} \) 14.gxf3 \( \text{\text{xe5}} \)† Despite being a pawn down it is Black who has the upper hand, Anastasian – Wu Wenjin, Dubai 2005.

7...c5 8.\( \text{g3} \)
8.cxd5 cxd4 9.cxd4 \( \text{Wxd5} \) 10.\( \text{f3} \) is just another way of reaching the main line.

8...0–0
From this position we will look at A) 9.\( \text{b1} \) B) 9.\( \text{b3} \) and C) 9.cxd5 in detail, after first considering a few of White’s minor options.

9.\( \text{e5} \) cannot pose any problems; the following is one good example: 9...\( \text{xe5} \) 10.\( \text{xe5} \) c6 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.\( \text{a4} \) b6 13.\( \text{a3} \) This position occurred in Wu Wenjin – Huzman, Moscow 2004, and now the simple 13...\( \text{cxd4N} \) 14.\( \text{cxd4} \) \( \text{\text{b8}} \) 15.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{b2} \) 16.\( \text{xb2} \) \( \text{xb2} \) leads to a position in which only Black can be better.

9.\( \text{c1} \) c6 10.\( \text{e2} \) (10.cxd5 \( \text{Wxd5} \) 11.c4? does not work in view of 11...\( \text{d8} \) 12.d5 \( \text{a5} \)†! 13.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{b4} \) when Black is clearly better, as shown in the following game: 14.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{a2} \) 15.\( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{xd2} \)† 16.\( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{xg7} \)† Bernei – Nogrady, Kobanya 1996.) 10...\( \text{d4} \) 11.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) 12.cxd4

12...\( \text{a5} \)†! This timely check enables Black to solve his problems easily. 13.\( \text{d2} \) This was Anastasian – Mirumian, Yerevan 1996, and now the simplest route to equality would have been 13...\( \text{f5N} \) 14.0–0 \( \text{Wxd2} \) 15.\( \text{dx2} \) e5 16.dxe5 \( \text{xe5} \) when Black is fine.

9.\( \text{e2} \) dxc4 Black is happy to make this exchange now that White must move his bishop for the second time.

10.\( \text{xc4} \) c6 11.0–0 \( \text{f5} \) 12.\( \text{c1} \) c8 Black has a comfortable game, as the following examples demonstrate.

9.\( \text{e1} \)
I also examined: 13.\( \text{a4} \) a6! Black should have no qualms about sacrificing the c5-pawn. 14.\( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{a5} \) Black regains his pawn and White will have nothing to make up for his damaged pawn structure. 15.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 16.\( \text{xf7} \)† White was already worse, but this
was hardly the way to solve his problems. 16...\texttt{Exf7} 17...\texttt{g5} 18...\texttt{xfl7} 19...\texttt{xf7} Black emerged with a winning position in Balcerowski – Gligoric, Moscow 1963. 13...\texttt{cxd4} 14...\texttt{exd4}

This was the idea behind putting the rook on the e-file, although we already know that this pawn structure is unlikely to cause us any problems. Alternatively after 14...\texttt{cxd4} \texttt{\texttt{ie}4} 15...\texttt{h3} \texttt{\texttt{ia}5} 16...\texttt{ie}2 \texttt{\texttt{d}7} Black is fine.

14...\texttt{d}7 15...\texttt{a}4 \texttt{a}6

Black is doing well, Gligoric – Olafsson, Bled 1961.

A) 9...\texttt{\texttt{b}1}

Both this and line B share a common idea: White delays the development of his light-squared bishop, hoping to save time by recapturing on c4 in one move rather than two. As we will see, Black is well-placed to counter this plan.

9...\texttt{c}6 10...\texttt{\texttt{e}2}

Another idea is:

10...\texttt{a}4

White is waiting for his opponent to release the tension in the centre, but Black has another useful move available.

10...\texttt{a}6!

I only found one game from this position, which continued as follows:

11...\texttt{a}3 \texttt{cxd4} 12...\texttt{exd4} \texttt{dxc4} 13...\texttt{xc4} \texttt{\texttt{f}5!} 14...\texttt{c}1

14...\texttt{xb}7 could have been met by 14...\texttt{\texttt{a}5!}

15...\texttt{xa}5 \texttt{\texttt{a}5} 16...\texttt{c}7 \texttt{\texttt{xc}4} 17...\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{\texttt{fc}8} 18...\texttt{xc}8+ \texttt{\texttt{xc}8} 19.0–0 \texttt{f}6 when Black's bishop pair gives him fantastic compensation for the pawn.

14...\texttt{\texttt{a}5!} 15...\texttt{xa}5 \texttt{\texttt{xa}5} 16...\texttt{b}3 \texttt{\texttt{xb}3} 17...\texttt{xb}3 \texttt{\texttt{ac}8} 18.\texttt{d}2

Fernandez Garcia – Quintero Torres, Madrid 1999. Now the most logical continuation would have been:

10...\texttt{dxc4} 11...\texttt{xc}4

18...\texttt{e}4N 19...\texttt{e}7 \texttt{f}6

Black’s bishop pair offers him slightly better chances.
11...ãf5!
Winning an important tempo.

12.ãb5
After 12.ãxb7? ãa5 13.ãc7 ãc8 White loses the exchange.

12...ãa5!?
12...cxd4N 13.cxd4 ãc8 is also nice for Black.

13.ãe2
Presumably White was not satisfied with the position arising after 13.ãxc5 ãxc4 14.ãxc4 ãc8 15.ãxc8 ãxc8 16.ãb3 ãd3!. Indeed, in the long run the exposed position of White's king should eventually tell. Nevertheless the game continuation is also pleasant for Black.

13...cxd4 14.cxd4 ãc8 15.0–0 a6 16.ãb4
We have been following the game Kraus – Vydeslaver, Budapest 1992. At this point the best continuation would have been:

16...ãd5!N
Black has achieved everything he could wish for in the Grünfeld. The b4-rook is misplaced, and it is obvious that White's strategy beginning with 9.ãb1 has been an abject failure.

B) 9.ãb3

This is another way in which White can attempt to save time by developing his lightsquared bishop to c4 in one move. However, we will soon see that the present idea suffers from its own drawbacks.

9...cxd4! 10.exd4
My personal opinion is that White can almost never hope for an advantage with the hanging-pawn structure against the Grünfeld. However, in this position the otherwise desirable 10...ãd4 runs into the disruptive 10...ãa5† when White will have to spend valuable time arranging castling: 11.ãd2 dxc4 12.ãxc4

Now in Shahisavandi – Strugies, Ladenburg 1992, Black missed the strong idea of 12...ãd7N 13.ãd1 ãb6 with comfortable
play, for instance 14.0-0  
15.f3  
16.b2  
17.xc4  
18.b5 and Black's bishop pair offers him a slight plus.

10.c6  
11.cxd5  
12.a5  
12.b5 was played in Versporten – Deman, Gent 2000, and here the best continuation would have been:

12...a6N  
13.c5 b6  
14.b4 b7  
15.c4 e6!

Black has the initiative, thanks to his better development.

12...xd5  
13.e2 d7  
14.b4

Frih – Stephan, France 2008. Now it looks promising for Black to play:

14.ac8N  
15.0-0 c4!  
16.xe7 fxe7  
17.xc4 Exc4

Black has nice compensation, for example:

18.a3  
19.f1  
20.e3  
21.d2  
22.b2 b6

With two excellent bishops, a sounder pawn structure and active major pieces, Black has every reason to feel optimistic.

C) 9.cxd5

Alternatives have seldom been seen. One example that is worth mentioning briefly is 11.d2  
12.c1, as played in Berezhnoi – Silakov, Rostov on Don 1975. At this point I believe Black should have continued in the spirit of the main line with: 12...c6N  
13.e2  
(13.c4 can be met comfortably by 13...a5.)

13.ac8  
14.0-0  
(14.c5  
15...a5  
16.xa5  
17...xa5 The endgame is equal.

11...c6  
12.0-0  

The f5-square is generally the best home for the light-squared bishop in the present variation.

13.a4

This is the main continuation, but it is worth checking the numerous alternatives which have been tried.
Firstly, it is important to understand that 13.\(d2\), which works well in the analogous position with the bishop on \(h4\), is not so strong here in view of: 13...\(e5!\) Strangely, in the only two games on the database Black refrained from this logical move. 14.\(f3\)

14...\(\text{Wd7?!}\) With this ambitious move Black attempts to fight for the advantage. (Alternatively 14...\(\text{Wb5}\) 15.\(\text{xc6}\) bxc6 16.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) is just equal.) 15.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{xc6}\) 16.\(\text{xe5}\) (After 16.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{fd8}\) the evaluation is similar.) 16...\(\text{xe5}\) 17.\(\text{dxe5}\) \(\text{fd8}\) Black has a great game, and will easily regain his pawn with the imminent ...\(\text{e6}\).

13.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xb3}\) 14.\(\text{xb3}\) This type of endgame holds no dangers for Black.

14...\(a6?!\) I like this prophylactic move, which allows the a8-rook to enter the game. (Black has achieved excellent results with 14...\(\text{fc8}\) as well.) 15.\(\text{fc1}\) \(\text{ac8}\) Black has no problems.

13.\(a3\) Taking control over the b4-square is not a bad idea for White. 13...\(\text{ac8}\) 14.\(\text{c1}\) \(\text{a5}\)

This is my preferred reaction; it looks logical to eye the b3-square, as well as the a3-pawn after a future knight jump to c4.

15.\(\text{d2?!}\) After this unfortunate move the initiative passes to Black. (White should have played 15.\(\text{a4}\) after which 15...\(\text{e4}\) 16.\(\text{b4}\) \(\text{f6}\) reaches a roughly equal position.) 15...\(\text{xc1}\) 16.\(\text{xc1}\) \(\text{ac8}\) Having taken over the c-file Black stands clearly better, Nistri - Albesa, e-mail 2007.

13.\(\text{c1}\)

This pawn sacrifice has been tried in two blitz games. White won both of them, but Black's play can easily be improved.

13...\(\text{xa2}\) 14.\(\text{c4}\)

The more active 14.\(\text{d5?!}\) occurred in Anand - Wolff, New York (blitz) 1993, but it was not a good idea, as after the natural 14...\(\text{ad8}\)
15...\textit{\texttt{a}}\texttt{e}8N
This natural move improves on the somewhat strange 15...\textit{\texttt{a}}\texttt{d}8 as occurred in the game.

\texttt{b}1
I do not see any other way for White to create problems for his opponent.

16...\textit{\texttt{b}}4 17.\textit{\texttt{d}}3 \textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}3 18.\textit{\texttt{w}}\texttt{x}d3 \textit{\texttt{e}}6 19.\textit{\texttt{f}}\texttt{b}1 \textit{\texttt{w}}7
White has some compensation for the pawn, but the most he can realistically hope for is equality.

13.\textit{\texttt{h}}4 \textit{\texttt{c}}8?!
This slightly surprising move, with its tacit draw offer, makes a good deal of sense. The point is that if White does not intend to offer a repetition with 14.\textit{\texttt{f}}\texttt{b}3, then he will have to address the threat of ...\textit{\texttt{g}}5, winning a piece. The most natural way to meet this challenge would be to play \textit{\texttt{b}}1, after which ...\textit{\texttt{g}}5 can be met by \textit{\texttt{b}}5. In view of this, Black anticipates the attack on the \textit{b7}-pawn.

Nevertheless, if Black prefers not to allow a repetition then 13...\textit{\texttt{d}}7 is a reasonable alternative, and after 14.\textit{\texttt{b}}1 as played in R. Garcia – Lujan, Buenos Aires 2002, Black can play 14...\textit{\texttt{b}}6?N with a reasonable position.

14.\textit{\texttt{a}}4
Other moves are also not dangerous.

14...\textit{\texttt{b}}3 \textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{b}3 15.axb3 \textit{\texttt{e}}6 is comfortable for Black.

14...\textit{\texttt{b}}1 can be met by 14...\textit{\texttt{w}}\texttt{x}a2, and with the \textit{b7}-pawn defended, White will have to work hard to demonstrate compensation.
19...\(\text{\textit{c4}}\)N 20.\(\text{\textit{e1}}\) \(\text{\textit{d8}}\)  
With easy equality.

15.\(\text{\textit{c1}}\)  
This has been White's usual choice. The alternatives are harmless, for instance:

15.\(\text{\textit{c7}}\) is best met by 15...\(\text{\textit{c6}}\) followed by a rook to the c-file, rather than 15...\(\text{\textit{b6}}\) which weakens the queenside and gives White the option of \(\text{\textit{a6}}\) to control the c-file.

15.\(\text{\textit{ac1}}\) \(\text{\textit{fc8}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{e5}}\) \(\text{\textit{e6}}\) Attacking the a2-pawn. 17.\(\text{\textit{d3}}\)

13...\(\text{\textit{a5}}\)  
There is nothing wrong with 13...\(\text{\textit{ac8}}\), but the text move is Black's first choice according to theory. From this position White can choose between removing the queens with C1) 14.\(\text{\textit{xa5}}\) and keeping them on the board with C2) 14.\(\text{\textit{b3}}\).

C1) 14.\(\text{\textit{xa5}}\)  
Of the two continuations, this is the slightly less challenging option.

14...\(\text{\textit{xa5}}\)  

17...\(\text{\textit{d5}}\) (It is understandable that Black preferred to refrain from 17...\(\text{\textit{xa2?!}}\)N 18.\(\text{\textit{a1}}\) \(\text{\textit{c2}}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{f3}}\), even though 19...\(\text{\textit{b3}}\) 20.\(\text{\textit{b4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xa1}}\) 21.\(\text{\textit{xa1}}\) \(\text{\textit{ac8!}}\) should enable him to maintain the balance.) 18.\(\text{\textit{c5}}\) (In the event of 18.\(\text{\textit{b4}}\) \(\text{\textit{c4}}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{xc4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xc4}}\) 20.\(\text{\textit{d5}}\) \(\text{\textit{e6}}\) Black has no problems.) 18...\(\text{\textit{e6}}\) The position was equal in Loginov – Turov, Bor 2000.

15...\(\text{\textit{f8}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{f1}}\)  
Another game continued 16.\(\text{\textit{d2}}\) \(\text{\textit{e6}}\) 17.a3 \(\text{\textit{d5}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{b5}}\), Novikov – Ulko, Moscow 1995, and now 18...\(\text{\textit{e6}}\)N intending ...\(\text{\textit{f8}}\) would have maintained equality.

16...\(\text{\textit{c6}}\)  
Black is trying to activate his knight via the b4-square.

17.\(\text{\textit{e1}}\)  
White played inaccurately in the following encounter: 17.\(\text{\textit{c3?!}}\) \(\text{\textit{b4}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{b3}}\) a5 19.\(\text{\textit{b2}}\)
Shaposhnikov – Shipov, Internet (rapid) 2002, and here Black could have obtained some initiative by means of:

19. d2 c2=

C2) 14. b3

14... w b4
Once again the queen exchange suits Black just fine.

15. f c1
This is generally considered the best try. Also possible is:
15. c4
This leads to similar positions to the main line.
15... w x b3 16. a x b3 a6
It is always useful to free the rook from the defence of the a7-pawn.
17. c7
17. f c1 reaches the note to White’s 17th move in the main line below.
17... a c8 18. a b6
18...e5!
Now that White's dark-squared bishop has vacated the h2-b8 diagonal, this central break becomes possible.
19.h3 exd4 20.exd4
This position occurred in Boensch – Holzke, Germany 2004. At this point Black's play can be improved with:

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20...\textit{e}4N
This leads to easy equality, for instance:
21.\textit{e}ad1
21.\textit{g}5 \textit{c}2 leaves White nothing better than 22.\textit{f}3 \textit{e}4 with a repetition. The attempt to play more ambitiously with 22.\textit{c}5?! only leads to trouble after 22...\textit{x}d4 23.\textit{xf}8 \textit{xa}1 24.\textit{h}6 \textit{g}7 25.\textit{xf}7\textit{f} when Black stands slightly better.
21...\textit{x}f3 22.\textit{gf}3 \textit{b}8 23.\textit{fe}1 \textit{d}7 24.\textit{a}5 \textit{fe}8=
The position is equal, as Black can easily blockade his opponent’s passed pawn.

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15...a6!
This move has only been played in two games, but both of them involved Peter Svidler, one of the greatest Grünfeld experts in the world. The main theoretical continuation is 15...\textit{ac}8, but it seems to me that after 16.\textit{ac}4 \textit{xb}3 17.axb3 a6 18.\textit{d}5 White can develop some pressure.

16.\textit{c}4
This was an attempt to improve over the following game:
16.h3 \textit{ac}8 17.g4 \textit{e}4 18.\textit{d}1
This position was reached in Vallejo Pons – Svidler, Dresden (ol) 2008, and here I found a nice idea:

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15...a3N
Preventing a2-a3. This easily solves Black’s problems, while also setting a devious trap.
19.\textit{d}2
19.\textit{b}3 \textit{xb}3 20.axb3 \textit{d}4 is equal.
19...\textit{d}5 20.\textit{c}4?
This natural move meets with a stunning refutation.
The best continuation is 20.\textit{c}4 \textit{xc}4 21.\textit{xc}4 e5 22.dxe5 \textit{xe}5! 23.\textit{a}4 \textit{e}7 when Black is fine.
20...\textit{xd}4!! 21.\textit{exd}4
Or 21.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xc}1 22.\textit{xc}1 \textit{xc}1! 23.\textit{xc}1 \textit{e}2\textit{f} with a decisive material advantage.
21...\textit{xc}4! 22.\textit{xc}4
22.\textit{xc}4 \textit{hx}3 wins easily.
22...\textit{hx}3 23.f3
Chapter 19 – 5.\(f_4\)

Black is not worse, as his bishop pair makes up for his weakened queenside structure, and 22.\(\text{Bxc6}\text{Bxc6}\) 23.\(\text{Bxc6}\text{a5}\) is better for Black.

19.\(\text{De5}\)

The inaccurate 19.\(\text{Ed2?!}\) allows the tactical idea 19...\(\text{Ed8}\text{Efd8}\text{f5}\text{e5}\) and Black is better.

19...\(\text{Dxe5}\)

Usually Black will not wish to exchange his Grünfeld bishop for a knight, but in simplified positions such as the present one, the idea can work well.

20.\(\text{De5}\)

At this point the game Eljanov – Svidler, Bundesliga 2009, was agreed drawn, but it is worth considering how the game might have continued. At this point my preferred continuation would be:

20...\(\text{Ee6}\text{N}\) 21.\(\text{Ef3}\)

After 21.\(\text{Ee6}\text{fxe6}\) Black's doubled pawns are not weak, and White runs the risk of ending up with a bad bishop against a good knight.

21...\(\text{Exc1}\text{†}\)

Another idea is 21...\(\text{b5}\) 22.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{Ed7}\) when the strong outpost on c4 should be enough to compensate for White's bishop pair.
22.\textit{Ex}c1 \textit{Ex}a2 23.\textit{Ec}7

23.\textit{Ea}1? is met by 23...\textit{Ec}8 when the weakness of the first rank gives Black time to prepare ...\textit{Ec}2 next.

23...\	extit{Ec}8

From here I do not see anything better for White than regaining his pawn:

24.\textit{Ex}b7 \textit{Ex}b7 25.\textit{Ex}b7

It is hard to see this opposite-coloured bishop endgame finishing in anything other than a draw.

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

\textbf{Conclusion}

The system beginning with 5.\textit{Ef}4 is a sensible try which has been tested in numerous high-level games. Following the usual sequence of 5...\textit{Dxc}3 6.\textit{Dxc}3 \textit{Dg}7 7.e3 \textit{c}5 8.\textit{Df}3 0–0, we investigated three main moves. Attempting to save time with either A) 9.\textit{Db}1 or B) 9.\textit{Wb}3 leads nowhere for White, so the main line of C) 9.cxd5 cxd4 10.cxd4 \textit{Wxd}5 11.\textit{Dc}2 \textit{Cc}6 12.0–0 is critical. Then after 12...\textit{Ff}5 13.\textit{Wa}4 \textit{Wa}5 both C1) 14.\textit{Wxa}5 and C2) 14.\textit{Wb}3 lead to roughly similar situations without queens. The latter is considered slightly more challenging, but according to the above analysis Black should experience no particular problems. In all these lines his position remains fundamentally sound, with considerable dynamic potential, as illustrated by lines such as the note to White's 16th move in line C2.
Chapter 20

4. \( \text{g5} \)

5. \( \text{h4} \) – Sidelines

Variation Index

1. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 2. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 3. \( \text{c3} \) d5 4. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{e4} \) 5. \( \text{h4} \)

5... \( \text{xc3} \) 6. \( \text{bxc3} \) dxc4

A) 7.e4?!  
B) 7.\( \text{a4} \)†

---

A) after 12.\( \text{f1} \)

12...\( \text{e5!N} \)

B) note to 12.e3

13...\( \text{e6N} \)

B) after 12.e3

12...\( \text{cxd4!N} \)
1. d4 何况6 2. c4 g6 3. f3 c6 4. g5 何况4 5. h4

Finally we arrive at White's most popular option on the fifth move.

5... dx3 6. bxc3 dx4

Capturing the c4-pawn works better against the bishop on h4 compared with f4. Now we will consider the rare and dubious A) 7. e4?!, followed by the more interesting B) 7. a4.

The main line of 7. e3 will be handled in the following three chapters.

A) 7. e4?!

This move cannot work properly when the h4-bishop is so far away from the defence of the d4-pawn.

7... 何况7

Simple development works well for Black. The greedy 7... b5?! would justify White's idea, as after 8. a4 c6 9. f4 he has decent compensation for the pawn.

8. a4 dx4 c5

We have reached a normal position except that White's bishop has moved from c1 to h4. This 'free' developing move might seem like an advantage, but in fact the opposite is true as the d4-pawn is too vulnerable.

9. e2 dx4! 10. dx4 何况6

Black exploits the aforementioned advantage and delays castling in order to intensify the pressure against the enemy centre.

11. d5

11. 0–0 0–0 12. d5 is unimpressive: 12. a1 d1 d1 13. a1 d2 14. d3 d6 Compared with the well-known exchange sacrifice line, Black is once again better off thanks to the misplaced bishop on h4.

11... a5? 12. a1

This position was reached in Ostermeyer - Riefner, Germany 1982, and here Black should have played:

12... 何况5!N 13. b3 何况7

Black has a great position.
This is an important alternative, and a speciality of the Greek grandmaster Efstratios Grivas.

7...\texttt{4d7}

This is the main line, and my preferred choice. The minor pieces have more appealing squares than d7 available.

8.\texttt{xc4 b6!}

This is an important resource. Black intends to exploit the slightly vulnerable position of White's queen by winning a tempo with ...\texttt{a6}.

9.\texttt{g3?!}

It is this move which gives the present variation an independent character. In the event of 9.\texttt{f3 a6} 10.\texttt{b3 g7} 11.e3 the play transposes to line B22 of Chapter 25, beginning with 4.\texttt{f3}.

9...\texttt{c5} 10.\texttt{e5}

Again 10.\texttt{f3 g7} reaches Chapter 25.

10...\texttt{f6}

With this move Black hopes to exploit his bishop pair later in the game. 10...\texttt{a6} looks tempting, but after 11.\texttt{b3 f6} 12.\texttt{xb8 xxb8}

13.\texttt{f3} White will soon be able to exchange the light-squared bishops – a definite achievement for him.

11.\texttt{xb8 xxb8}

This is my main recommendation, but it is worth pointing out that Black has a solid alternative available: 11...\texttt{b5?!} 12.\texttt{b3} (Black would have excellent compensation after 12.\texttt{xc5 xxb8} 13.\texttt{b4 e5} 14.\texttt{b2 exd4} 15.\texttt{xd4 c7}) 12...\texttt{c4} 13.\texttt{c2 xxb8} 14.e3 \texttt{b7} 15.\texttt{f3 g7} 16.a4 a6 17.e2 0–0 18.0–0 \texttt{f5} The position is roughly equal, Postny – Kurnosov, Evora 2007.

12.e3

White has also tried:

12.\texttt{f3} cxd4 13.cxd4

Malakhatko – Stephan, Gibraltar 2010. In this position I found the following idea:
13...e6 N 14.e3 a5!
Intending a check on b4, which should offer Black nice play as shown by the following lines:
15...d3
15...d2 f7 (15...b7?) 16.e2 b4
17...d3 (After 17.a3 xd2† 18.xd2 b7 intending ...hc8 Black's position is preferable.) 17...b7 18.0-0 hc8† Black has a nice game.
15...b4† 16.e2 b5 17...b3 b7 18.hc1 0-0 19.a3 d5 20.b2 e7
The position is complicated, but it seems to me that the bishop pair and queenside pawn majority gives Black the upper hand.

12...cxd4! N
This is an important improvement over the following game: 12...b7 13...b3 cxd4 14.cxd4 e6?! (14...a6 was necessary) 15.b5 c6 16.xc6 xc6 17.e2 f7 18.0-0† Following the exchange of light-squared bishops White had the better chances in Hillarp Persson – Grandelius, Stockholm 2009.

13.cxd4 e6 14...b3
14.f5 a5! transposes to 12.f3 above.

14...xd5!
The queen exchange works well for Black in this line.

15.b5 f7 16.exd5 exd5
Black has one extra pawn island, but the d5-pawn is not really weak. A more significant factor is Black's bishop pair, which could become a powerful force in the endgame.

17...c1

17...a6?
17...d6 is fine, but Black can even allow the rook to come to c7 temporarily.

18...e7† e6 19...d3 d7
Black will soon chase the rook away with ...d6, and his bishop pair promises him the better chances.

Conclusion

In this short chapter we have examined two rare lines. A) 7.e4?! is just a mistake which allows Black to develop strong pressure against White's pawn centre. B) 7...a4† is more significant, especially as Black must keep in mind the possibility of a transposition to Chapter 25. Fortunately we saw that, in the cases where White attempts to derive independent value from the early queen check, Black has at least enough resources to maintain the balance, and quite possibly fight for the advantage.
4. \( \texttt{g5} \)

7.e3 - Sidelines

**Variation Index**

1.d4 \( \texttt{f6} \) 2.c4 \( \texttt{g6} \) 3.\( \texttt{c3} \) d5 4.\( \texttt{g5} \) \( \texttt{e4} \) 5.\( \texttt{h4} \) \( \texttt{xc3} \) 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3

7...\( \texttt{e6} \)

A) 8.\( \texttt{h3} \)

B) 8.\( \texttt{e2} \)

C) 8.\( \texttt{b1} \) c5! 9.\( \texttt{xb7} \) \( \texttt{d5} \) 10.\( \texttt{b5} \) \( \texttt{d7} \) 11.\( \texttt{b1} \) \( \texttt{xb5} \) 12.\( \texttt{xb5} \) \( \texttt{d7} \)

C1) 13.\( \texttt{f3} \)

C2) 13.\( \texttt{e2} \)

A) after 12.\( \texttt{xc4} \)

C) note to 9.\( \texttt{xb7} \)

C1) after 18.\( \texttt{g3} \)
1. d4 .gf6 2. c4  g6 3. c3  d5 4. g5  e4  
5. h4  xc3 6. bxc3  dxc4 7. e3

7... e6
This is a key move in Black's strategy. Black may not be able to keep his extra pawn indefinitely, but he can force White to waste time regaining it.

From this important tabiya White has tried several moves. The two most important options of 8. b1 and 8. f3 will be covered in Chapters 22 and 23 respectively. In the present chapter we will consider the alternatives of A) 8. h3, B) 8. e2 and C) 8. b1.

8. e2  h6! This important move is directed against the idea of f4. 9. g3

A) 8. h3
This move has seldom been seen, but it is not without merit. White's idea is to attack the light-squared bishop with f4 or g5.

8... h6!
This move works well, just as it did against 8. e2.

It is worth pointing out that Black should refrain from 8... h3, as after 9. gxh3  d5 10. g1 White's light-squared bishop comes into the game with a lot of power.

9. g5  d5 10. e4
If White delays taking action then Black will drive the knight away with ...f6.

10... xg5 11. xg5  xe4 12. xc4
This position occurred in Schlehoefer - Kurz, Germany 1987, and here Black could have safely eaten a second pawn:
12...\texttt{axg2}!N 13.\texttt{wb3}  
13.\texttt{bgl} \texttt{d5} leaves White without much compensation.

13...0–0 14.\texttt{bgl} \texttt{c6} 15.\texttt{d5}?!  
This looks critical, but it turns out that Black can refute it.

Objectively White should prefer 15.\texttt{h6}, but after 15...\texttt{e6} 16.\texttt{xf8} \texttt{xf8}+ Black reaches a stable position with two pawns for the exchange and a better pawn structure.

15...\texttt{b5}! 16.\texttt{dxc6} \texttt{bxc4} 17.\texttt{b7}  
Nothing else can cause Black any problems.

17...\texttt{d6}! 18.\texttt{xa8} \texttt{xc6} 19.\texttt{b7} \texttt{b8}  
20.\texttt{a6} \texttt{xh2}  
Black has a decisive attack, with ...\texttt{d5} coming next.

\textbf{B) 8.\texttt{e2}}

8...\texttt{g7} 9.\texttt{b1}  
This is an independent try. The more popular 9.\texttt{f3} reaches line A of Chapter 23.

9...\texttt{d7}!N  
I decided to analyse this as yet untested move. I must stress that there is also nothing wrong with 9...\texttt{b6}, after which 10.\texttt{f3} 0–0 reaches line C3 of Chapter 23.

10.\texttt{f3}  
Once again, 10.\texttt{f3} \texttt{b6} is a transposition, this time to line C2 of Chapter 22.

10...\texttt{b8}
11.\textit{Exb7}
11\textit{.De2 Eb6} is fine for Black.

11...\textit{Exb7} 12.\textit{Exb7} c5 13.\textit{De2} cxd4
14.cxd4
After 14.exd4 0-0 15.0-0 \textit{Af6} 16.\textit{Ag3} \textit{Ba5}
Black has a solid position with equal chances.

14...\textit{g5}!!
This is my preferred solution, exploiting the fact that taking on g5 would cost White his bishop.

15.\textit{Ag3} \textit{f5} 16.\textit{Cc3}
After 16.0-0?! \textit{Bb6} 17.\textit{Ad5} \textit{Ad3} Black has the initiative.

16...0-0 17.\textit{Ae4} \textit{Ax} e4 18.\textit{Dx} e4

18...\textit{e5}!
With this dynamic move Black maintains enough activity to offset his minor pawn weaknesses.

19.dxe5 \textit{Dxe5} 20.\textit{Dxd8} \textit{Dxd8} 21.\textit{Cxe2} \textit{Bb8}
Black is not worse in the endgame.

C) 8.\textit{Bb1}

8...\textit{c5}!
With this great solution, Black returns his extra pawn but gets a lot of activity. The alternative 8...\textit{Dd5} has been tested in several top-level games, but it seems to me that White has reasonable chances to fight for the advantage against that line.

9.\textit{xb7}
In one game White tried taking a different pawn:
9.\textit{Bb5}+ \textit{Cc6} 10.\textit{Bxc5}
But Black found a strong reply:
10...\textit{Bb6} 11.\textit{Bxb6}
Black has a nice game after 11.\textit{Ba3} \textit{Dd5}
12.\textit{Cf3} e5 13.\textit{Cc1} \textit{Ag7} followed by 0-0.
11...\textit{axb6} 12.\textit{Cf3}
12.e4?! looks premature, since after 12...\textit{Ag7}
13.\textit{Cd2} \textit{Ea3} 14.\textit{Ce2} \textit{Dd7}!, intending ...b5-b4, Black has clearly better chances.
Black's light-squared bishop is a key piece which should be safeguarded. This is an important improvement over 12...b5 13.\textit{f}4 \textit{e}3 14.\textit{g}e2 \textit{h}6 15.\textit{d}xe6 \textit{fxe6} 16.\textit{d}d2 when White was better in Iljushin – Dominguez Perez, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

13.\textit{f}4

Worse is: 13.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}3 14.\textit{f}4 \textit{f}7 15.\textit{d}d2 (or 15.\textit{d}5 \textit{a}5 16.\textit{d}e6 \textit{xe6} 17.\textit{d}xe6 \textit{g}7\texttt{t}+\texttt{t}) 15...\textit{e}5 16.\textit{d}e2 \textit{b}5\texttt{t} The impending ...\textit{b}4 will be highly unpleasant for White.

13...\textit{f}7 14.\textit{e}4 \textit{a}3

White's idea must have been to meet 14...\textit{g}5 with 15.\textit{d}5.

15.\textit{d}5 \textit{xd5} 16.\textit{exd5} \textit{a}5\texttt{t}

Black has the better game.

11.\textit{xc}5?! looks too risky, and it is hardly surprising that nobody has tested it yet. Black should respond with 11...\textit{e}5! 12.\textit{a}3 \textit{c}6 13.\textit{a}4 \textit{exd}4 14.\textit{exd}4 \textit{e}6\texttt{t} 15.\textit{d}e2 \textit{d}6 and it is hard to see how White can complete development.

11...\textit{xb}5 12.\textit{xb}5 \textit{d}7

From here White has tried C1) 13.\textit{f}3 and C2) 13.\textit{e}2.

\textbf{C1) 13.\textit{f}3}

13...\textit{e}6 14.\textit{e}2 \textit{e}7

Another game saw 14...\textit{a}6, which is also not bad, but I prefer to concentrate on the text move.

15.\textit{d}2

After 15.\textit{g}3 Black should play 15...\textit{cxd}4 16.\textit{exd}4 \textit{f}6 with equal chances.

15...\textit{cxd}4 16.\textit{exd}4

16.\textit{cxd}4? runs into the nice trick: 16...\textit{c}3\texttt{t}! 17.\textit{c}1 (The pawn is untouchable: 17.\textit{xc}3? \textit{xf}3! 18.\textit{xf}3 \textit{c}8\texttt{t} White loses his bishop on \textit{h}4.) 17...\textit{a}6 18.\textit{a}5 \textit{b}8 Black is better as ...\textit{b}2 is coming.

16...\textit{a}6
17...g5

17...g5 18...g3

Perhaps White should have preferred:
18...eg5 19.f3 1.g2 20.g3 (In the event of 20.hg1?! Exg1 21.xg1 xh4 22.Eg8+ Efx8 23.xh4 Ebs Black is better, as he will penetrate along the b-file.) 20...Ef6 21.Ef1 !f8! The position is more or less balanced.

So far we have been following the game Sargissian – Naiditsch, Germany 2006. In this position I would suggest:

18...f5!!

The game continuation of 18...g4 19.de1 h5 was at least equal for Black, but I like the text move even more. The positional threat of ...f4 is not easy for White to meet, for example:

19...e5

This creative solution falls short.

19...e5? is met by 19...0–0 followed by ...g4 when White is in big trouble.

Perhaps White should consider 19.h3?!, although I doubt that many players would be comfortable with the prospect of the bishop being driven back to h2 at any moment.

19...f4 20.de5+ de8 21.f7+ ec7 22.xh8

The two minor pieces outclass White’s rook.

C2) 13.de2

This move was tested in a couple of subsequent games, but it does not seem to be much of an improvement. Indeed, it soon transpires that White will have trouble equalizing.

13...e5!

Black should play actively, without worrying about such trivialities as an imperfect pawn structure.
Chapter 21 – 7.e3 – Sidelines

14.f3
I also examined the natural alternative: 14.dxe5N 0-0 15.Łf4 0-0 16.La5 (After the passive 16.Lb1 Łc7 Black already stands better.) 16...Łe7

17.Lg3 (Clearly worse is 17.Lxe7? 0-0 18.Lxc5 Łd6 19.La5 Łhb8 when Black takes over the initiative.) 17...0-0 18.Le2 Łf8
Black's activity more than makes up for his doubled pawns, for instance: 19.0-0 Łd2 20.Ld1 Łxd1† 21.Lxd1 Łd8 22.Le2 Łd7!
With ...Łd3 coming soon, Black has the more promising position.

14...Łg7

15.Lb1
Also after 15.dxc5 0-0 16.e4 Łc6 17.Lb1 Łf8! Black emerged with the better position in Arutinian – Pashikian, Armenia 2007.

15...Łc6 16.Lc1
Allowing a favourable liquidation of the centre, but it was hard to suggest another way to develop the kingside pieces.

16...exd4 17.Lxd4 0-0 18.Lxc4 dxe3 19.Lg5 Łb6 20.Lb5 Łxb5 21.Lxb5 0-0 22.Lxe3 Łc4
Black was clearly better in Sanikidze – Rodshtein, Plovdiv 2008.

Conclusion

After the moves 7.e3 Łe6, none of the sidelines presented here should worry Black. A) 8.Lh3 is not completely without merit, but analysis shows that Black can obtain an excellent game with resolute play. B) 8.Le2 is not such a bad move, and usually transposes to a line examined in a different chapter. As we have seen, Black has nothing to fear from the independent possibilities. In terms of popularity, C) 8.Lb1 is the most important of the options examined in the present chapter, but after the active 8...c5! I have full confidence in Black's chances.
4. \( \text{g5} \)

8. \( \text{b1} \)

**Variation Index**

1. d4 \( \text{f6} \) 2. c4 \( \text{g6} \) 3. \( \text{c3} \) d5 4. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{e4} \) 5. h4 \( \text{xc3} \) 6. bxc3 dxc4 7. e3 \( \text{e6} \) 8. \( \text{b1} \)

8... \( \text{d7}! \)

A) 9. \( \text{xb7} \)

B) 9. \( \text{a4} \)

C) 9. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{b6} \)
   
   C1) 10. \( \text{a4} \)
   
   C2) 10. \( \text{e2} \)

B) after 15. \( \text{xb3} \)

C1) after 17. \( \text{g4} \)

C2) after 15. \( \text{g4} \)

Tiger Hillarp Persson's queen sac
8...\textit{od7!}

Once again Black should be happy to return his extra pawn for the sake of activity. It is essential to understand that after 8...\textit{b6} White has the promising idea of 9.\textit{h}3! \textit{h}6 10.e4 with interesting play.

After the text move White has three main options: A) 9.\textit{xb7}, B) 9.\textit{a4} and C) 9.\textit{f3}.

It is barely worth considering 9.d5? \textit{f5} 10.\textit{xb7} \textit{c5} when Black is clearly better.

A) 9.\textit{xb7}

Of course this move should not be ignored, but it is too simplistic and Black easily gets a good game.

9...\textit{b6}

9...\textit{g7} is also fine, but I prefer to limit the rook’s movement.

10.\textit{g3} \textit{c5} 11.\textit{f3}

The \textit{c5}-pawn is untouchable: 11.dxc5?? \textit{xd1+} 12.\textit{xd1} 0–0–0†++

In the event of 11.\textit{xc7} Black should play 11...\textit{e}8! 12.\textit{xa7} \textit{g7} with nice play for the sacrificed pawn, for instance 13.\textit{f3} \textit{cxd4}

12.\textit{d2} \textit{cxd4} 13.\textit{cxd4} \textit{d5} 14.\textit{c7} \textit{e5!} 15.\textit{c5} \textit{exd4} 16.\textit{xc4} 0–0

Black was already winning in Kaganskiy – Baron, Petah Tiqwa 2007.

B) 9.\textit{a4}

Amazingly, this move already implies a queen sacrifice, at least if White wishes to conduct the opening in a remotely principled way. The critical line runs as follows.
9...<f6

9...<g7?! would be a serious concession, as after 10.<xc4 <xc4 11.<xc4 White has regained the pawn while keeping a safe positional edge.

After the text move Black is threatening to consolidate his extra pawn with ...a6 followed by ...b5, so White is more or less forced to take the following path:

10.<xc4 <xg2 11.<b3 <h6!

It is crucial to take the f4-square under control, as after 11...<g7? 12.<xf7+ <f8 13.<e2 <xh1 14.<f4 White has a serious initiative, Kaganskiy - Bykhovsky, Petah Tiqwa 2008.

12.<xf7+ <f8 13.<d5

15...<b8

This was a new move at the time, although it is logical enough, as Black needs to activate his rook with ...b5 followed by ...<b6.

15...b5 had already occurred in three games, and after 16.<f3 <b8 the play is similar to the main game and may even transpose directly.

16.<f3 <g7

It is useful to take control over the e5-square, preventing White from strengthening his position by means of <e5 and f4. A secondary point behind the last move is to prepare the regrouping plan of ...<g7-f6 followed by ...<g7(f7).

17.0-0
17...b5!
I consider this the most accurate move. I rejected 17...\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{6} 18.\text{\textit{g}}3 \text{b}5 \) in view of 19.\(\text{\textit{a}}3\) when suddenly it is not easy to defend the a7-pawn.

18.\(\text{\textit{g}}3\)
There are two important alternatives to consider.

In the present position 18.\(\text{\textit{a}}3\) is not dangerous, as after 18...\(\text{\textit{c}}8\)! 19.\(\text{\textit{xa}}7\) \(\text{\textit{a}}8\) Black achieves a highly desirable rook exchange, which more than justifies the loss of the a-pawn.

18.\(\text{\textit{g}}5\)!
This is more interesting, but Black has sufficient resources to meet the challenge.

18...\(\text{\textit{b}}6\) 19.\(\text{\textit{xb}}5\)
Otherwise there would be no point to White’s previous move.

19...\(\text{\textit{xb}}5\)!
Black should be content to return most of his material in order to reach a good endgame. Less advisable would be 19...\(\text{\textit{c}}8\) 20.\(\text{\textit{c}}5\) \(\text{\textit{f}}6\) 21.\(\text{\textit{g}}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 22.\(\text{\textit{e}}4\) \(\text{\textit{c}}5\), or 21...\(\text{\textit{x}}g5\) 22.\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) \(\text{c}6\) 23.\(\text{\textit{xc}}5\), with interesting compensation for White in both cases.

20.\(\text{\textit{e}}6\) \(\text{\textit{f}}7\) 21.\(\text{\textit{xd}}8\) \(\text{\textit{xd}}8\) 22.\(\text{\textit{g}}3\)
Black has kept a modest material advantage, and now he has a pleasant choice.

22...e6?!
This is the more ambitious option. In the event of 22...e5 23.c4 \(\text{\textit{a}}5\) (23...\(\text{\textit{b}}4\) 24.\(\text{\textit{d}}5\) \(\text{\textit{b}}8\) 25.dxe5 \(\text{c}6\) 26.\(\text{\textit{xc}}6\) \(\text{\textit{xc}}4\) 27.\(\text{\textit{b}}7=)\) 24.dxe5 \(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) 25.\(\text{\textit{d}}5\) \(\text{\textit{xd}}5\) 26.cxd5 \(\text{\textit{xd}}5\) the endgame is equal.

23.\(\text{\textit{xc}}7\) \(\text{\textit{c}}8\) 24.a4 \(\text{\textit{b}}2\) 25.\(\text{\textit{a}}5\) \(\text{\textit{f}}6\) 215?
18...\texttt{b}6 19.c4!?
White opts for a temporary pawn sacrifice in order to open the c-file for his rooks.

A serious idea was: 19.\texttt{g}5 h6 20.\texttt{e}e4 \texttt{f}5 21.\texttt{c}c5 The knight is very well placed on c5, but I am not convinced that this can offer White full compensation, and for this reason after the quiet 21...a6 I prefer Black's position.

19...bxc4
19...a6 is too passive, and after 20.c5 \texttt{f}6 21.\texttt{e}e5 White obtains some pressure.

20.\texttt{c}c3 \texttt{f}6
Black continues the strategy of improving his piece coordination. With his last move he vacates the g7-square for his king, enabling him to develop the h8-rook.

21.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{c}6 22.\texttt{e}e5
After 22.\texttt{fc}1 \texttt{f}7 23.\texttt{e}e5† \texttt{xe}5 24.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{g}8 we transpose to the game.

The following line clearly justifies Black's safety-first strategy: 24.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xc}6! 25.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{d}5 26.\texttt{c}c2 \texttt{f}7 Black can press for a win without taking any real risk.

24...\texttt{f}7 25.d5!
This fantastic tactical resource enables White to keep the game interesting. Clearly inferior is 25.\texttt{xc}6? \texttt{xc}6 26.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{a}5† and with a pair of rooks off the board, Black is clearly better.

25.\texttt{xc}6 can once again be met strongly by 25...\texttt{xc}6! 26.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{d}5, just as in the note to the previous move.

25...\texttt{xd}5 26.\texttt{c}c5 \texttt{e}8!
The strongest continuation. Instead after 26...\texttt{e}d6 27.\texttt{xd}6 exd6 28.\texttt{c}7† \texttt{f}6 29.\texttt{xa}7 White is not worse.

27.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{d}6!
Black must obviously avoid 27...\texttt{a}8?? 28.\texttt{d}4 \texttt{b}7 29.\texttt{d}5† and White wins.

28.\texttt{xd}6 exd6 29.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{e}6†
Hillarp Persson – Avrukh, Dresden (ol) 2008. The complications have mostly subsided, and we have reached a calm position in which White has a rook and bishop against Black's queen. Overall Black stands slightly better, as he has managed to secure his king while preserving a small material advantage.
Nevertheless White has managed to construct a fortress which is hard to breach, and in the game I had to settle for a draw.

C) 9.\(\text{d}f3\)

This useful developing move also carries the threat of \(\text{g}5\), harassing the bishop.

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

Black creates an escape route for the bishop, while also safeguarding the \(\text{b}7\)- and \(\text{c}4\)-pawns. At this point White's most important choices are C1) 10.a4 and C2) 10.\(\text{e}2\), although a few other moves have also been tried.

10.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{g}7\) 11.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{d}7\) 12.0–0 \(\text{a}4\) This slightly unusual queen manoeuvre gives Black interesting play. 13.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{f}5\) 14.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 15.\(\text{c}1\) a5 16.\(\text{b}2\) Now in Tomashevsky – Sutovsky, Kallithea 2008, Black should have played:

16...\(\text{e}4\)N Setting up a nice bind on the light squares, for instance: 17.\(\text{e}1\) \(f5\) 18.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}5\)\(\text{+}\) With an extra pawn and a firm grip on the centre, Black stands better. The plan for the next few moves is ...\(\text{f}6\) and ...0–0.

10.e4

This move seems a bit premature, as it allows Black an extra option.

10...\(\text{g}7\) 11.\(\text{e}2\) \(c5\)?

The fact that White has not yet castled is what makes this move a viable option. It is also quite reasonable to play 11...\(f5\)N, just as in line C2 below. I do not see any way for White to take advantage of the fact that neither side has castled.

12.0–0

This position occurred in Halkias – L’Ami, Amsterdam 2006, and now the logical continuation of Black's play would have been:

12...\(\text{c}xd4\)N 13.\(\text{c}xd4\)

In the event of 13.\(\text{e}xd4\) \(\text{d}7\) 14.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{a}4\) 15.\(\text{d}2\) 0–0 16.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{d}7\)\(\text{+}\) Black has an extra pawn and a very solid position.

13...\(\text{d}7\) 14.\(\text{c}2\) 0–0 15.\(\text{h}3\) \(f6\) 16.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{a}c8\)\(\text{∞}\)

In this complex position Black looks to be in good shape.

C1) 10.a4
This is a thematic idea in positions where the black knight goes to b6, but in the present position the inclusion of the move a1-b1 renders the a4-pawn vulnerable.

10...a5 11.\(\text{g}5\)

White provokes complications, which is understandable as normal development does not promise him much: 11.\(\text{e}2\) g7 12.0-0 0-0 13.e4

13...d7! The a4-pawn is a clear target. 14.\(\text{c}1\) (14.a1 is pointless in view of 14...e8!) 14...xa4 15.a3 d6! 16.xe7 xa3 17.xa3 fe8 18.dd2 \(c\)c2 19.b2 \(d\)d3! 20.xd3 cxd3 Black was clearly better in Akobian – Roiz, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

11...d5! 12.e4 h6

Black accepts the challenge, and indeed the complications are not unfavourable to him.

13.exd5 hxg5

14.xg5

After 14.xb6 Sutovsky demonstrates the following illustrative line in ChessBase Magazine 113: 14...xb6 15.xc4 c7! 16.b5† d8 17.xg5 xc3† 18.d2 xd4†

14...h6

This seems more thematic than 14...xd5 15.b5 e4† 16.e2 f6 17.d2 xg2 18.f3 h3 19.xb7 ½–½ Banikas – Smirin, Athens 2007. The position is messy and interesting but unfortunately it seems that neither player was in the mood for a fight.

15.xh6 xh6 16.f3
Now Black found a natural, but still highly attractive idea:

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

Black clearly has the upper hand. Material is level, but White's pawns are weaker and his pieces lack coordination.

C2) 10.\text{e}2

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

This time White simply completes his development before taking any direct action.

10...\text{g}7 11.0-0 0-0 12.e4 \text{f}5!

This looks a bit dangerous, but in fact it is the most active and principled idea available to Black, without which White could obtain long-term positional compensation. This strong move has only been played once, by a sub-2100 player. Curiously, in 2010 two grandmasters reached the same position with Black, but both of them opted for different and in my opinion less promising continuations.

13.\text{g}5

This must be the critical reply.

13...\text{d}7 14.exf5

White opts for a positional approach, presumably hoping to develop pressure along the e-file.

It is important to note that the following tactical solution does not quite work for White:

14.\text{xb}6 axb6 15.\text{xc}4†
15...\textit{e6}!\smallskip
The key move.

16.\textit{\textbf{W}b}3\smallskip
16.g3 can be met comfortably by 16...\textit{\textbf{W}f}6.\smallskip
The other important line is 16.exf5 \textit{\textbf{W}xf}5
17.\textit{\textbf{Q}xe}6? \textit{\textbf{W}xh}4 18.\textit{\textbf{Q}x}c7+ \textit{\textbf{h}h}8 19.\textit{\textbf{Q}xa}8
\textit{\textbf{W}h}5 20.h3 \textit{\textbf{Q}xh}3 with a winning position for Black.
16...\textit{\textbf{W}h}6 17.\textit{\textbf{Q}xe}6\dagger \textit{\textbf{g}g}7 18.\textit{\textbf{Q}xd}7 \textit{\textbf{W}xg}5
19.\textit{\textbf{Q}xg}5 \textit{\textbf{W}xg}5\smallskip
White's compensation is hardly sufficient.

14...\textit{\textbf{B}x}f5\smallskip
In return for his damaged pawn structure Black has secured the use of the important d5-square.

15.\textit{\textbf{Q}g}4\smallskip
This position occurred in Gladyszev – Dubois, Metz 2007, and now Black should have played:

15...\textit{\textbf{W}f}6!N 16.f4\smallskip
After 16.\textit{\textbf{Q}xf}5 \textit{\textbf{W}xf}5 Black has great compensation for the exchange, for instance 17.\textit{\textbf{Q}b}5 e6 and White's material advantage is unlikely to last for much longer.

It is also worth mentioning that 16.\textit{\textbf{W}d}2 can be met strongly by 16...e5!.

16...\textit{\textbf{W}a}5!\smallskip
White's compensation for the pawn is highly questionable.

Conclusion\smallskip
We have seen that the active move 8.\textit{\textbf{Q}b}1 leads to complex and dynamic positions which can present tricky problems for both sides. After the correct 8...\textit{\textbf{B}d}7!, taking the b7-pawn is harmless, but White's two alternatives should be studied carefully. The queen sacrifice associated with B) 9.\textit{\textbf{W}a}4 is fascinating, but as long as Black keeps a cool head and finds the right moves at a few key moments, he should be able to count on at least equal chances. Line C with 9.\textit{\textbf{Q}f}3 sees White developing more calmly, but after 9...\textit{\textbf{Q}b}6 Black secures his extra pawn and keeps enough dynamic potential to fight for the initiative, perhaps with a material sacrifice of his own.
Variation Index

1.d4  \textit{Qf6} 2.c4 \textit{g6} 3.\textit{Oc3} d5 4.\textit{Qg5} \textit{Qe4} 5.\textit{Oh4} \textit{Qxc3} 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 \textit{Qe6} 8.\textit{O\textsubscript{f3}}

8...\textit{Qg7}

A) 9.\textit{Qe2} c5 10.0–0 0–0
   A1) 11.\textit{Qg5} 277
   A2) 11.\textit{Qb1} cxd4 12.\textit{Qxd4} \textit{Qd5} 13.\textit{Qc2} \textit{Qd7}
      A21) 14.e4 281
      A22) 14.\textit{Qfd1} 282

B) 9.\textit{Qb1} \textit{Qd5} 10.\textit{Qe2} \textit{Qf5}
   B1) 11.\textit{Qb4} 283
   B2) 11.\textit{Qb2} 285

C) 9.\textit{Qb1} \textit{b6}
   C1) 10.\textit{Qg5} 286
   C2) 10.\textit{Qd2} 287
   C3) 10.\textit{Qe2} 0–0
      C31) 11.\textit{Qd2} 288
      C32) 11.0–0 289

A1) after 21.h5?!  
C1) after 13.\textit{Qa4}†  
C32) after 18.\textit{Qbd1}
This time White makes a kingside developing move before deciding which of his major pieces, if any, to place on the b-file. Compared with the previous chapter, this small difference leads to some significant differences in the subsequent play for both sides.

8...\(\text{g}7\)

From here we will analyse the patient A) 9.\(\text{e}2\), the recently fashionable B) 9.\(\text{b}1\), and finally C) 9.\(\text{b}1\). Before doing so, it is worth checking a couple of rare knight moves.

9.\(\text{g}5\)?? is premature: 9...\(\text{d}5\) 10.e4 \(\text{h}6\) 11.exd5 hxg5 12.xg5 \(\text{xd}5\) 13.h4 This was Gerber – Belov, Biel 2009, and now Black should have immediately attacked the opponent’s centre by 13...c5!!N, with the following point: 14.a4\(\text{c}6\) 15.xc4 \(\text{d}8\) 16.xd5 \(\text{xd}5\) Black is clearly better.

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

With this retreat White is not going for outright aggression, but instead strives for long-term compensation.

9...\(\text{b}5\) 10.a4 \(\text{c}6\) 11.\(\text{e}2\)

In the following game White played too slowly and soon got into trouble: 11.\(\text{b}1\) a6

This position was reached in Lehmann – Ftacnik, Kiev 1978, and here Black’s play could have been improved by:

14...\(\text{f}5\)!!N

Provoking the following move.

15.e4

This is practically forced, since 15.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}7\) leaves White with very few ideas.

15...\(\text{e}6\)

White’s ‘free’ move e3-e4 has reduced the scope of his minor pieces, especially his light-squared bishop. The resulting position is complex and holds chances for both sides. Black is a bit cramped, but his extra pawn is secure and White still needs to prove his compensation. Here is one illustrative line:

16.\(\text{fb}1\)!!

This natural move turns out to be a mistake.
Chapter 23 – 8.\( \text{Q}f3 \)

16...b4! 17.g3
White cannot play 17.\( \text{B}x\!b4 \) in view of 17...c5!.
17...\( \text{Q}d7 \)
Black stands better.

A) 9.\( \text{Q}e2 \)

9...c5
This is my top choice, although there is a serious alternative in the ...\( \text{Q}d7-b6 \) manoeuvre, which can be carried out either immediately or after castling.

10.0-0 0-0
At this important crossroads White’s principal choices are A1) 11.\( \text{Q}g5 \) and A2) 11.\( \text{B}b1 \).

11.\( \text{B}b1 \)
This move should prove harmless if Black responds correctly.
11...\( \text{Q}c6! \)
This idea is already known to us from the two preceding chapters: Black returns his extra pawn in order to maximize the activity of his pieces.
In the event of 11...b6 12.\( \text{B}d1 \) White’s position looks preferable to me.
12.\( \text{W}xb7 \text{Q}d5 \)

13.\( \text{W}b5 \)
I also checked 13.\( \text{W}a6N \text{cxd}4 \) 14.\( \text{exd}4 \) (after 14.\( \text{cxd}4 \text{Q}b4 \) 15.\( \text{W}a4 \) a5 Black has sufficient counterplay) 14...\( \text{W}c8 \) 15.\( \text{W}xc8 \text{B}xc8 \) when the position is balanced.
13...\( \text{cxd}4 \) 14.\( \text{Q}xd4 \text{B}b8 \) 15.\( \text{W}c5 \text{B}c8 \) 16.\( \text{Q}xc6 \text{B}xc6 \) 17.\( \text{W}xa7 \)
White has won a pawn, but after Black’s next accurate move, his piece activity easily makes up for the small material investment.

A1) 11.\( \text{Q}g5 \)
11...\textit{d5}

In the 2009 Gibraltar tournament I chose an inferior option: 11...\textit{f5} I should mention that during this event my computer was only working for a maximum of five minutes at a time before switching off, and my preparation suffered accordingly. 12.\textit{xc4} \textit{xc6} 13.\textit{b3} (the more accurate 13.\textit{f3}!N would have created more serious problems) 13...e6 14.\textit{f3} \textit{b6} 15.\textit{d2} cxd4 16.cxd4 \textit{fc8} Black was fine in Harikrishna - Avrukh, Gibraltar 2009, although I later went wrong and lost.

12.e4 \textit{h6} 13.exd5 \textit{hxg5} 14.\textit{gxg5} cxd4 15.\textit{xc4} dxc3

After a more or less forced sequence we reach a position in which White has tried two different moves.

16.\textit{e1}

The alternative is:
16.\textit{c1} \textit{d6} 17.\textit{e1}

Here I like the new idea:
17...\textit{e5}!!\textit{N}

17...\textit{e8} also looks good enough for Black, despite the fact that he went on to suffer a painful loss. 18.\textit{e2} \textit{f8}! 19.\textit{f3} \textit{d7} Black has consolidated his position and there is no way he can be worse with such a strong pawn on c3. 20.\textit{f4} This was Harikrishna - Svidler, Dresden (ol) 2008, and now the best idea would have been:

20...\textit{f6}!N 21.\textit{b5} \textit{g5}! 22.\textit{xd7} \textit{ed8} The simplifications work in Black's favour.

18.\textit{f4}

18.\textit{e2} was mentioned by Mikhalchishin, but now instead of 18...\textit{f6}? Black should prefer 18...\textit{d7} when he is doing fine.

18...\textit{f6} 19.\textit{xf6} \textit{xf6}
Black is at least equal, with ...\(\text{d7}\) and ...
\(\text{ac8}\) coming quickly.

**16...\(\text{f6!}\)**

This is a key defensive idea. After the inferior
16...\(\text{e8}\)? 17.d6! White seized a decisive
initiative in Banikas – Fier, Internet (blitz)
2009.

**17.\(\text{h6!}\)**

This is the most challenging move, although
White is also taking a serious risk in allowing
the c-pawn to live.

After the safer 17.\(\text{xf6}\) a draw was agreed in
Banikas – Rodshtein, Budva 2009. The logical
continuation would seem to be 17...\(\text{exf6}\)
18.\(\text{c1 d6}\) 19.\(\text{xc3 d7}\) with a perfectly
playable position for Black.

**17...\(\text{d6}\)**

This seems like the most natural and ‘human’
move, especially taking into account that after
17...\(\text{e8}\) 18.d6! White’s bishops look extremely
powerful.

However, I considered another interesting
exchange sacrifice: 17...\(\text{d7!}\)?N 18.d6!? (after
18.\(\text{xf8 xf8}\) 19.d6 e6 20.\(\text{b3 c5}\) 21.\(\text{c2 g7?!}\) Black’s position is more pleasant)
18...e6 19.\(\text{c2 e8}\) 20.\(\text{ad1}\) (20.\(\text{exf6}\) does
not work: 20...\(\text{xe6}\) 21.\(\text{xe6 fxe6}\) 22.\(\text{xg6 f8–}\)
\(\text{h8–}\) 20...\(\text{a5}\) 21.\(\text{e3 ad8}\) 22.\(\text{g3 h5}\)
23.\(\text{h3 c5}\) Black is holding his own in this
complicated position.

**18.\(\text{xf8 xf8}\) 19.\(\text{b1 b6}\)**

**20.h4!**

Opening the kingside with h4-h5 is White’s
only attractive plan.

**20...\(\text{d7}\)**

Of course the h-pawn is untouchable:
20...\(\text{xf4??}\) 21.\(\text{g4 f6}\) 22.\(\text{c8+ g7}\)
23.\(\text{b7+–}\)

**21.h5?!**

In his column for the famous Russian
magazine 64, Alexey Kuzmin proposed 21.g3N
as an improvement for White.
However, it seems to me that after 21...\texttt{c}8 22.\texttt{b}3 (or 22.\texttt{g}4 \texttt{c}5 23.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{b}5!) 22...\texttt{c}5 23.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{d}8 24.h5 gxh5 25.\texttt{x}h5 \texttt{xd}5 Black is out of danger.

We have been following the game Al Sayed – Kasimdzhanov, Guangzhou (rapid) 2010. In this position Kuzmin points out a significant improvement for Black:

21...\texttt{f}4!N

Black takes over the initiative, with ...\texttt{d}4 or ...\texttt{e}5 coming next.

A2) 11.\texttt{b}1

In my opinion this is the critical continuation. It featured twice in the recent World Championship Candidates match between Gelfand and Kamsky, which took place just a few weeks before the book went to print.

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

11...\texttt{c}xd4

In the first of the two aforementioned games Black tried a different approach but soon found himself in trouble: 11...\texttt{d}5?! This looks rather risky. 12.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{c}xd4?! (If Black is to make his previous move work then 12...\texttt{f}5?!N might be the way, although I have my doubts about it...) 13.\texttt{c}xd4 \texttt{b}6?! (13...\texttt{d}7 was the lesser evil, although Black is struggling here too,) 14.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{xc}6 15.\texttt{xc}1 \texttt{xc}4 16.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{a}5 17.\texttt{c}7 Black had a depressing position although he eventually managed to hold a draw, Gelfand – Kasmin, Kazan (2.2) 2011.

12.\texttt{c}xd4

White has also played:

12.\texttt{c}xd4 \texttt{d}7

I should mention that the alternative 12...\texttt{c}7?! also deserves attention.

13.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{d}5 14.e4 \texttt{c}6 15.\texttt{xc}4

15...\texttt{xd}4N

This looks better than 15...\texttt{x}d4 16.\texttt{b}3, which gave White dangerous compensation for the pawn in Leitao – Lima, Sao Paulo 2005.

16.\texttt{b}3 e6 17.\texttt{xe}6

Sacrificing on e6 is clearly critical. There is also: 17.\texttt{bd}1 \texttt{b}2 18.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{xb}3 19.\texttt{xb}3 \texttt{a}6 Black intends to continue ...\texttt{d}5 with a fine position.

17...\texttt{xe}6 18.\texttt{xe}6†

Much worse for White is: 18.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{xe}4
Chapter 23 – 8.\f3

19.\xf8f8\xf8xf8 20.\wxf3 \xd7\pd \n18...\xd8h8 19.\xd6d1 \we6 20.\wxf3 \xd7d7 21.\wxd7 \xd7xd7 22.\xd8xh7

After all the tactical fireworks, we have reached a position where only Black can play for a win.

12...\xd5 13.\w\d2
White recently tried:
13.f3 b6 14.e4 \xb7b7 15.\ixe4 \d6c6

The pawn structure is favourable for Black, and White's hope must be that his activity provide enough compensation.

16.\d5 \c6c8 17.\b5

This position occurred in Vuckovic – Sanikidze, France 2011. Here Black can immediately solve all his problems by:

17...a6N 18.\d7

The only move that poses any danger, but Black can deal with it.

18...\xd7f7! 19.\xb6\xd6

After 19.\wxc6 \wxc6 20.\xe2 (or 20.\c4 \w7d7!) 20...\xd7f7 21.\xb8b8 \wxf8 Black will very soon regain the pawn.

19.\xb7a7 20.\xb8b7 \d7d7 21.\b5\d5 22.\xb2 \d6c3 23.\xa6 \d2

Black has powerful compensation for the pawn; indeed it is White who must play accurately in order to maintain the balance.

13...\w\d7

Not the most aesthetic move, but definitely the strongest one. After 13...b6 14.e4?! \xb7b7 15.\ixe4 \d6c6 16.\b7d1 \we8 Black was doing well in Caruana – Nepomniachtchi, Moscow (blitz) 2010; but instead 14.\b7d1N would have been highly unpleasant for Black to meet.

After the text move White has tried A21) 14.e4 and A22) 14.\fd1.

A21) 14.e4 \c6c6 15.\exe4 \xda4! 16.\xd4 \wxd4

It looks a bit scary to give up the dark-squared bishop, but it's very principled, and according to my analysis it is not easy for White to pose Black many problems.

17.\b7d1

I also examined: 17.\xe1 e6 18.\bd1 \wc5 19.\xf6 This is not as dangerous for Black as
it looks at first sight. 19...\(\text{d}7\) 20.\(\text{d}4\) (after 20.\(\text{x}d7\) \(\text{x}d7\) 21.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{e}c8\) Black will have \(\text{f}8\) to defend the dark squares on the kingside) 20...\(\text{e}7\) I do not think that White has enough for the pawn.

17...\(\text{w}x4\)

The endgame is not dangerous for Black.

18.\(\text{w}x4\) \(\text{a}e4\) 19.\(\text{f}e1\) \(\text{f}5\) 20.\(\text{x}e7\)

White avoids the totally equal 20.\(\text{x}e7\) \(\text{c}6\) 21.\(\text{x}b7\) \(\text{a}5\), but he lacks the resources to fight for an advantage.

20...\(\text{e}8\) 21.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 22.\(\text{f}6\)

The strong dark-squared bishop gives White enough compensation to hold the balance, but not more. In the game, Black decided to liquidate into a drawish endgame.

22...\(\text{x}e1\)† 23.\(\text{x}e1\) \(\text{e}6\) 24.\(\text{x}e6\) \(\text{e}8\) 25.\(\text{x}f7\)† \(\text{x}f7\)

\(\frac{1}{2}\)–\(\frac{1}{2}\)

Moiseenko – Kurnosov, Moscow 2009.

A22) 14.\(\text{f}d1\)

This logical move was introduced by Boris Gelfand in the second of his recent games against Kamsky in this line. I had analysed it already, having proposed it as a novelty at a seminar I gave in Stuttgart.

14...\(\text{xd}4\)!

This is one of the key motifs associated with the move ...\(\text{d}7\).

15.\(\text{cx}d4\)

15.e4 \(\text{e}5\) 16.\(\text{ex}d5\) \(\text{b}5\) is fine for Black.

15.\(\text{xd}4\) is also harmless: 15...\(\text{c}6\) 16.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{e}6\) The queen is well-placed here. 17.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{e}4\) 18.\(\text{x}b7\) \(\text{ab}8\) The position is equal.

\(\text{w}e6\)!

This is clearer than 15...\(\text{c}8\) 16.e4 \(\text{c}6\) 17.\(\text{b}4\)! with interesting play for White.

16.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xf}3\) 17.\(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{d}7\)!

The idea of returning the pawn for quick mobilization works well here. In the event of 17...\(\text{d}5\) 18.\(\text{e}4\)! White has the advantage.
18.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{\textbar{}}}} x b 7 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}}! N
This is a natural attempt to improve White’s play. In fact I had already analysed the move, along with what follows, at a time when the “N” mark could be found four moves earlier.

18.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} e 4 led nowhere for White in the recent Candidates match: 18...\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} b 6 19.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} d c 1 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} a c 8 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} b 4 c 3 21.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} f 6 \texttt{\textbar{}} x e 6 f x e 6 23.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x f 6 \texttt{\textbar{}} x f 6 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} g 8 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} Gelfand – Kamsky, Kazan (2.4) 2011.

18...\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} f b 8 19.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} d 5
After 19.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} d b 1 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x b 7 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x b 7 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} c 8 21.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x a 7 c 3 the c-pawn gives Black sufficient counterplay.

19...\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} h 3 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x b 8 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x b 8 21.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} e 4 c 3 22.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x c 7

\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} e 8 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} g 7 25.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} e 5 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x e 5 26.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x e 5 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} g 8 =
White is not forced to take the perpetual, but avoiding it does not bring him any advantage.

B) 9.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} b 1

The idea of sacrificing a pawn by 9...c 5 doesn’t work here; continuing in the same way as we did in line C of Chapter 21 with 10.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x b 7 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} d 5 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} b 5 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} d 7, then both 12.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x c 5 and 12.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} x c 4 are advantageous for White.

9...\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} b 6 10.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} e 2 0–0 11.0–0 c 5 12.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} d 1 looks quite pleasant for White.

10.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} e 2 \texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} f 5
It is essential to improve the position of the light-squared bishop with tempo, taking control over the important e4-square at the same time.

White now has a choice of squares for his queen: B1) 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} b 4 or B2) 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} b 2.

B1) 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textbar{}}} b 4
Capturing the c4-pawn the other way allows Black a surprising resource:

12...\textit{xc4}

Black now manages to achieve the favourable exchange of light-squared bishops.

12...\textit{xd4!N}

13.\textit{b5†}

The critical response.

13...\textit{d7!}

Black now manages to achieve the favourable exchange of light-squared bishops.

14.\textit{xd4} cxd4 15.\textit{xd7†} \textit{xd7} 16.cxd4 \textit{e5}

This position was reached in Pantsulaia - Sutovsky, Gothenburg 2005. Black can easily equalize with:

18...\textit{f5!N}

The attack on the e7-pawn prevents Black
castling, however the king can find a safe haven on f7.

19.\textit{f3} cxd4 20.cxd4 \textit{f7}
Black has comfortable equality.

B2) 11.\textit{b}2

11...\textit{d}7 12.0-0 \textit{d}3
There have been another couple of Grünfeld clashes between Aronian and Svidler:

12...e5 13.\textit{b}4 c5 14.\textit{x}c4 \textit{xc}4 15.\textit{x}c4 \textit{c}8 16.\textit{d}5 White had definite pressure in Aronian – Svidler, Dortmund 2006.

12...\textit{b}6 13.a4 a5 14.\textit{d}2 \textit{d}3 15.\textit{x}d3 cxd3 16.\textit{b}1! (16.\textit{f}b1 \textit{c}6 17.\textit{a}3 0–0 was unclear in Aronian – Svidler, Moscow 2006) 16...e5 (after 16...\textit{c}6 17.\textit{x}d3 \textit{xa}4 18.\textit{c}4 \textit{b}6 19.\textit{f}b1 White has good compensation for the pawn) 17.\textit{xd}3 0–0 18.\textit{f}b1 White had an edge in Paikidze – Popova, Plovdiv 2008.

13.\textit{xd}3 cxd3 14.\textit{fd}1
White has tried 14.e4, but 14...\textit{c}6 15.e5 \textit{a}6! 16.\textit{f}e1 e6 17.\textit{d}2 0–0 18.\textit{e}4 c5 gave Black the better position in Romanov – Nepomniachtchi, St Petersburg 2009.

14...\textit{e}4 15.\textit{b}1 c5 16.\textit{xd}3

16...\textit{b}6N
I offer this as an improvement on 16...\textit{c}8 as played in Eljanov – Svidler, Astrakhan 2010. In that game White later penetrated with his rook along the a-file, suggesting that it may have been a bit premature for Black to move his rook away from a8.

17.\textit{d}1
Another line runs: 17.a4 0–0 18.a5 (18.\textit{d}1 \textit{xb}1 19.\textit{xd}b1 e5 20.a5 is just a transposition) 18...e5 19.\textit{d}1 \textit{xb}1 20.\textit{xd}b1 exd4 21.exd4 \textit{fc}8 Black has no problems.

17...\textit{xb}1 18.\textit{ax}b1 \textit{c}8
Now that the white rook has left the a-file, this move is natural and good.

19.a4 cxd4
This is necessary in order to activate our rook.

20.cxd4 f6
This seems to be the best way to solve the problem of the e7-pawn.

21.a5 \textit{f}7 22.\textit{g}3 \textit{c}4
Black doesn't have any problems in this endgame.
Black is unable to use the same remedy as in the previous chapter, because here 9...\(\text{d}7?\) runs into the unpleasant 10.\(\text{g}5\).

White now has three main options, C1) 10.\(\text{g}5\), C2) 10.\(\text{d}2\) and C3) 10.\(\text{e}2\), although he has also tried a fourth move:

10.\(\text{c}2\) c6N

10...0–0?! allows White to reveal his idea with: 11.\(\text{g}5!\) \(\text{d}5\) 12.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{b}7?!\) (after 12...\(\text{f}6\) 13.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{f}7\) 14.\(\text{d}2\) White regains the pawn with an edge) 13.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{c}8\) 14.\(\text{b}3\) White had strong pressure in I. Sokolov – Arman, Stockholm 2011.

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

Otherwise White may not get the pawn back.

14...\(\text{a}6\) 15.\(\text{a}2\) \(\text{b}5!\) 16.\(\text{xb}5\) \(\text{cxb}5\) 17.\(\text{xb}5\) \(\text{xa}8\) 0–0 19.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{d}7\)

Black has a good game, with chances to take over the initiative.

C1) 10.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{d}5\)

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

11.\(\text{a}4?!\) is pointless, in view of: 11...\(\text{d}7\)N 12.\(\text{xd}7?!\) \(\text{xd}7\) 13.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{b}7\) 14.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{h}6!\) 15.\(\text{xf}7\) \(\text{f}8\) The complications turn out in Black's favour.

11...h6 12.exd5 hxg5 13.\(\text{a}4\)†

The alternatives have not brought White success:

13.\(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 14.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{d}7!\) 15.\(\text{e}2\) Kahn – Caruana, Budapest 2005. Black should now play the straightforward: 15...\(\text{c}8\)N 16.0–0 \(\text{c}5\)†

13.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{xd}5\) 14.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{a}5\) 15.0–0 Jorczik – P. Popovic, Germany 2009. Now Black can simply capture the c-pawn: 15...\(\text{xc}3\)N 16.\(\text{a}4\)† c6 17.\(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{xb}6\) 18.\(\text{xa}8\) 0–0 19.\(\text{xb}8\) \(\text{xd}4\)! 20.\(\text{b}7\) \(\text{c}2\) 21.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}2\) Black's position is close to winning, thanks to the powerful c-pawn.

13...c6!N

I believe that this move, suggested by the computer, effectively refutes this line. In all the games that have reached this position Black played the natural 13...\(\text{f}8\). Although that is also fine for Black, it gives White more chances than the text.

14.dxc6

After 14.\(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 15.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{b}5\) Black remains with a healthy extra pawn and the better position.

14...\(\text{d}5!\)
This strong follow-up is the point of Black's novelty. It transpires that c6-c7† is not such a deadly threat. Meanwhile the white bishop is hanging and Black threatens ...\textit{e}4† winning the rook on b1.

\textbf{15.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}4† 16.\textit{d}2 \textit{xb}1 17.\textit{xc}4}

This is White's most challenging try.

\textbf{17...\textit{xf}5!}

17...\textit{xh}1? allows the stunning 18.c7† \textit{d}7 19.\textit{xf}7!† \textit{xf}7 20.\textit{b}5† with a most unusual perpetual check.

\textbf{18.\textit{x}d}3!

This is stronger than 18.\textit{xb}8 \textit{xf}2† 19.\textit{d}1 0--0, when Black is decidedly better.

\textbf{18...a}5

18...\textit{b}5† looks interesting as well.

\textbf{19.\textit{xa}5 \textit{bxa}5 20.\textit{e}4}

White clearly has some compensation, but not quite enough.

\textbf{20...0--0 21.\textit{xb}1 e}5

Black has the advantage.

\textbf{C2) 10.\textit{d}2}

This has been White's most popular choice, but it is not particularly dangerous. White ensures that he will regain his pawn, but Black gets enough time to develop his counterplay.

\textbf{10...0--0 11.\textit{f}3}

Other options include the following:

11.\textit{e}2 c5 transposes to C31.

11.\textit{xc}4? is certainly no good, due to 11...\textit{xc}4 12.\textit{xc}4 \textit{d}5 followed by 13...\textit{xg}2.

11.\textit{xc}4 c5 12.\textit{e}2

12...\textit{c}6

12...d7 13.0--0 \textit{f}6† is worth considering.

13.0--0 \textit{cxd}4 14.\textit{cxd}4 \textit{c}8 15.\textit{c}1

White has also tried 15.\textit{a}4, but after 15...\textit{d}7 White has to spend a tempo
defending against the ...\( \text{\&} \text{xd}4 \) threat. 16.\( \text{\&}h1 \) Kahn – Todor, Budapest 1994. Simplest now is: 16...\( \text{\&}e5 \)N 17.\( \text{\&} \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{\&} \text{xd}7 \) 18.\( \text{\&}f3 \) \( \text{\&}f6 \) 19.\( \text{\&}g3 \) \( \text{\&}f5 \) 20.\( \text{\&}a1 \) \( \text{\&} \text{fd}8 \) Black is not worse. 15...\( \text{\&}d7 \) 16.\( \text{\&}d2 \)

Here I found an interesting idea:
16...\( \text{\&}h6 \)!N
Threatening to play ...\( \text{\&} \text{xd}4 \).
17.f4
Not the most desirable move, but after 17.\( \text{\&} \text{fd}1 \) Black’s idea works well: 17...\( \text{\&} \text{xd}4 \)
18.\( \text{\&}f1 \) \( \text{\&} \text{fd}8 \)N
17...\( \text{\&}g7 \) 18.\( \text{\&} \text{fd}1 \) \( \text{\&} \text{fd}8 \)
Black will play ...\( \text{\&}d5 \) next; his position is very comfortable.

15.\( \text{\&}e5 \) 16.\( \text{\&}e2 \) f5 17.f4 \( \text{\&}g4 \)!
This is more active than 17...\( \text{\&}f7 \), which has been played a couple of times.

18.\( \text{\&}xg4 \) \( \text{\&}xg4 \) 19.0–0 \( \text{\&}d7 \) 20.a4 e6! 21.dxe6 \( \text{\&}xe6 \) 22.a5 \( \text{\&}ae8 \) 23.axb6 axb6 24.\( \text{\&}e1 \) h6
Black had solved all his opening problems in Wang Yue – L’Ami, Istanbul 2005.

C3) 10.\( \text{\&}e2 \) 0–0

White now chooses between C31) 11.\( \text{\&}d2 \) and C32) 11.0–0.

C31) 11.\( \text{\&}d2 \)

11...\( \text{\&}c5 \)!! 12.\( \text{\&}f3 \)
After 12.0–0 Black has no problems:
12...\( \text{\&} \text{xd}4 \) 13.\( \text{\&} \text{d}7 \) 14.\( \text{\&}x\text{c}4 \) \( \text{\&}f6 \)= Nogueiras – Sasikiran, Internet 2005.

12...\( \text{\&} \text{xd}4 \)!! 13.\( \text{\&} \text{xa}8 \)
Taking the rook seems critical. The stem game continued:
Another line is 14.d5 \( f5 \) 15.e4 and here Krasenkow in *ChessBase Magazine* 107 gives 15...c3 (15...\( \text{Ec}8 \) first may be more accurate) 16.\( \text{C}b3 \) \( \text{Ec}8 \) 17.\( \text{Wc}2 \) g5! 18.\( \text{Xg}5 \) \( \text{g}6 \) with an excellent position for Black.

14...\( \text{Xxa}8 \)

Black's strong passed pawn and bishop pair gives him more than enough compensation for the exchange.

15.0–0 c3 16.\( \text{D}f3 \) \( \text{Ec}8 \) 17.\( \text{Wa}4 \) \( \text{D}f6 \)

Black was better and went on to score a convincing victory in Moiseenko – Svidler, Sochi 2005.

15.\( \text{Ec}1 \) \( \text{Da}6 \) 16.\( \text{Db}7 \) \( \text{Dc}5 \) 17.\( \text{Xc}7 \)

We have been following Sorokina – Gorozhankina, St Petersburg 2005. Black should now play:

17...\( \text{Xxb}7 \)N 18.\( \text{Xf}8 \) \( \text{Xf}8 \)

I feel that Black should be able to slowly take over the initiative.

19.\( \text{Ec}2 \)

Black is also better after: 19.\( \text{D}d4 \) \( \text{b}4 \) 20.\( \text{Cc}2 \) \( \text{d}5 \)!

12.e4

One game continued:

12.\( \text{D}d2 \) b5 13.\( \text{D}f3 \) a6 14.a4 \( \text{a}7 \) 15.\( \text{g}3 \)

This was Ruehlmann – Rohde, Krumpa 1972, and now I believe Black should play:

19...\( \text{b}4 \) 20.\( \text{e}2 \)

White sensibly prepares to castle.

20...\( \text{c}5 \) 21.\( \text{d}4 \)

After 21.0–0 Black has 21...\( \text{f}5 \)! with advantage.

21...\( \text{d}7 \) 22.0–0 \( \text{a}4 \)

Black clearly has the initiative.

C32) 11.0–0 c6
Black provokes a pawn move that will block the pressure of White's light-squared bishop—just as was suggested against the sideline 9.\d2 at the start of the chapter.

16.e4
After 16.\a1 \d3 17.\xe2 \xe2 18.\xe2 \d7 Black is better.
16...\e6 17.\e2 \d7 18.\e3
Here Black can even play:
18...\b6 19.axb5 axb5 20.d5 cxd5 21.exd5 \xd5! 22.xd5 \xd5 23.\xa7 \xc3
Black's two queenside pawns could well decide the issue.

12...b5 13.\g5 \d7 14.f4 \f6 15.\f3
If White plays 15.\h3 then I recommend:
15...\f5 16.\f3 (or 16.e5 \e6 17.a4 a6 18.\f3 \e7 19.\c1 \d5 20.\a3 \b7) 16...\a6
Followed by ...\c7; I prefer Black, since it is not clear how White should continue.

15...\h6! 16.\g3 \a6
Black activates his knight; it is heading for c7 and later to e6 or d5, depending on circumstances.

17.\c2 \c7 18.\bd1
This occurred in Postny – Bykhovsky, Israel 2010. It is now the right moment to play the thematic:

18...\f5!N 19.d5 \e8!
Black has the better chances.

Conclusion

Simply developing with A) 9.\e2 is a sensible option; Black must play accurately, but if he does so then he can count on securing equal chances. Attacking the b7-pawn with B) 9.\bd1 is well met by 9...\d5. White will regain the c4-pawn, but the queens are liable to come off, resulting in a level endgame. The other method of attacking the b7-pawn is 9.\b1, which can lead to very interesting tactical play; in particular, C31) 9...b6 10.\e2 0–0 11.\d2 c5! 12.\f3 cxd4! is a highly promising rook sacrifice.
Rare Fifth Moves

Variation Index

1.d4 d6 2.e4 g6 3.c3 d5 4.e3

4...g7

A) 5.a4+
B) 5.g3 dxc4 6.a4+ fd7 7.xc4 b6
   B1) 8.b3
   B2) 8.d3

B1) note to 10.e3

B1) after 13.a3

B2) note to 9.g2

12..c5!N

13..c5N

11..f5!
We shall look at A) 5.\textit{wa}4\textit{t} and B) 5.g3. Note that 5.e3 was covered via the move order 4.e3 \textit{g}7 5.\textit{f}3 in Chapter 12.

\begin{itemize}

\item A) 5.\textit{wa}4\textit{t} \textit{d}7 6.\textit{wb}3 dxc4 7.\textit{wc}4 0–0

\item B) 5.g3 \textit{e}6

\end{itemize}

Chasing the white queen away should help Black to get in the desirable ...c5, although it might also be interesting to try 8...\textit{a}6\textit{N} 9.\textit{g}2 c5.

\textbf{9.\textit{wa}4}

Another option is 9.\textit{d}3 but Black is doing well after: 9...c5 10.\textit{g}2 \textit{c}6 11.dxc5 \textit{a}5\textit{N} (also quite attractive is 11...\textit{xd}3 12.exd3 Ahrendt – Gerlach, corr. 1973, and now 12...\textit{d}5\textit{N} is at least equal for Black) 12.\textit{b}5 \textit{xb}5 13.\textit{xb}5 \textit{ac}8 14.0–0 \textit{e}4 White will have to play accurately in order to avoid being worse.

\textbf{9...\textit{d}5 10.\textit{g}2}

\begin{itemize}

\item 10...c5 10...\textit{c}6 is also playable.

\item 11.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 12.dxc5 \textit{a}6 13.\textit{a}3 \textit{d}7 14.0–0 \textit{b}5

\end{itemize}

The calm 14...\textit{fd}8 deserves attention.

\textbf{15.c6?!}

White should be satisfied with: 15.\textit{d}4 \textit{xd}4 16.\textit{xd}4 e6 17.\textit{f}3 \textit{xc}5 The game is fairly equal.

\textbf{15...\textit{xc}6 16.\textit{x}e7 \textit{fe}8 17.\textit{wh}4 \textit{e}4 18.\textit{f}4 \textit{xe}2}

Black was clearly better in Adianto – Formanek, Liechtenstein 1992.
Chapter 24 – Rare Fifth Moves

B) 5.g3

I have never faced this move in practice, but in my database I found over 600 games where it has been played.

5...dxc4 6.a4†

The alternative is:

6.g2 c6!

It is already not so easy for White to regain the pawn. The arising position slightly resembles some Catalan lines where White plays for compensation for the pawn, but I believe that Black’s dark-squared bishop makes a big difference here – from g7 it has a lot of influence on the centre.

7.e5

7.0–0 0–0 and 7.a4 0–0 transpose to lines C and C2 respectively of Chapter 5.

7...b6

With this thematic reaction we immediately feel the influence of the dark-squared bishop.

8.exd4 exd4 9.d5 0–0 10.h3

10.0–0 is another transposition to Chapter 5, this time to the note to White’s ninth move in line C3.

This was Hvenekilde – Knudsen, Aarhus 1984, and now I like:

10...c8N

Black is intending to exchange on d5 next move, so the bishop is better placed on c8 rather than d7.

11.0–0 cxd5 12.cxd5

After 12...xd5 13...xd5 (13...xd5 c6 is just a pawn up for Black) 13...c6

14.g2 e6, Black is better.

12...c6

Black is doing well, particularly after:

13.a4 xh3†

6...fd7 7.xc4

After 7.g2 0–0 White is obliged to play 8.xc4 anyway, returning to the main line.

7...b6

White has to choose between two different retreats: B1) 8.b3 or B2) 8.d3.

B1) 8.b3 0–0 9.g2 c6
10.e3
Other moves do not promise White much either:

10.d5 This pawn sacrifice doesn’t work here: 10...\textit{x}c3\texttt{#} 11.bxc3 \textit{xd}5 12.0-0 \textit{e}6 White had no compensation for the pawn in Niebaum – Krueger, Essen 2006.

10.0-0 \textit{xd}4 11.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 12.\textit{d}1 (after 12.\textit{b}5 Docekal – Dvorak, Znojmo 2002, Black should play 12...\textit{c}5!!N 13.\textit{e}3 \textit{c}4 and White does not have enough compensation for the pawn) 12...\textit{g}4 13.\textit{f}3 Schwartzman – Martinovsky, Saint John 1988. Here 13...\textit{f}5N 14.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}6 would make it difficult for White to demonstrate compensation.

10...\textit{e}6 11.\textit{f}d1 \textit{c}4
An important idea, disrupting White’s development.

12.\textit{d}2

12...\textit{d}3!\texttt{#}
This is stronger than: 12...\textit{a}6 13.\textit{de}4 e5 14.\textit{b}4 15.\textit{c}5 White had achieved an acceptable game in Mascarinas – Djuric, Subotica 1984.

13.\textit{f}1 \textit{xf}1 14.\textit{xf}1 e5 is obviously very good for Black.

13...\textit{e}5N
Not so clear is 13...\textit{xd}4 Machacek – Jansa, Havírov 1970, and now White should take the bishop: 14.exd4N \textit{xd}4 15.\textit{e}4\texttt{#} \textit{c}2\texttt{#} 16.\textit{xc}2 \textit{xc}2 17.\textit{xc}2 With three pieces for the queen, I would rather be White here.

14.\textit{d}5 \textit{d}4!

15.\textit{exd}4 \textit{exd}4 16.\textit{de}4
16.\textit{ce}4 \texttt{f}5\texttt{#} is dangerous for White.

16...\textit{xc}3 17.\textit{xd}3 \textit{xb}2 18.\textit{xb}2 \textit{xb}2 19.\textit{b}1 \textit{g}7 20.0-0
White has some compensation for being a pawn down, but it’s obvious that he is fighting for a draw.

B2) 8.\textit{d}3 0-0 9.\textit{g}2

After 9.\textit{f}4 Black can quickly arrange counterplay in the centre, and the white queen on \textit{d}3 is quite vulnerable: 9...\textit{a}6 10.\textit{e}4 (White cannot complete his development normally, since 10.\textit{g}2 \textit{c}5 puts his centre under too much pressure) 10...\textit{c}5 11.d5
a b c d e f g h

11...f5! Thus powerful thrust is a logical way for Black to use his lead in development. 12.e5 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}} b4 13.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}} d2 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}} 4xd5 14.0-0-0 e6 Black had the better chances in Obukhov – Najer, Krasnodar 1997.

9...c6 10.f4

Other possibilities are hardly satisfactory for White:

10.e3 e5\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}}

10.f3 f5 11.d1 c4\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}}

10.0-0 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}} xd4 11.xd4 xd4 12.xd4 xd4 White failed to demonstrate compensation after 13.a4 (or 13.b5 e5 14.h6 d8 15.fd1 d7\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}} Bancod – Jayaram, Subic Bay 2009) 13...a5 14.b5 e5 15.h6 d8 16.ad1 d7 17.b3 e6\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}} Othman – Frhat, Manama 2009.

10...xd4!

A convincing way to solve any opening problems.

11.xd4 e5 12.db5\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}}

This may look at first sight to be the most challenging continuation, but objectively better is 12.xe5 xe5 13.d1, which leads to an only slightly inferior position: 13...e7 14.0-0-0 c5 (14...c6\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}} also gives Black a comfortable game) 15.f3 g7 16.d2 f5 17.b5 e6\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}} Massimini Gerbino – Krueger, e-mail 2003.

12.xd3 13.exd3 xf4 14.xc7 b8

Black has a strong initiative.

15.0-0

15.gxf4 runs into 15...d8 16.0-0-0 g4\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}}.

15...fxg3 16.hxg3 d8\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}}

Black enjoys a clear advantage, thanks to his bishop pair and superior pawn structure, Hübner – Topalov, Dortmund 1996.

Conclusion

The rare fifth moves we looked at in this chapter should not trouble Black unduly. In particular, if White wants to enter the Fianchetto System then I don’t think that the move order featured in this chapter with 5.g3 is the most accurate; after 5...dxc4 6.a4\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbullet}} fd7 7.xc4 d6 Black quickly obtains good play against the white centre.
Variation Index

1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♕c3 d5 4.♗f3 ♞g7 5.♕g5 ♞e4 6.♕h4

6...♕xc3 7.bxc3 dxc4

A) 8.e3
B) 8.♗a4†
   B1) 8...♕d7??
   B2) 8...♗d7 9.♕xc4 b6!
      B21) 10.♕g3
      B22) 10.♗b3 ♞a6 11.e3 ♞xf1
         B221) 12.♕xf1
         B222) 12.♕xf1 0–0 13.♗e2 c5
            B2221) 14.♗fd1
            B2222) 14.dxc5

B21) after 14.d5
B221) after 17.♖c4
B2221) after 15.dxc5

B21) after 14...♗f5!N
B221) after 17...♗fc8!N
B2221) after 15...♗f5!?N
Chapter 25 – 6.\h_4

1.d4 \f_6 2.c4 g6 3.\c_3 d5 4.\f_3 \g_7 5.\g_5 \e_4

6.\h_4

The most popular 6.cxd5 will be covered in the following chapter.

The other main alternative is 6.\f_4 \x_c_3 7.bxc3 \c_5, reaching a position that was examined in Chapter 19 (note to White's seventh move).

6.\x_c_3 7.bxc3 dxc4

Black can of course play 8...\e_6 transposing to Chapter 23. However White's move order allows Black the option of defending the c4-pawn in a different way, and it is certainly tempting to take advantage of this opportunity.

9.a4 \c_6 10.\d_2 a6 11.\e_2 0–0 12.\f_3

12...\a_7

This move has been played in all the games to reach this position, but I fail to understand why 12...\b_7 has never occurred in practice. I guess everybody is worried about 13.\e_4, but I don't see anything wrong with 13...\e_8 (after 13...\d_7? 14.\d_6 White regains the pawn with advantage) 14.c5 \c_8 followed by ...\d_7. It seems to me that the onus is on White to demonstrate sufficient compensation.

13.0–0

We have already examined this type of position in the note on 9.\d_2 at the start of Chapter 23 (page 276), but here Black has an improved version since he hasn't wasted time defending the c-pawn with ...\e_6.

13...\f_5

This is a well-known idea to provoke the move e3-e4, which significantly reduces the pressure on Black's queenside.
14.e4
Another option for White is:
14.Ee1 d3
Black can avoid offering the repetition by playing 14...b6 with a complicated game.
15.b3 f5 16.d2
Black has no problems after 16.c5 d7.
16.d3 g4?! Objectively there was no reason for White to avoid the repetition.
17.c7!
As always, it is a great pleasure to see how Kasparov handles the middlegame.
18.b3 cxb3 19.Exd3 c5 20.g3 e5! 21.axb5 c4 22.Ee4 axb5
Black was clearly better in Sorin – Kasparov, Buenos Aires (simul) 1997.

14...c8
14...e6 is also playable, but I prefer not to block the e-pawn.

15.b1?!

B) 8.a4†
I would like to look at two options for Black, B1) 8...d7? and B2) 8...d7.

B1) 8...d7?!

This is the more combative choice, although objectively it may be weaker than blocking with the queen.

9.e3
White aims to recapture the c4-pawn with his bishop. Not so good is:
9.xc4 c5 10.e3 a5!
Black has an ideal game.
11.b1
Other possible moves are:
a) 11.e2 cxd4 (Black can also consider 11...b6N 12.b5† xb5 13.xb5† d7 with a good endgame) 12.exd4 b6 13.b5† (better is 13.c7 0–0 14.0–0 d7!=) 13...xb5 14.xb5† d7 15.b1
b) Relatively best may be 11.d2N in order to recapture with the c-pawn, but Black is certainly doing fine after 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 e5!
11...cxd4 12.cxd4
Not a good sign for White, as his pawn structure will be weak in the long term.

12...\texttt{w}c5! 13.\texttt{d}b5 \texttt{a}e5! 14.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{ wc}4 15.\texttt{xc}4 0-0 16.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{d}xe3 17.\texttt{hx}g3 \texttt{c}5\texttt{+}

Black was positionally better in Cebalo – Avrukh, Biel 2008.

9...0–0 10.\texttt{a}3

Other continuations do not pose Black any problems:

10.\texttt{wc}4 c5 11.\texttt{e}2 cxd4 12.\texttt{d}xd4 (after 12.cxd4 \texttt{a}5\texttt{+} 13.\texttt{d}2 e5! Black has an initiative) 12...\texttt{b}6 13.\texttt{c}5 \texttt{d}5 14.0–0 \texttt{d}g4 Black was better in Bogner – Romanov, Neustadt 2008.

10.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{b}6 11.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{xc}4 12.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{b}6 13.0–0 \texttt{b}7 14.\texttt{e}2 c5 15.\texttt{fd}1 cxd4 16.cxd4 \texttt{d}7 Black is slightly better thanks to his bishop pair, Beilfuss – Giemsa, Germany 1991.

After 12.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{b}7 13.0–0 \texttt{d}6! 14.\texttt{b}3 e6 15.f3 c5 16.\texttt{ad}1 \texttt{ac}8 Black had equalized in Raetsky – Timofeev, Sochi 2005, and now the inaccurate 17.e4? let him take over the initiative: 17...\texttt{cd}4 18.\texttt{cd}4 \texttt{dh}5! 19.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{dc}7 20.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{xe}5 21.\texttt{dx}e5 \texttt{xe}5 White does not have enough for the pawn.

12...\texttt{b}7 13.\texttt{fd}1 \texttt{d}6 14.\texttt{b}3

This occurred in V. Georgiev – Swinkels, Ohrid 2009, and here Black should play the calm:

14...\texttt{e}6\texttt{N} 15.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{e}7\texttt{+}

The position is complex.

\textbf{B2) 8...\texttt{d}7}

10...\texttt{d}f6

I think it makes sense to delay 10...c5 since White can reply: 11.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{c}7 12.\texttt{c}1! (but not 12.\texttt{xe}7 cxd4! 13.\texttt{xf}8 \texttt{xf}8 with strong compensation for the exchange, Kahn – Nagy, Budapest 2004) 12...\texttt{e}6 13.0–0 \texttt{b}6 14.\texttt{g}3! White has the better chances.

11.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{b}6 12.0–0
The main theoretical continuation.

9.\( \text{Wxc4} \) b6!

Black wants to use the slightly misplaced white queen in order to win a tempo with ...\( \text{a6} \).

11...\( \text{xe5} \) 12.\( \text{xe5} \)

White's bishop pair is not significant here, since Black will obtain a serious lead in development.

12...\( \text{a6} \) 13.\( \text{b3} \) 0–0 14.d5

White has also tried: 14.dxc5 \( \text{c6} \) (the immediate 14...\( \text{f5} \) also deserves attention) 15.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{f5} \) 16.\( \text{c7} \)

14...\( \text{f5} \)!

This is a strong and forcing novelty. Black's play in the two previous games to reach this position was rather unconvincing.
15.\textbf{g3}

Clearly White cannot be happy with: 15.\textbf{xb8} \textbf{axb8} 16.\textbf{d1} \textbf{fd8} Black’s lead in development looks scary.

15...\textbf{c4!} 16.\textbf{a3} \textbf{xd5} 17.\textbf{d1}

This is better than: 17.\textbf{xb8} \textbf{axb8} 18.\textbf{xa6} \textbf{bd8} 19.\textbf{f3} \textbf{d2f2} 20.\textbf{f2} \textbf{xc3} 21.\textbf{e1} \textbf{d2} Black’s c-pawn should decide the issue.

17...\textbf{b7} 18.\textbf{e3} \textbf{b5\textsuperscript{+}}

I do not believe that White has full compensation for the pawn.

\textbf{B22) 10.\textbf{b3} \textbf{a6} 11.\textbf{e3} \textbf{xf1}}

Much of the time, both of White’s recaptures will come to the same thing, but there are a few possible divergences, so we shall look at \textbf{B221) 12.\textbf{xf1}} and \textbf{B222) 12.\textbf{xf1}}.

\textbf{B221) 12.\textbf{xf1} 0–0}

13.\textbf{e2}

Bringing the queen’s rook to d1 did not prove successful: 13.\textbf{d1?!} \textbf{c6} 14.\textbf{e2} \textbf{a5} 15.\textbf{b4} \textbf{fe8} (15...\textbf{d5?!} is also promising for Black) 16.\textbf{d3} \textbf{ac8} 17.\textbf{hd1} \textbf{d5} 18.\textbf{a4} Cifuentes Parada - Rodriguez Guerrero, Dos Hermanas 2005.

17.\textbf{c4}

Now the simple 18...\textbf{c4N} 19.\textbf{f1} \textbf{a5} 20.\textbf{b1} \textbf{b8!} followed by ...\textbf{b5}, would give Black excellent play.

13...\textbf{c5} 14.\textbf{dxc5}

More common is 14.\textbf{hd1}, transposing to B2221.

14...\textbf{a6} 15.\textbf{ad1}

This seems illogical, since it is not clear what White intends to do with his king's rook. The more natural 15.\textbf{hd1} leads to B2222.

15...\textbf{c7} 16.\textbf{c6} \textbf{xc5!}

Black is not satisfied with 16...\textbf{xc6} 17.\textbf{xe7} \textbf{fe8} 18.\textbf{a3} \textbf{ac8} with equality.

17.\textbf{c4}

17...\textbf{fc8!N}
This is stronger than: 17...e5 18.\textit{g}3 \textit{xc}6 19.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 20.\textit{e}5 \textit{xg}2 21.\textit{g}4 With mutual chances, Stefanova – Cmilyte, Dagomys 2009.

18.\textit{d}4 e5 19.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}7

Black regains the pawn with a clear positional advantage.

B222) 12.\textit{xf}1 0–0 13.\textit{e}2 c5

Here we have the main crossroads for White in this variation: B2221) 14.\textit{fd}1 or B2222) 14.dxc5.

B2221) 14.\textit{fd}1 \textit{c}6!?

14...\textit{xd}4 15.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}6 is more frequently played, but I rather like the text move.

15.dxc5

This looks more critical than 15.\textit{ab}1, as played in Cramling – Howell, Hinckley 2009. Here I like the following line for Black: 15...\textit{a}5N 16.\textit{b}5 \textit{e}6? 17.\textit{f}1 \textit{xd}4 18.\textit{xd}4 \textit{fc}8 Black has good Grünfeld play.

16.\textit{d}5

Black has easy equality after 16.\textit{xb}6 \textit{xb}6 17.\textit{f}1 \textit{c}5 18.a4 \textit{fc}8 19.\textit{d}4 \textit{e}6 20.\textit{ab}1 \textit{e}5 21.\textit{xb}6 \textit{xc}3, as White is also losing the a-pawn.

16...\textit{e}4!

16...\textit{a}5 17.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}6 is very close to equality, but Black would still need to be accurate after 18.\textit{ed}7.

17.\textit{xb}6 \textit{xb}6 18.\textit{ad}1 \textit{e}6 19.\textit{ed}7 \textit{a}5

20.\textit{b}4 \textit{c}4

20...\textit{c}4† also equalizes.

21.\textit{f}1 \textit{a}4! 22.\textit{b}3 \textit{a}3=

White cannot profitably avoid the repetition.

B2222) 14.dxc5

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|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{tabular}
\end{center}

This wins a pawn but seriously damages White's pawn structure.

14...\textit{a}6!

Black nearly always obtains good compensation in the Grünfeld when White captures the c5-pawn and is left with his a2- and c3-pawns.

15.\textit{fd}1
Chapter 25 – 6.h4

15...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{c7}}!}

An important point here is that Black shouldn't play: 15...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{b7}}?! 16.c6! \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xc6}} 17.xe7 fe8 18.a3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xc3}} 19.xc3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xc3}} 20.acl b4 21.b2± White went on to win an instructive endgame in Carlsen – Eljanov, Wijk aan Zee 2008.}

16.cx\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{b6}} axb6 17.g3

This seems best, as other moves can lead to an advantage for Black:

17.bab1?! \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{c5}} 18.c4 This was the game Mascaro March – Llaneza Vega, Villava 2009, and now I found the following idea: 18...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a4N}} 19.b4 b5! 20.cxb5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e4!}} The point. 21.xe4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xe4}} 22.xd7 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xc3}} 23.xe7 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e8}} It is not clear whether White can hold this.}

17.a4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{c5}} 18.b4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a5!}} 19.g3 e5 20.d2?! \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{fa8}} 21.c4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xa4}} White was facing difficulties in Lautier – Ivanchuk, Terrassa 1991.

17...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{c6}}

This is an attempt to avoid the inevitable draw which might arise after: 17...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xc3}} 18.xc3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xc3}} 19.acl ½–½ Ibragimov – Volzhin, Ubeda 1996.

18.gf1

It is too risky for White to play 18.d4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xg2}} 19.xb6 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e8}}. The exposed position of the white king gives Black an edge.

18...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{c5}} 19.d5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xd5}} 20.xd5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xc3}} 21.c1 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{f6}} 22.c2= The position was equal in Bosboom Lanchava – Gustafsson, Amsterdam 2001.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Following 6.h4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xc3}} 7.bxc3 dxc4 White has to decide how to go about recovering the c4-pawn. After A) 8.e3 Black can keep the pawn with 8...b5, when it is not clear that White can obtain enough compensation. Therefore it is safer for White to regain the pawn immediately with B) 8.a4†. However Black can then choose between B1) 8...d7?? and B2) 8...d7, and can reasonably expect to achieve equal chances in either line.
Variation Index

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♗f3 ♟g7 5.♗g5 ♟e4 6.cxd5

6...♕xg5 7.♕xg5 e6

A) 8.♗a4†
B) 8.♗d2 h6
   B1) 9.♗f3 exd5
      B11) 10.♗e3†
      B12) 10.b4
   B2) 9.♗h3 exd5
      B21) 10.♗f4
      B22) 10.♗e3† ♟f8 11.♗f4
      B221) 11...c6
      B222) 11...c5
C) 8.♗f3 exd5 9.e3 0–0
   C1) 10.b4
   C2) 10.♗e2 c6 11.0–0 ♘e6 12.b4 ♦d7
      C21) 13.a4
      C22) 13.♗c1

A) after 18.d5
B12) note to 12.♗e2
C22) after 16.axb5
Chapter 26 - 6.cxd5

1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.d3 d5 4.d3 g7 5.g5 d4 6.cxd5 d5 7.g5 e6

White has a wide choice here. Before examining the three main lines, A) 8.a4†, B) 8.d2 and C) 8.f3, we shall take a brief look at three minor options:

8.dxe6? is adventurous, but not correct: 8...dxe5 9.exf7† xf7 10.e3 e8 11.c4† f8 12.0–0

This occurred in Rossen – R. Pert, Copenhagen 2002, and now the simple 12...c6N 13.f3† f6 14.d3 c5! Black strikes first.

8.h4 is hardly sensible either: 8...exd5 9.e3 0–0 10.d3 c5! Black strikes first.

8.h3 exd5 9.d4

This is not very impressive; White obtains an inferior version of line B21.

9...0–0 10.e3

After 10.g3 e8 11.g2 Black can afford to play actively: 11...c6 (11...c6 is perfectly playable too) 12.0–0 dxg4 13.f3† c6 14.d4 g4 15.f3 d7 The opening up of the position clearly favours the bishop pair, and Black has a clear advantage, Kovacevic – Jansa, Amsterdam 1973.

10...c5

If Black manages to get his dark-squared bishop involved then White can easily stand worse.

11.dxc5 d4 12.exd4 xdx4 13.e2 c6 14.0–0
\[ \text{g5} \] 15.\text{g3} 

This was Hebert – Gutman, Hastings 1984, and now Black should play the natural:

15...\text{\underline{x}c5} 16.\text{\underline{xc}1} \text{\underline{g}7}

Black retains the better chances, thanks to his bishop pair.

\begin{itemize}
  \item[A) 8.\text{\underline{a}4}+]
\end{itemize}

8...\text{c6}

This is a clearer line than 8...\text{\underline{d}7} 9.\text{\underline{b}3} \text{\underline{x}g5} 10.\text{\underline{x}b7} 0–0 with great complications.

9.\text{\underline{xc}6} \text{\underline{xc}6} 10.\text{\underline{d}f3} \text{\underline{d}7} 11.\text{\underline{d}1}

It is dangerous for White to play:

11.0–0–0 0–0 12.\text{\underline{a}3}

12.\text{e3?} is very bad for White: 12...\text{\underline{xd}4} 13.\text{\underline{xd}4} \text{\underline{x}a4} 14.\text{\underline{xd}8} \text{\underline{fx}d8} 15.\text{\underline{a}a4} \text{\underline{ac}8}+ 16.\text{\underline{c}3} \text{\underline{xc}3} 17.\text{\underline{b}xc3} \text{\underline{xc}3}+ 18.\text{\underline{b}2} \text{\underline{dc}8}+ 19.\text{\underline{d}4} \text{\underline{e}5} 20.\text{\underline{b}3} \text{\underline{c}2}+ 21.\text{\underline{b}1} \text{\underline{xf}2} Black was winning in Knaak – Forintos, Skopje (ol) 1972.

12...b5! 13.\text{\underline{x}b5} \text{\underline{xb}8}

Black has a serious initiative.

14.\text{e4} \text{\underline{b}6} 15.\text{\underline{d}6} \text{\underline{b}4}

15...\text{\underline{xd}4} is not bad either.

16.e5 \text{\underline{c}6} 17.\text{\underline{c}4} \text{\underline{fd}8} 18.\text{\underline{he}1} \text{\underline{xf}3} 19.\text{\underline{gxf}3} \text{\underline{f}8} 20.\text{\underline{b}1} \text{\underline{xd}6} 21.\text{\underline{exd}6} \text{\underline{xd}6}

Black had emerged with a clear positional edge in Lindsalu – Trubetskoi, e-mail 2009.

11...\text{\underline{b}6} 12.\text{\underline{d}d}2 \text{\underline{xd}4} 13.0–0–0 \text{\underline{c}6}

14.\text{\underline{xd}4} \text{\underline{d}8} 15.e3 \text{\underline{e}5} 16.\text{\underline{e}1} \text{\underline{exd}4}

17.\text{\underline{exd}4}+ \text{\underline{f}8} 18.d5

18...\text{\underline{d}7}?

I find the text quite an interesting attempt to avoid the drawish: 18...\text{\underline{xd}5} 19.\text{\underline{xd}5} \text{\underline{xd}5} 20.\text{\underline{e}7}+ \text{\underline{xe}7} 21.\text{\underline{xd}5}+ \text{\underline{d}6} 22.\text{\underline{xb}6} \text{\underline{ab}6} This totally level endgame has occurred in more than a dozen games.

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

After 19.\text{\underline{b}1} \text{\underline{c}8} 20.\text{\underline{a}1} \text{\underline{f}6} 21.\text{\underline{c}1} \text{\underline{g}7} the strength of the dark-squared bishop secures Black excellent compensation for the pawn.

19...\text{\underline{xe}3}+

Here too, Black can go for a drawish line:

19...\text{\underline{a}5} 20.\text{\underline{b}1} \text{\underline{c}8} 21.\text{\underline{c}1} \text{\underline{xc}3} 22.\text{\underline{xc}3} \text{\underline{xd}5}=

20.\text{\underline{xc}3} \text{\underline{c}8} 21.\text{\underline{d}2} \text{\underline{c}5} 22.e4 \text{\underline{e}7}
Black has good compensation for the pawn and is definitely not worse.

**B) 8.\(\text{N}d2\) h6**

The approach I recommend here is quite similar to what I give against 8.\(\text{N}f3\) in line C below. Personally I have never liked 8...exd5 9.\(\text{N}e3\) \(\text{f6}\) 10.\(\text{N}f4\) \(\text{f6}\) 11.\(\text{h}4\); although it is considered perfectly playable for Black, it requires a lot of theoretical knowledge.

White has a choice of retreats for the knight: 
**B1) 9.\(\text{N}f3\) or B2) 9.\(\text{Nh}3\).**

### B1) 9.\(\text{N}f3\) exd5

We shall examine **B11) 10.\(\text{N}e3\)†** and **B12) 10.\(\text{b}4\)**, but first there are a couple of other options:

10.e3 is frequently played, but is not of independent significance, since White will soon follow up with b2-b4. For instance, 10...0-0 11.\(\text{N}e2\) c6 12.0-0 \(\text{c}6\) 13.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{Nd}7\) transposes to the main line of B12.

10.g3 0-0 11.\(\text{g}2\) The kingside fianchetto against the black pawn chain b7-c6-d5 does not offer White much, for example: 11...c6 12.0-0 \(\text{Nd}7\) 13.\(\text{ac}1\) \(\text{e}8\) 14.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{b}6\) 15.\(\text{b}3\) a5 16.\(\text{e}1\) h5!? 17.\(\text{d}3\) h4? White is very solid, but Black's position is definitely the more promising, Seeck - Golod, Schaumburg 2006.

**B11) 10.\(\text{N}e3\)†**

This doesn't make much sense in my opinion, since Black is happy to play:

10...\(\text{e}6\)

11.g3

It is a mistake to be tempted by: 11.\(\text{e}5\)? (threatening 12.\(\text{xg}6\)) 11...c5! Black immediately strikes in the centre and takes the initiative. 12.0-0-0 \(\text{cxd}4\) 13.\(\text{xd}4\) 0-0 14.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{x}c6\) 15.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{bxc}6\) The strength of the bishop down the long diagonal gave Black a decisive queenside attack in Jorgensen - Paske, Copenhagen 2000.

11...0-0 12.\(\text{g}2\) c5 13.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{d}6\) 14.\(\text{dxc}5\) d4? 

Black goes for complications; instead 14...a5 15.0-0 \(\text{xc}5\) 16.\(\text{ac}1\) \(\text{e}8\) 17.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{wa}5\) would lead to just a small plus for Black.

15.\(\text{a}4\)

Black also keeps the initiative after 15.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}5\) 16.\(\text{d}6\) b6.

15...\(\text{c}4\) 16.0-0 \(\text{b}5\) 17.\(\text{b}3\) d3! 18.\(\text{c}3\)
White has no prospects for activity, while Black can play on the kingside, Pelts – Benesa, Chicago 1993.

14...a6
Black could consider: 14...a5? 15.%ab1 (as we have already seen, 15.b5 can be comfortably met by 15...c5) 15...%ab4 16.%xb4 b6 The position is complex and unclear.

15.%e2
White has also played 15.b5 %xb5 (also good is 15...c5??) 16.%xb5 %xal 17.%xal c5 18.%e2 Jakab – Farkas, Budapest 1998. Now 18...%g4!N would have been rather unpleasant for White.

15...%e7 16.h3 g5 17.%ac1

This occurred in Barsov – Rowson, York 2000. The logical continuation of Black's strategy would be:

17...f5N
Depending on circumstances, Black may go for ...f4 or ...g4. Undoubtedly Black has the more promising position.

12.%e2
White may also try:

12.%d3 %d7 13.0–0 c6 14.a4
Black is ready to meet 14.b5 with:

14...c5! 15.h3 (or 15.%xc5 %xc5 16.%d4 %a5 17.%ac1 %ac8??) 15...c4 16.%c2 f5

Black's bishop may turn out to be useful on this diagonal.
16...b5
Black was ready to meet 16.b5 with 16...a5.

16...Qf5
Black wants to play ...b5 followed by ...Qb6, without worrying about a4-c5 hitting his bishop on e6.

17.d3 g4 18.e1 b5 19.b2 Qb6
20.xc6 Qc4! 21.xc4 dxc4 22.c2 a6!

White's rook has invaded the black camp, but most probably he will end up losing the exchange.

23.d1 f5 24.c2 e4

Black was clearly better in Khmelniker – Greenfeld, Tel Aviv 2002.

B2) 9.Qh3 cxd5

White now chooses between B21) 10.Qf4 and B22) 10.Qe3†.

B21) 10.Qf4 0-0 11.e3

11.g3 has been played quite a few times: 11...e8 12.g2 Qc6! 13.e3 Qxd4 14.0-0-0 Qc6 15.xd5 Qxf4! 16.gxf4 (or 16.exf4 Qf5†) 16...Qe7 Black had an edge in Rajkovic – Ceschia, Caorle 1982.

11...c5 12.dxc5 d4
13. exd4
Compared to the line with 8. \( \text{d}h3 \) that we mentioned at the start of the chapter (page 305), White has an extra option here: 13.0–0–0 dxc3 Black may consider other moves, but this equalizes comfortably. 14. \( \text{w}x \text{d}8 \) cxb2t 15. \( \text{c}b1 \) \( \text{f}5 \)† 16. \( \text{w} \text{d}3 \) Marchand – Feher, Eger 1997. Now the simplest is: 16... \( \text{w}x \text{d}3 \)†N 17. \( \text{w}x \text{d}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 18. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) =

13... \( \text{w}x \text{d}4 \) 14. \( \text{w}x \text{d}4 \) \( \text{e} \text{xd}4 \)

15.0–0–0
Other possibilities are:

15. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \)† 16. \( \text{d}d2 \)?! The wrong square. (After the correct 16. \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 17. \( \text{x} \text{x} \text{g}6 \) \( \text{x} \text{c}6 \) 18. \( \text{d}d1 \) \( \text{x} \text{c}3 \) 19. \( \text{b}x \text{c}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 20. \( \text{f}6 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 21. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 22. \( \text{e} \text{d}2 \) \( \text{e} \text{e}4 \) 23. \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{e} \) 8 the position is equal.) 16... \( \text{a}6 \) (16... \( \text{e} \text{c}5 \) 17. \( \text{e} \text{x} \text{g}6 \) \( \text{d}6 \) would give Black slightly the better chances) 17. \( \text{a}e1 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 18. \( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 19. \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 20. \( \text{f}3 \)? \( \text{e}3 \)† 21. \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{f}5 \)† 22. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{x} \text{c}6 \) White ended up in a very bad position in Renman – Svidler, Copenhagen 1991.

15. \( \text{f}d5 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 16. \( \text{e}2 \) (this is too passive; 16.0–0–0 returns to the main line) 16... \( \text{x} \text{c}5 \) 17.0–0 \( \text{L} \text{g}4 \) – Macieja, Copenhagen 1996. Now Black should continue with the calm:

17... \( \text{g}7 \)N 18. \( \text{f}d1 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 19. \( \text{a}c1 \) \( \text{d}8 \) The bishop pair gives Black an edge.

15... \( \text{c}6 \) 16. \( \text{f}d5 \) \( \text{x} \text{c}5 \) 17. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \)
I believe this is best.

18. \( \text{x} \text{b}6 \) \( \text{a}x \text{b}6 \) 19. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 20. \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 21. \( \text{x} \text{f}5 \) \( \text{x} \text{c}4 \) 22. \( \text{e}7 \)† \( \text{g}7 \) =
Black has enough activity to compensate for his doubled pawns, Davies – King, Hamar 1982.

B22) 10. \( \text{e}3 \)† \( \text{f}8 \) 11. \( \text{f}4 \)

Black has two very different approaches here, and I have decided to cover them both: B221) 11... \( \text{c}6 \) and B222) 11... \( \text{c}5 \).

B221) 11... \( \text{c}6 \)
Black first supports his centre and will then slowly solve the problem of his king.

12. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \)
Another plan is: 12... \( \text{g}8 \) 13. \( \text{d}7 \) 14. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 15. \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{d} \text{d}6 \) 16. \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 17.0–0 \( \text{h}5 \) Black had obtained a perfectly playable position in Schroll – Wach, Austria 1995.

13. \( \text{e}3 \)
It looks a bit risky to play 13.0–0–0 \( \text{h}5 \) as
in Penalver – Eksmyr, Sweden 2009. Black threatens ...h6, and of course 14.e3? is impossible due to 14...g4.

13...h5

An important resource; Black not only plans to activate his dark-squared bishop via h6, but also ...g4 will come with tempo.

14.h4

White grabs some space on the kingside and prevents the possibility of the ...g5 advance. Previously White had tried: 14.d3 g4 (14...g5 15.Ke2 xf3 16.gxf3 g4 is possible, but seems rather unclear to me) 15.xf3 f5 (15...d7) 16.xf5 xf5 17.d1 h4 18.xh3 xh3 Black had equalized comfortably in Guramishvili – Karavade, Yerevan 2007, which was agreed drawn here.

14...g4

White is okay after 14.h6 15.d3 xf3 16.gxf3. Black’s bishop pair is not a significant advantage, because the coming f3-f4 will leave the dark-squared bishop somewhat passive.

15.xg3 d7 16.e2

After 16.d3 I intended to play 16.e8 17.0-0 g8 18.e1 f8 followed by ...d6, with balanced play.

16.f5!?

Also fine is 16...xe2 followed by 17...e7 and 18...f6.

17.c1

White didn’t like 17.0-0 in view of 17...d8. The threat of ...f6 looks unpleasant, but White can still maintain the balance with: 18.h2 f6 19.g3 g7 20.d3=

17...b6

A useful move, principally defending against possible sacrifices on d5, but also looking to improve the knight with ...c8-d6.

18.b4

White starts his play on the queenside, but it is already somewhat risky. It was still not too late to play 18.d3 with equality.

18...a6

I believe that it is useful for Black to swap the a-pawns in order to activate his queen’s rook.

19.a4 e7 20.b5

The tactical idea 20.a5?! c8 21.cxd5?! doesn’t work: 21...cxd5 22.xd5 d8! (but not 22...d6?? 23.xc8+–)

20...xb5 21.axb5 f6

White is starting to experience problems
with the defence of his h-pawn, Markos – Avrukh, Germany 2009.

**B222) 11...c5**

Less popular is 12.\(\text{Wf3}\) cxd4 13.\(\text{Bxd5}\) \(g8\)
when Black has good chances for an advantage. For example: 14.\(\text{e4}\) (or 14.\(\text{Be1}\) \(c6\) 15.\(\text{b4}\) g5!
16.\(\text{Bh5}\) \(\text{e5}\) 17.\(\text{Wg3}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 18.\(\text{Bxg7}\) \(\text{bxg7}\)
19.\(\text{Be5}\) \(\text{e4}\) 20.\(\text{Wxe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 21.\(\text{Bxe5}\) \(\text{xe6}\)
and the vulnerability of the white queenside gave Black the better endgame in Salus – Blees, Lyon 1990) 14...\(\text{e3}\) 15.\(\text{Bc4}\)

12.\(\text{dxc5}\)

15.\(\text{Ed1}\)

White can easily become worse after other moves:

15.\(\text{exd4}\) \(\text{Wxd4}\) 16.\(\text{Bxa6}\) \(\text{bxa6}\) 17.0–0–0 (after 17.\(\text{Wxd4}\) \(\text{Bxd4}\) 18.0–0 \(\text{Ec8}\) the endgame is very pleasant for Black) 17...\(\text{Bxc5}\)
Black had a good position in Damaso – Avrukh, Albufeira Algarve 1999.

15.0–0–0 \(\text{dxc3}\) 16.\(\text{Wxd8}\) \(\text{Wxd8}\) 17.\(\text{Wxd8}\) \(\text{e7}\) 18.\(\text{Wd4}\) \(\text{xb2}\) 19.\(\text{Bxb2}\) \(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{e4}\)
White will have to fight for the draw.

15...\(\text{dxc3}\) 16.\(\text{Wxd8}\) \(\text{Wxd8}\) 17.\(\text{Wxd8}\) \(\text{e7}\) 18.\(\text{Bxh8}\) \(\text{cxb2}\) 19.\(\text{Bd5}\) \(\text{e6}\)

1/2–1/2

Markus – Eljanov, Balatonlelle 2000. Neither side can avoid the repetition after 20.\(\text{Bf4}\) \(\text{e7}\) 21.\(\text{Bd5}\) \(\text{e6}.

C) 8.\(\text{Bf3}\) \(\text{exd5}\) 9.\(\text{e3}\)
White can play the immediate 9.b4 but then 9...0-0 10.e3 just transposes to C1.

As always I am sceptical about a kingside fianchetto in this variation. Here is one example that I like: 9.g3 0-0 10.g2 c6 11.0-0 e7 12.d2 d7 13.a3 b6 14.b3 d7 15.e3 c8!? 16.b2 d6 17.d2 f5 Black had a nice game in Jackson - Groszpeter, Novi Sad (ol) 1990.

9...0-0

White generally chooses between C1) 10.b4 and C2) 10.e2, although they often come to the same thing.

C1) 10.b4 c6 11.c1

11.e2 e6 12.0-0 just transposes to C2.

11.a6

11.e6 followed by ...d7 is of course playable, and is likely to transpose below.

12.e2 e7 13.b3 e6?! Illescas has suggested that 13...g4N is equal.

14.0-0 d7

White has another way to try and generate play on the queenside, but it's harmless: 15.a4 bae8 16.c5 xc5 17.xc5 (It is surely much more natural to recapture with 17.bxc5N, although 17...c8!? is still slightly better for Black. The b7-pawn is soundly protected, making White's queenside play irrelevant, while Black will slowly advance his kingside pawns.) 17.f5 Black's main idea in this middlegame is to advance ...f5-f4 and get the dark-squared bishop involved in the play. 18.a4 f4 19.c3 This was Martin – Hoffmann, Seefeld 1998, and now 19...g5N would give Black a serious initiative.

15...f6

Black can also start a kingside advance immediately by: 15.f5 16.f1 g5 17.d3 g4 18.d2
This occurred in Toth - Cocozza, Nuoro 1984, and now Black should continue his
attack with 18...f4!N. For example: 19...c2
fxe3 20...xh7+ (20.fxe3...h6 also looks
promising for Black) 20...h8 21.fxe3...h6
22...d3 g3! 23.hxg3...g4 24.e4...xb4 25...b3
...e8 Black has the better chances.

16...e1?! 
Better is 16...fd1 and Black has only a slight
edge.

16...b6 17...d3...c4 18...e1...f5! 
Black had a clear positional advantage in

C2) 10...e2 c6 11.0–0...e6 12.b4...d7

White has a wide choice in this position. We
shall examine the main lines C21) 13...a4 and
C22) 13...c1, first let's first take a look at four
other possibilities:

13.b5?! is premature: 13...c5 14...c1...a5
15...xa4...xa4 16...xa4...c4 17...g5?! a6 Black
had the better chances in Lemos – Liascovich,

13...e1 is quite a thematic idea. The knight
is heading for the d3-square, where it will
support White's queenside play. 13...a5! This
active idea works very well for Black here.
We have already seen this idea, centralizing the rook before securing the queenside with ...\textit{c}8.

16.\textit{a}4 \textit{a}6 17.\textit{b}ab \textit{c}8 18.\textit{f}e1 \textit{f}5 19.\textit{d}3 \textit{f}6 20.\textit{g}3 \textit{g}5

\(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\) Ostermeyer – Brueckner, Germany 1986. Black would be justified in playing on. Although White has a solid position, he is lacking a good plan, whereas Black can continue ...\textit{g}7 and then try to play ...\textit{f}4 under favourable circumstances.

\[\text{C21) 13.a4}\]

13...\textit{e}7

The active counter 13...\textit{a}5!? also comes into consideration: 14.\textit{b}5 (14.\textit{b}3 \textit{axb}4 15.\textit{xb}4 \textit{b}6 looks slightly preferable for Black, although White does have reasonable counterplay on the queenside) 14...\textit{c}5 15.\textit{c}1 \textit{c}8 (15...\textit{c}4 reaches a different type of position, but one that is also good for Black) 16.\textit{xc}5 This occurred in Antoshin – Jansa, Sochi 1974, and now best is: 16...\textit{xc}5N 17.\textit{d}4 \textit{b}6 18.\textit{d}2 \textit{e}7 Black enjoys the better chances.

14.\textit{b}3 \textit{a}6 15.\textit{b}5

15.\textit{ac}1 would transpose into line C1.

15...\textit{xb}5 16.\textit{xb}5 \textit{c}5!

\[\text{C22) 13.\textit{c}1 \textit{a}6 14.a4}\]

Black is doing well. He needn't worry about:

17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 18.\textit{xd}5 \textit{b}6 19.\textit{g}5

Or 19.\textit{b}3 \textit{xd}4\textsuperscript{+}.

19...\textit{f}6 20.\textit{h}6 \textit{xd}4

Black is clearly better.

14.\textit{a}4 \textit{f}5 15.\textit{g}3 \textit{g}5 16.\textit{e}1 (or 16.\textit{h}4 \textit{h}6 17.\textit{hx}5 \textit{hx}5 18.\textit{g}2 \textit{f}4 19.\textit{xf}4 \textit{gf}4 20.\textit{c}5 \textit{xc}5 21.\textit{xc}5 Raetsky – Tukmakov, Biel 1995, and now 21...\textit{fx}g3N 22.\textit{fx}g3 \textit{f}d7 23.\textit{h}1 \textit{f}5! 24.\textit{d}3 \textit{ae}8 would give Black the better chances) 16...\textit{f}4 17.\textit{exf}4 \textit{gf}4 18.\textit{g}4

This happened in Raetsky – Liss, Biel 1993, and now Black should play: 18...\textit{f}6N
Conclusion

Of White's eighth move options, A) $8.\text{a}4t$ is not too threatening. Black should equalize easily, although the resulting positions can be very drawish; perhaps $18...\text{d}7?N$ in the main line can keep some life in the game.

After $8.\text{d}2$ h6 9.$\text{h}3$ exd5 10.$\text{e}3t$ $\text{c}8$ 11.$\text{f}4$ the displacement of the black king should not be too worrying. With B221) 11...c6 Black aims to unravel slowly, but his long-term prospects seem good; however if that is not to your taste then B222) 11...c5 offers a more direct route to equal chances.

The lines B1) $8.\text{d}2$ h6 9.$\text{f}3$ and C) $8.\text{f}3$ tend to be quite similar, often leading to a strategical battle between White's minority attack on the queenside and Black's kingside attack. Matters are not entirely clear, but my view is that in most lines it is Black's attack that is the more dangerous.
Russian System

Without 8.\textit{\#}e2

Variation Index

1.d4 \f6 2.c4 \textit{\#}f6 3.c3 d5 4.\textit{\#}f3 \textit{\#}g7 5.b3 dxc4 6.\#xc4 0–0 7.e4

7...\textit{\#}c6

A) 8.d5?! \hfill 318
B) 8.\textit{\#}f4 \hfill 318
C) 8.\textit{\#}e3 \hfill 320
D) 8.\textit{\#}g5 \hfill 322
E) 8.h3 \hfill 323
F) 8.e5 \hfill 324

A) after 14.\textit{\#}xf3
B) after 14.\#xc7
E) after 18.\#d3
1. d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.\(\triangle c3\) d5 4.\(\triangle f3\) g7 5.\(\triangle b3\) dxc4 6.\(\triangle x c4\) 0-0 7.e4

White grabs space in the centre, but falls a little behind in development. Black will try to use this lead in development to tear the White centre apart.

The alternative 7.\(\triangle f4\) a6 8.e4 was covered as line A of Chapter 10.

7...\(\triangle c6\)

This is not the most popular choice at the top level, but I am convinced that this move is a viable alternative to the more common lines.

White most frequently chooses 8.\(\triangle e2\), which is the topic of the following chapter, but he has a host of other options: A) 8.d5?! B) 8.\(\triangle f4\), C) 8.\(\triangle e3\), D) 8.\(\triangle g5\), E) 8.h3 and F) 8.e5.

A) 8.d5?! \(\triangle a5\)

Black will continue with ...c6 and easily destroy the white centre.

9.\(\triangle c5\)

Black also obtains an ideal position after: 9.\(\triangle d3\) c6 10.dxc6 \(\triangle xc6\) 11.\(\triangle xd8\) \(\triangle xd8\) 12.\(\triangle e2\) b6 13.0-0 \(\triangle b7\) 14.\(\triangle f4\) \(\triangle b4!\) Black begins active operations before White has managed to consolidate. 15.e5 (15.a3 \(\triangle d3\)

16.\(\triangle xd3\) \(\triangle xd3\) 17.\(\triangle f1\) \(\triangle d7\) was clearly in Black's favour in Herndl – J. Horvath, Austria 1996) 15...\(\triangle e4\) 16.\(\triangle xe4\) \(\triangle xe4\) Black has the better chances, since the e5-pawn is somewhat vulnerable, Uhlmann – Korchnoi, Stockholm 1962.

9...c6 10.dxc6

There is no way that 10.b4? should work. The easiest refutation is: 10...\(\triangle xc5\) 11.\(\triangle x a5\) \(\triangle xe4\) 12.\(\triangle xe4\) dxe4 13.\(\triangle e5\) \(\triangle d6\) Black is winning.

10...\(\triangle xc6\) 11.\(\triangle e2\) \(\triangle g4\) 12.\(\triangle e3\) \(\triangle d7\) 13.\(\triangle a3\) \(\triangle xf3\) 14.\(\triangle xf3\)

It is clear that Black has a comfortable game, Richardson – S. Ernst, Lichfield 2000. Most accurate now is:

14...\(\triangle d4!\)

The position is unpleasant for White.

B) 8.\(\triangle f4\)

The start of a remarkable line.

8...\(\triangle g4\) 9.d5

9.d1?! was played in Gereben – Doncevic, Zurich 1986, and should be met by the thematic: 9...\(\triangle xf3!\) 10.\(\triangle xf3\) \(\triangle h5\) 11.\(\triangle e3\) e5 12.dxe5 (12.d5 \(\triangle d4\) 13.\(\triangle g2\) \(\triangle f6!\) is fantastic for Black)
12...\texttt{Wh}4 Black has the better chances – he will regain the e5-pawn and maintain control over the important dark squares.

9...\texttt{Qxf}3 10.dxe6
I examined the logical novelty:
10..gx\texttt{f}3N \texttt{Qh}5 11..\texttt{Qe}3
It is dangerous for White to play: 11.dxe6 b5! 12..\texttt{Qxc}7 \texttt{Bxc}7 13..\texttt{Qc}5 (neither 13..\texttt{Qxb}5 \texttt{Bb}6\texttt{f} nor 13..\texttt{Qxb}5 \texttt{Bxc}3\texttt{f} 14.bxc3 \texttt{Bab}8 15..\texttt{Qc}5 \texttt{Qf}4\texttt{f} is any better) 13..\texttt{Qxc}3\texttt{f} 14..\texttt{Bxc}3 \texttt{Bab}8 15..\texttt{Bh}3 e6 16.0–0–0 \texttt{Qf}4 Black clearly has the better chances, thanks to the superiority of his knight over the white bishop.
11...\texttt{Qa}5 12..\texttt{Qb}4 c6 13.0–0–0 \texttt{Qc}7∞
The game is very complicated.

10...\texttt{b}5!
A very important resource.

11..\texttt{Qxb}5
For a long time I considered 11..\texttt{Qxb}5 to be a serious alternative, but I recently discovered that Black can reply: 11...\texttt{Qxe}4! (much stronger than the natural-looking 11...\texttt{Qxe}4) 12..\texttt{Qxe}4 \texttt{Qxe}4 13..\texttt{Ed}1 \texttt{Bc}8 14..\texttt{Ed}7 \texttt{Bb}8 15..\texttt{W}a4 \texttt{Qf}5 Black has a clear advantage.

11..\texttt{Dd}3?! \texttt{Wxd}3 12..\texttt{Qxd}3 \texttt{Qxg}2 13..\texttt{Dg}1 \texttt{Bfd}8!
Here I analysed: 14..\texttt{Qxb}5 \texttt{Qxe}4 15..\texttt{Qxc}7 \texttt{Qxc}3 16.bxc3 \texttt{Qxc}3\texttt{f} 17..\texttt{Qe}2 \texttt{Bd}2\texttt{f} 18..\texttt{Qe}3 \texttt{Bd}5 19..\texttt{Bab}1 \texttt{Qd}4\texttt{f} 20..\texttt{Qe}2 \texttt{Qe}4 Black is much better.

11...\texttt{Qxe}4 12..\texttt{Ed}1
The c7-pawn is untouchable: 12..\texttt{Qxc}7? \texttt{Bc}8 13..\texttt{Ed}1 a6 14..\texttt{Qc}3 \texttt{Bxc}7 15..\texttt{Qxe}4 \texttt{Qxe}4 16..\texttt{Qxe}4 \texttt{W}a5\texttt{f} and 12..\texttt{Qxc}7? e5 13..\texttt{Qxe}5 \texttt{Bc}7 14.f4 \texttt{Bac}8\texttt{f}

12..\texttt{Qc}8! 13..\texttt{f}3
Black is clearly better after: 13..\texttt{Qe}2 \texttt{Qf}5! 14..\texttt{Qxc}7 \texttt{Qxg}2 15..\texttt{Dg}1 \texttt{Qd}5 16..\texttt{Bc}5 \texttt{Bf}c8!
White will surely find 17...a6 to be an unpleasant threat.

13...\texttt{Qf}5! 14..\texttt{Qxc}7
This position occurred in Van Heirzeele – Pujos, Guingamp 2010. Black now missed an important tactical resource:
14...\texttt{xf3!} N 15.\texttt{d3}  
It transpires that White cannot take the bishop: 15...\texttt{gxf3} \texttt{Wxf3} 16.\texttt{g1} \texttt{We3}!→

15...\texttt{d5} 16.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xc4} 17.\texttt{d3} \texttt{xd3} 18.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{c8}  
The \texttt{c6}-pawn is falling and Black will remain with an extra pawn.

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{C}) 8.\texttt{e3} \texttt{g4} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

9.\texttt{e5}  
In my opinion this is the only continuation that makes some sense and can try to justify giving up the dark-squared bishop.

9.0–0–0 \texttt{dxe3} 10.\texttt{fxe3} e5!  
I believe that after this important move only Black can be better.

11.\texttt{b1} \texttt{g4} 12.d5  
White certainly cannot find 12.dxe5 \texttt{We8} satisfactory, in view of his exposed pawns.

12...\texttt{e7} 13.h3 \texttt{d7} 14.h4  
This occurred in Jakobsen – Howell, Copenhagen 2006. Now I really like the positional:

14...\texttt{g4}N  
Black prevents h4-h5 and will follow up with ...\texttt{c8-d6}. I believe that in the long term Black will be positionally better, due to White's weakened pawn structure.

9.\texttt{d1}  
This doesn't change the character of the game.

9...\texttt{xe3} 10.\texttt{fxe3} e5 11.d5  
11...\texttt{e7}  
This is slightly stronger than: 11...\texttt{b8}  
12.\texttt{e2} a6 13.0–0 \texttt{d6} 14.\texttt{d2} (or 14.\texttt{c1} b5 15.\texttt{b3} \texttt{d7}) 14...\texttt{d7} Black gradually obtained the better game in Beliavsky – Avrukh, Dresden (rapid) 2007.

12.\texttt{b5}  
After 12.\texttt{e2} Raceanu – Gerard, Bucharest 2002, Black should continue with 12...a6N. Play will be similar to the above Beliavsky – Avrukh game, but with the black knight rather better placed.

In my analysis during that game I was a bit concerned about the text move, but it transpires that it is not such a big deal:
12...c6! 13.dxc6 \(\varepsilon\)b6 14.c7 \(\varepsilon\)e6 15.\(\varepsilon\)c3 a6 16.\(\varepsilon\)d6 \(\varepsilon\)xa2
Black is a little better.

9...\(\varepsilon\)e6
Before capturing the bishop it is important to include this developing move.

10.\(\varepsilon\)c5 \(\varepsilon\)x e3 11.fxe3 \(\varepsilon\)d7
I think that Black's only constructive plan is to prepare the ...c5 break. To do this he first needs to chase the white queen away from the c5-square by arranging to play ...b6.

12.0–0–0

12...b6N
A natural novelty. Previously played was:
12...\(\varepsilon\)h6?! 13.d5! b6 14.\(\varepsilon\)c4 \(\varepsilon\)xe3† 15.\(\varepsilon\)b1 \(\varepsilon\)a5 16.\(\varepsilon\)e2 (16.\(\varepsilon\)h4?!N may be even stronger) Lima – Tsuboi, Brasilia 2000. Black has won the e3-pawn, but his pieces have lost coordination and White has seized the initiative.

13.\(\varepsilon\)a3
I also examined 13.\(\varepsilon\)d5, but that allows Black to gain important tempos for regrouping:
13...e6 14.\(\varepsilon\)e4 \(\varepsilon\)b4! 15.a3 (after 15.\(\varepsilon\)c4 b5! 16.\(\varepsilon\)xb5 \(\varepsilon\)xb5 17.\(\varepsilon\)xb5 \(\varepsilon\)xa2† Black has a strong attack) 15...c6 16.\(\varepsilon\)g4 \(\varepsilon\)d5 17.\(\varepsilon\)xd5

18...\(\varepsilon\)c4† A solid approach, although keeping the queens on should also be promising. 19.\(\varepsilon\)xe4 \(\varepsilon\)xe4† 20.\(\varepsilon\)d3 \(\varepsilon\)b7 Black will continue with ...c5, with the better endgame.

13...a5 14.h4
After 14.\(\varepsilon\)b5 \(\varepsilon\)b4 15.\(\varepsilon\)xd7 \(\varepsilon\)xd7 16.\(\varepsilon\)b3 c5 17.dxc5 \(\varepsilon\)c7 18.cxb6 \(\varepsilon\)xb6† Black has good play for the pawn.

14...\(\varepsilon\)b4 15.h5 c5 16.hxg6 hxg6

17.dxc5
Or 17.d5 \(\varepsilon\)b8! and the plan of ...b5 and ...c4 looks strong for Black.
17...\texttt{c}c8 18.\texttt{xb}6 \texttt{e}e6
Black has plenty of play for the sacrificed pawns.

D) 8.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{g}4 9.0-0 0 \texttt{d}d7

10.e5
It is not a good idea to play: 10.d5 \texttt{d}e5
11.\texttt{e}e2 f5 Black takes over the initiative.

10...\texttt{b}b6 11.\texttt{f}c5 f6 12.\texttt{c}e3 \texttt{fx}e5
12...\texttt{h}8? is a serious mistake: 13.e6 f5
14.d5 White was clearly better in Epishin - Roiz, Valle d’Aosta 2002.

13.dxe5 \texttt{e}e8!
I found this improvement in late 2003, but as so often happens I did not get a chance to employ it myself. Clearly worse is 13...\texttt{c}c8
14.h4! with an initiative for White, as has occurred in three games of Epishin’s.

14.\texttt{e}e2
An important idea behind 13...\texttt{e}e8 is seen in the following line: 14.h4 \texttt{xf}3!
15.gxf3 \texttt{xf}3 16.\texttt{h}3 Now this move does not gain a tempo by attacking the queen.
16...\texttt{f}7 17.e6 \texttt{f}8 18.\texttt{hg}1 \texttt{x}d1 19.\texttt{x}d1 \texttt{h}6! White has no compensation for the pawn.

14...\texttt{b}b8?N
This is an interesting improvement on:
14...\texttt{h}h8 15.\texttt{he}1 (15.h3?!) 15...\texttt{f}5 16.\texttt{b}5 \texttt{xf}3 17.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{xe}5 Atalik - Khmelniker, Dresden 2007. Now 18.\texttt{b}3N would lead to an unclear game, with White having sufficient compensation for the pawn.

15.\texttt{he}1
I also examined: 15.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{h}5! (less clear is 15...\texttt{xf}3 16.gxf3 \texttt{xf}3 17.\texttt{e}4 \texttt{h}1
18.\texttt{xf}1 N) 16.\texttt{e}4 \texttt{xe}5 17.\texttt{xc}7 \texttt{c}8
18.\texttt{xb}7 \texttt{f}ec4 Black’s attack is very powerful.

15.\texttt{f}3 16.\texttt{xf}3

16...\texttt{xe}5
Chapter 27 – Without 8...e2

After 16...dxe5 White has the following resource: 17...xb7! d3† 18...xd3 e5 19...xc5 ecx5 20...xc3 White has decent compensation for the queen.

17...xc6 bxc6 18...a3 d5
Black is better.

E) 8.h3 e5!

Black’s first choice according to theory is 8...d7, but the text seems to solve Black’s opening problems quite convincingly.

9.dxe5
After 9.d5 d4 Black has great play, since the pawn is untouchable: 10...xd4? exd4 11...xd4 dxe4 12...xe4? e8–+

9...d7 10.e6
White does not benefit from: 10...g5?!

10...dxe5! 11...xd8 ecx4 12...xc4 xd8 Black’s bishop pair gave him an edge in Henrichsen – Roberts, Budapest 2008.

10...f6 11...f6† h8 12...d5
White fails to pose Black any problems with: 12...g5

12...d5! 13...xd8 (both 13...xe5 dxe5 14...xd8 xf3† 15.gxf3 xd8 and 13...xe5 a6 14...xd8 a5 15...g5 b4 offer Black fine compensation for the pawn) 13...xf3† 14.gxf3 a6 15...xc7 d4 16.0–0–0 ac8 17...d6 xf3 Black will regain the second pawn and have the better chances.

12...b3 c5 13...c4 d4! 14...d5? (this should lose on the spot; relatively best is 14...c2† 15...e2 xa1 16...g5 d7†)
In Ranson – McNally, e-mail 1998, Black now missed the nice:
14...\(\text{dxe4}\)N 15.\(\text{dxd4}\) \(\text{dxf2}\) 16.\(\text{g1}\) c6→

12...\(\text{gxh3}\)!

The key move; Black will pay any price to obtain the d4-square for his knight.

13.\(\text{gxf3}\) \(\text{d4}\) 14.\(\text{c3}\)

I considered 14.\(\text{d1}\) for White, but his position is very shaky after: 14...c6 15.\(\text{g5}\) (15.\(\text{d6}\)? \(\text{c5}\) 16.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{d5}\)! gives Black a decisive attack) 15...\(\text{f6}\) 16.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{xf3}\) 17.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{de5}\) 18.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{d4}\)† 19.\(\text{b1}\) \(\text{c4}\) 20.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{e6}\) Black has a definite initiative here.

14...\(\text{c2}\)† 15.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{xa1}\) 16.\(\text{c2}\)

There is also:

16.\(\text{d3}\) c6!N

This is an important improvement over: 16...\(\text{e8}\) 17.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{b6}\) Portisch – Korchnoi, Bad Kissingen (6) 1983. Here I am not sure how Black should counter 18.\(\text{g5}\)!N followed by \(\text{xa1}\).

17.\(\text{g6}\)

17.\(\text{g5}\) is now well met by: 17...\(\text{f8}\)

18.\(\text{xa1}\) \(\text{e5}\) 19.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{xf3}\)† 20.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{xg3}\)

21.\(\text{d8}\)† \(\text{f8}\) 22.\(\text{xf8}\)† \(\text{xf8}\) 23.\(\text{d4}\)† \(\text{g8}\)

The bishop pair gives Black a plus in this endgame.

17...\(\text{e5}\) 18.\(\text{e6}\) \(\text{f8}\) 19.\(\text{xa1}\) \(\text{g7}\)

Preparing to discover an attack on the white queen.

20.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{e5}\) 21.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xd3}\) 22.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{xe3}\)

Again the bishop pair means that Black's chances are preferable.

16...c6 17.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{e5}\) 18.\(\text{d3}\)

18...\(\text{xb1}\)N

Another important improvement in this line. 
K. Georgiev – W. Schmidt, Warsaw 1987, continued: 18...\(\text{f6}\) 19.\(\text{xa1}\) \(\text{f8}\)! 20.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{e6}\) 21.\(\text{d1}\) Although Black clearly has some compensation for the pawn, I do not believe that he has full equality.

19.\(\text{xa1}\) \(\text{c5}\) 20.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{b6}\)! 21.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{e6}\)

Black has a safe alternative in 21...\(\text{a6}\), which seems likely to lead to a draw: 22.\(\text{xc5}\) (or 22.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{f6}\) 23.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 24.\(\text{f7}\) \(\text{xe2}\) 25.\(\text{xe2}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 26.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xe4}\)† 27.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{d8}\)† 28.\(\text{c1}\) \(\text{d3}\) 29.\(\text{f6}\)† \(\text{g8}\) 30.\(\text{f6}\)† with perpetual check) 22...\(\text{xc4}\) 23.\(\text{xf8}\) \(\text{xe2}\) 24.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 25.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{xf3}\) The endgame is drawish.

22.\(\text{b4}\) \(\text{xe3}\)

The position is very complex.

F) 8.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{d7}\)

A position with three minor pieces versus queen and two pawns arises after: 8...\(\text{e6}\) 9.\(\text{xf6}\)!
Chapter 27 - Without 8.\textit{\texttt{xe}2}

\texttt{xc4} 10.\texttt{xfg7} \texttt{xfg7} 11.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{xd4} 12.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{wxd4} 13.\texttt{e2} I personally don't like it, but objectively it may be quite okay for Black.

9.\texttt{e3}

White cannot play 9.e6? in view of 9...\texttt{db6} 10.exf7\texttt{xf7} 11.\texttt{wb3} \texttt{xd4}.\texttt{\textdagger}

9.\texttt{e2} \texttt{db6} 10.\texttt{wc5} a5 11.\texttt{e3} transposes to the main line.

9...\texttt{db6} 10.\texttt{wc5} a5!

This is an important move with two active ideas: transferring the knight from c6 to d5 via the b4-square, and bringing the rook into play with ...a4 followed by ...\texttt{a5}.

11.\texttt{e2}

After 11.a3 Black's second idea work well: 11...a4 12.\texttt{b5}? (White should play 12.\texttt{e2} \texttt{a5} 13.\texttt{b5} \texttt{a3} 14.\texttt{g4} with a complex game) 12...\texttt{a5}! Now White is in trouble, since the pin along the fifth rank is highly unpleasant. 13.\texttt{ed1} This was Miranda - Tsuboi, Curitiba 1999, and already Black could have virtually decided the game with the simple 13...\texttt{d7} followed by ...\texttt{a}4.

11...\texttt{db4} 12.\texttt{0-0}

12.\texttt{c1}?! is inaccurate: 12...\texttt{f5} 13.0-0 \texttt{d3}! White unexpectedly faces serious problems. 14.e6 \texttt{fxe6} 15.\texttt{e5} \texttt{d7} 16.\texttt{xd7} \texttt{xd7} Black had a clear plus in De Barros - Shankland, Sautron 2009.

12...\texttt{c6}

Black establishes total control over the d5-square.

13.\texttt{e4} \texttt{f5} 14.\texttt{g3}

After 14.\texttt{fd2}?! \texttt{d6}5 the white pieces are lacking in coordination: 15.\texttt{g3} \texttt{e6} 16.a4 V. Milov - Ma. Tseidin, Tel Aviv 1994. Black can now seize a clear advantage by: 16...\texttt{b6} 17.\texttt{f1} \texttt{c5} White's position is on the verge of collapse.

14...\texttt{d3}
15.\textit{d}2

Other possibilities are:

15.\textit{xd}3  \textit{xd}3 16.\textit{c}2  \textit{b}4 17.\textit{e}4  \textit{d}5
18.\textit{h}4 (this looks logical, but it is better to allow the queen swap with 18.a3  \textit{xe}4 19.\textit{xe}4  \textit{d}4d5 with approximately equality)
18...\textit{f}6! This strong move greatly restricts White's play on the kingside. 19.\textit{h}6 This was Gershon – Ma. Tseitlin, Ramat Aviv 2000, and now I believe that Black can afford to capture the pawn with: 19...\textit{xa}2N 20.\textit{xa}xe7  \textit{g}7 21.\textit{ae}1  \textit{d}b4 22.\textit{e}e2  \textit{f}7! Black will continue with ...\textit{d}6d5 and he seems to keep everything under control.

15.\textit{c}1  \textit{xe}2 16.\textit{xe}2 This occurred in Volke – Brendel, Dresden 2007, and here I developed the following regrouping for Black: 16...\textit{d}7N 17.a3  \textit{d}4d5 18.\textit{g}3  \textit{c}7 19.\textit{e}e4  \textit{e}6 20.\textit{d}d1  \textit{d}d8 The position is balanced.

15...\textit{d}7 16.\textit{c}1  \textit{xe}2 17.\textit{xe}2  c5 18.a3
18.dxc5 is not a good idea, because 18...\textit{xe}5 gives Black a fine game.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
& a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
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1 & & & & & & & & \\
2 & & & & & & & & \\
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\end{tabular}
\end{center}

We have been following Kozul – Borisek, Nova Gorica 2001. Black should now play:

18...\textit{d}5N 19.\textit{c}3  e6=

The position is complex.
Russian System

8. \( \text{e2} \)

Variation Index

1.d4 Cf6 2.c4 g6 3.Cc3 d5 4.Cf3 Cg7 5.Cb3 dxc4 6.Cxc4 0-0 7.e4 Cd6 8.Cd2

8...Cd4

A) 9.Ce3 Cxf3
   A1) 10.Cxf3
   A2) 10.gxf3 e5
       A21) 11.dxe5
       A22) 11.d5

B) 9.d5 Ca5
   B1) 10.Ca4 Cxf3 11.Cxf3 c6 12.0-0 b5!
       B11) 13.Cb4
       B12) 13.Cd1
       B21) 12.dxc6
       B22) 12.Ce3 cxd5 13.exd5 Cc8
           B221) 14.Cxa7
           B222) 14.0-0
       B23) 12.0-0 Cb6 13.Ca4 Cd7
           B231) 14.Ce3
           B232) 14.dxc6
           B233) 14.Ce2
           B234) 14.Ed1

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1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.d3 d5 4.df3 g7 5.db3 dxc4 6.exd4 0–0 7.e4 dc6 8.d2 df4

A) 9.de3 df3

Black immediately prepares to attack the white centre. White has a choice of recaptures: A1) 10.dxf3 or A2) 10.gxf3.

A1) 10.dxf3

This gives Black a strong initiative. In both games to reach this position Black instead went for the strange-looking 14..g6b5.

15.exd4 exd4 16.exd4 fxe4 17.xe4 g5+ 18.d2! xdx4 19.exd4 dxex4 20.xe4 exae8 21.f4!

White just manages to survive.

12.d1

I believe that Black has several ways to obtain good play here; my preference is for the following idea:

12..c6 13.dxc6 e8! 14.axe7 ecx6 15.0–0

White cannot take the pawn: 15.aexe7 ecx7 16.a3 ed8 (threatening the deadly ...f8)

17.exd4 exd4 18.dxe5 edx5 19.exd5 ed5+ 20.df1 edx5+

15..a6 16.a3 e8!
Here too, the threat of ...f8 is a real headache for White.
17.b4 d6 18.b2 ec8 19.c1 c7 20.e2 xc1 21.xc1 x e4
White was lost in Rajkovic – Sedlak, Kragujevac 2009.

12...b5
This novelty makes a lot of sense. The most recent game from this position saw: 12...xf3t 13.gxf3 e8 14.h4 d6 15.d5 h5 16.0–0–0 Black had failed to equalize in Riazantsev – Delchev, Le Port Marly 2009.

13.c1
Nor do other squares for the queen offer White any advantage:
13.d3 xf3t 14.gxf3 c6 15.d6 d7! White is liable to lose his passed pawn very soon.

13.c5 d7 14.c3 b4! 15.c4 b6 16.d3 c5 17.0–0 f5 Black has good activity and is at least equal.

13...e8
This is more challenging than: 13...xf3t 14.gxf3 d7 15.g3 ac8 16.c6 xc6 17.dxc6 fd8=

14.d2 d7 15.0–0–0 c5! is dangerous for White.
14...c6 15.dxc6 a5t 16.d2 xf3+ 17.gxf3 a6
Black regains the pawn and equalizes easily.

A2) 10.gxf3

The pawn recapture is thematic for the Russian System, but here Black obtains timely counterplay.

10...e5
White must decide what to do with his d-pawn: A21) 11.dxe5 or A22) 11.d5.

A21) 11.dxe5 xe5
12. \( \text{b5} \)

This is rather risky. Other options are:

12. \( \text{b5} \)

This is rather risky. Other options are:

12. \( \text{b5} \) is objectively best, but Black will be comfortable in the endgame: 12... \( \text{bxc5} \) 13. \( \text{dx}4 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 14. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{f}d8 \) 15. \( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 16. \( \text{b}5 \) (I also checked 16. \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 17. \( \text{f}4 \) and here Black equalizes with 17... \( \text{xe}2 \) 18. \( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 19. \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{xg}3 \) 20. \( \text{hxg}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 16... \( \text{xb}5 \) 17. \( \text{x}b5 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 18. \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 19.0-0 \( \text{e}5 \) The position is level, M. Gurevich – Kaidanov, Lvov 1987.

12. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{h}5! \)

The same idea as we shall see in the main line.

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

I won a nice game after: 13. \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 14. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{x}f4 \) 15. \( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 16. \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{h}6! \) 17. \( \text{h}4?! \) (17.0-0 would limit Black’s advantage
17...\( \text{b}8 \) 18.0-0 \( \text{d}2 \) 19. \( \text{fe}1 \) \( \text{xb}2=+ \) Aloma Vidal – Avrukh, Andorra 2003.

13. \( \text{f}4? \) is just bad: 13...\( \text{d}3+ \) 14. \( \text{xd}3 \) \( \text{xd}3 \) 15. \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{xc}3+ \) 16. \( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) Black was winning in Maurer – Korchnoi, Arvier 2006.

13...\( \text{d}3+ \) 14. \( \text{f}1 \)

After 14. \( \text{xd}3 \) \( \text{xd}3 \) 15. \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{a}6 \) Black has slightly the better chances.

14. \( \text{d}4 \) 15. \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 16. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 17. \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{c}7 \)

Black’s position is preferable, due to White’s weakened pawn structure and exposed king.

14...\f6\f6 N (I believe that this is stronger than 14...\b8 15.\xa7\xa7 \xbxb2 16.\xf1 \xf6 17.\g5 \e6 18.\b1 \xbxb1 19.\xb1 and White managed to hold in Werle – Howell, London 2009.) 15.0–0–0 \f8 16.\a6 \f4 17.\d2 \xe2\xe2 18.\xe2 \xf3 Black has a very promising position.

13...\b8 14.\d5
At a tournament in Zurich I witnessed the following remarkable encounter:

14.\xa7\xa7 \xbxb2 15.\d5
After 15.0–0 Black wins by force: 15...\xe2! 16.\xe2 \xf3 17.\g2 \h4 18.\h1 \xal 19.\xal \d3–+

15...\h4
I discovered that even without queens White is in trouble: 15...\f5? 16.\xc7 \xc7 17.\xc7 \xe4 18.\xe4 \f4 19.\xf4 \xf4 20.\d5 \xe4 21.\e3 \h6 Black’s attack looks decisive.

16.f4 \xe2\xe2
16...\g4 is also worth considering.

17.\xe2 \g4 18.\d2 \c4 19.\d3 \b2 20.\d2

We have been following the game Miroshnichenko – Brendel, Zurich 2009, in which Black later missed a forced win and eventually lost. Simplest now is:

20...\c6 N
White is defenceless, for example:

21.\e7 \h8 22.\c7 \c4 23.\d3 \xf4!

14...\f6\f6 N 15.0–0–0 \f4 16.\d2 \xe2\xe2 17.\xe2 \xf3 18.\d5 \c6
18...\b7 is also strong.

19.\c5

In none of the three games that reached this position did Black play the strongest move:

19...\fd8\fd8 N 20.\d1 \xd1 21.\xd1 \d8
Black has a clear advantage.

A22) 11.\d5 \d4

24.\xf4 \e5 25.\d2 \d7 26.\d5 \xd5
Black has a winning attack.

14...\f6 15.0–0–0 \f4 16.\d2 \xe2\xe2 17.\xe2 \xf3 18.\d5 \c6
18...\b7 is also strong.
12.0–0–0

It is obviously bad to grab the pawn:
12.\(\text{exd4?}\) exd4 13.\(\text{Wxd4}\) \(\text{Qh5}\) 14.\(\text{Wxe3}\) \(\text{Qe5}\) 15.\(\text{Wf1}\) \(\text{Wf6}\) Black was dominating in Reimaa – I. Ami, Internet 2000.

After 12.\(\text{Qb5}\) I like: 12...\(\text{Qh5}\) 13.\(\text{Qxd4}\) exd4 14.\(\text{Qxd4}\)

14...\(\text{c6?!}\) (an improvement on 14...\(\text{Qxd4}\) 15.\(\text{Wxd4}\) \(\text{Qf4}\) 16.\(\text{Wf1}\) Ackermann – Peschlow, Essen 2003) 15.\(\text{Qe3}\) (after 15.\(\text{Qxg7}\) \(\text{Qxd5!}\) 16.\(\text{Wxd5}\) \(\text{Qxd5}\) 17.\(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{Qxg7}\) Black will regain the d5-pawn and then be slightly better) 15...\(\text{Qxb2}\) 16.\(\text{Wb1}\) \(\text{Wf6}\) Black has a comfortable position.

12...\(\text{Qe8}\)

A thematic idea; the knight is heading for the ideal d6-square.

13.\(\text{h4}\)

13.\(\text{f4?!}\) is premature: 13...\(\text{Qd6}\) 14.\(\text{Wd3}\) \(\text{Qxe2}^{\text{T}}\) 15.\(\text{Wxe2}\) \(\text{xf4}\) 16.\(\text{Wxf4}\) \(\text{Qe8}\) 17.\(\text{f3}\) Feldman – Kudrin, North Bay 1998. Now the straightforward operation 17...\(\text{Qxc3}\)! 18.\(\text{bxg3}\) \(\text{Wf6}\) 19.\(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{Qac8}\) followed by 20...\(\text{c6}\) would give Black a serious edge.

13...\(\text{Qd6}\) 14.\(\text{Wd3}\) a6

14...\(\text{c5?!}\) is also an option.

15.\(\text{Qdg1}\) b5 16.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{Qxe2}^{\text{T}}\) 17.\(\text{Qxc2}\) \(\text{xf4}\)

18.\(\text{Qxf4}\) \(\text{Qe8}\)

Black was better in Dimitrijevic – Damljanovic, New York 1987.

B) 9.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{Qa5}\)

White must choose where to put his queen:

B1) 10.\(\text{Wf4}\) or B2) 10.\(\text{Qb4}\).

A third option doesn't pose Black any problems at all: 10.\(\text{Qd3}\) c6 11.\(\text{h3}\) (11.\(\text{b4}\) \(\text{Qxe4}\) 12.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qxa1}\) 13.\(\text{bxa5}\) \(\text{Wxa5}^{\text{T}}\) 14.\(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{Wxd5}\) is just bad for White) 11...\(\text{Qf3}\) 12.\(\text{Qxf3}\) \(\text{cxd5}\) 13.\(\text{Qxd5}\) \(\text{Qc8}\) 14.0–0 \(\text{Qd7}\) (14...\(\text{Qc4?!}\) is also worth considering) The position is roughly balanced.

B1) 10.\(\text{Wf4}\)
10...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{dx}}}}\)\texttt{f3}

It is important to include this exchange, thereby avoiding the nice trap: 10...c6? 11.e5+.

11.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{xf}}}}\)\texttt{3} c6 12.0–0 b5!

I definitely prefer this to 12...cxd5 13.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}}\)\texttt{d1}.

![Diagram](image)

Again the queen has a choice of squares: B11) 13.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}}}}\)\texttt{4} or B12) 13.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}}\)\texttt{d1}.

**B11) 13.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}}}}\)\texttt{4} a6 14.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}}}}\)\texttt{3}**

The alternative is:

14.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}}\)\texttt{d1} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}}\)\texttt{d7}

Already it appears that White cannot maintain equality.

15.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}}}}\)\texttt{1}

Black was clearly better after 15.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}}}}\)\texttt{e2} c5 16.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}}}}\)\texttt{e1} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}}}}\)\texttt{5} 17.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{f}}}}\)\texttt{f4} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{f}}}}\)\texttt{x3}\texttt{+} 18.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{g}}}}\)\texttt{xf3} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{4}\texttt{+}


15.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}}}}\)\texttt{3} runs into a nice idea: 15...c5! 16.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{xc5} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{5} 17.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{w}}}}\)\texttt{xc5} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}}\)\texttt{c8} 18.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{a}}}}\)\texttt{a7} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{4}\texttt{!}

Black has a serious initiative. 19.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}}}}\)\texttt{1} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}}\)\texttt{d6} 20.e5 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}}}}\)\texttt{xe5} 21.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{w}}}}\)\texttt{xe3} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{4}\texttt{+}


15...cxd5 16.exd5 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{8}\texttt{+}

Black had the more pleasant game in Kozul – Rowson, Istanbul (ol) 2000.

14...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}}\)\texttt{d7}

15.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}}}}\)\texttt{2}

Weaker is:

15.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{ad}}}}\)\texttt{1}?!

This allows Black to carry out a familiar idea.

15...c5! 16.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{xc5} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{5} 17.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{w}}}}\)\texttt{xc5}

This was Lugovoi – Ma. Tseidin, Chalkidiki 2002. Now the best continuation is:

![Diagram](image)

17...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{4}\texttt{+} 18.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}}}}\)\texttt{4} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}}\)\texttt{d6} 19.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{w}}}}\)\texttt{xd6}

No better is 19.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}}}}\)\texttt{b3} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{f}}}}\)\texttt{c8}! and Black will regain the pawn with advantage.

19...exd6

Black retains the initiative, for instance:

20.b3 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}}}}\)\texttt{2} 21.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{c1} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}}}}\)\texttt{d3} 22.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}}}}\)\texttt{cd1} \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}}}}\)\texttt{4}

22...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{xf}}}}\)\texttt{2} is also slightly better for Black.

23.a3 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{xc}}}}\)\texttt{3} 24.axb4 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{xb}}}}\)\texttt{4}\texttt{+}

White will have to work hard to draw this opposite-coloured bishop endgame, since Black’s a-pawn is potentially very dangerous.
Now I have nothing to add to the following correspondence game. Both sides played perfectly in my opinion.

17.\texttt{d1} e6 18.\texttt{dxe6} fxe6 19.\texttt{c1} \texttt{b6} 20.b4 \texttt{b7} 21.bxc5 \texttt{dxc5} 22.\texttt{b4} \texttt{d6} 23.\texttt{c3} \texttt{e5} 24.g3 \texttt{d7} 25.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{xd6} 26.\texttt{f1} \texttt{f6} 27.f4 \texttt{xc3} 28.\texttt{exd6} \texttt{xe4} 29.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{d4}!

And when both sides play flawlessly, the game ends in a draw, De Carlos Arregui – Fenwick, e-mail 2008.

White’s latest attempts have involved this retreat.

13.\texttt{c8}!

This accurate move easily solves Black’s opening problems.

14.\texttt{dxc6}

After 14.\texttt{f4} b4 15.\texttt{a4} cxd5 16.exd5 \texttt{d7} I prefer Black’s position.

14...\texttt{b4} 15.e5

Maybe White could try 15.\texttt{b5} \texttt{xc6} 16.\texttt{a4}, although Black has no problems and can respond 16...\texttt{e5} with some attacking ideas.

15...\texttt{bxc3} 16.\texttt{exf6} \texttt{xf6} 17.\texttt{bxc3} \texttt{c6} 18.\texttt{h6} \texttt{g7} 19.\texttt{xg7} \texttt{xg7}

Although the position looks fairly equal, there is some strategical danger for White due to his weak c-pawn. In Vallejo – Roiz, Dresden (ol) 2008, White had to suffer for a while before eventually securing the draw.

B2) 10.\texttt{b4}

Undoubtedly the most challenging option.

10...\texttt{xf3}

Once again, 10...\texttt{c6}! 11.e5? must be avoided.
11. \textit{\text{\text{\text{xf3}}}} \textit{c6} \\

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

White's options are B21) 12.dxc6, B22) 12.e3 and B23) 12.0–0.

\textbf{B21) 12.dxc6}

Nobody has tried this, which is not too surprising in view of:

12...\textit{\text{\text{\text{xc6}}}} 13.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xb7}}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{d4!}}}}

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

It turns out that White has problems with his queen.

14.\textit{\text{\text{\text{d1}}}} \\
This is probably better than:
14.0–0 \textit{\text{\text{\text{d6!}}}}

The threat of ...\textit{\text{\text{\text{fb8}}} forces White to give up the exchange.

15.\textit{\text{\text{\text{d1}}}} \\
15.\textit{\text{\text{\text{b5?}}} is just bad: 15...\textit{\text{\text{\text{b4}}} 16.a3 \textit{\text{\text{\text{xf3}}}+}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{b3}}} White is in trouble.

15...\textit{\text{\text{\text{fb8}}} 16.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xd4}}} \\
16.e5? \textit{\text{\text{\text{xe5}}} 17.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xa8}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{c8}}} 18.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xa8}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{g4}}} \\
19.g3 \textit{\text{\text{\text{h5}}} 20.h4 \textit{\text{\text{\text{c5}}} 21.\textit{\text{\text{\text{f1}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{c5}}}+}} \\
16...\textit{\text{\text{\text{xd4}}} 17.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xe7}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{f8}}} 18.\textit{\text{\text{\text{c7}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{d6}}} 19.\textit{\text{\text{\text{a5}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{e5}}} 20.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xe5}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{e5}}}+}} \\
White is facing a fight for a draw.

14...\textit{\text{\text{\text{d6}}} 15.f4 \textit{\text{\text{\text{ab8}}} 16.e5 \\
But not: 16.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xa7}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{c8}}} 17.\textit{\text{\text{\text{b7}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{f6}}} 18.e5 \textit{\text{\text{\text{d8}}}+}}}

16...\textit{\text{\text{\text{xb7}}} 17.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xd6}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{d6}}} 18.0–0 \textit{\text{\text{\text{e8}}} \\
Black is slightly better, but White should be able to hold the position.

\textbf{B22) 12.e3 cxd5 13.exd5 \textit{\text{\text{\text{c8}}} \\
With the clear intention of playing the knight to the c4-square.

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

White usually chooses between B221) 14.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xa7}}} and B222) 14.0–0. A third option is:

14.\textit{\text{\text{\text{d1}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{c4}}}! 15.\textit{\text{\text{\text{d4}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{d6!}}} Black is already better. 16.\textit{\text{\text{\text{b3}}} (after 16.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xb7}}} \textit{\text{\text{\text{b8}}} 17.\textit{\text{\text{\text{xa7}}} 

\textbf{}}}}}
\[ \text{\textcolor{red}{Oxb2 18.\textbf{E}d2 \textbf{h}6! White is in trouble}} \]

16...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}d7} 17.0–0 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xd4} 18.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xd4} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}c5} 19.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}fd1}

M. Gurevich – Urban, Groningen 1997. Here Black should play 19...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}d6N} with a very pleasant game.

**B221)** 14.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xa7}

Snatching this pawn is rather risky.

**14...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}c4 15.0–0**

15.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}d1}?! runs into the spectacular: 15...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xb2}! 16.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xb2} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}e4} 17.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}d4} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xd4} 18.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xd4} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xc3} 19.0–0 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}5} Black is slightly better, due to the superiority of his knight over the white bishop, Vshivkov – Vokarev, Omsk 1998.

15...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}d2} 16.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}fd1} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}c4}!

An important resource; before capturing the bishop, Black arranges for his rook to join the kingside offensive.

17.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}b5}

White has also tried: 17.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}b6} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xf3}† 18.gxf3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}c8} 19.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}d4} Farago – J. Horvath, Budapest 1991. Now I believe Black should play: 19...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xd4N} 20.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xd4} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}7} 21.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}e3} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}6}! 22.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xb6} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xb6} 23.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xb6} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xc3} 24.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}xc3} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}xc3} 25.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}d1} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}xf3} 26.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}d4} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}d8} Despite the equal material, White is facing a difficult defensive task due to his exposed king.

I also examined: 17.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}xb7} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xf3}† 18.gxf3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}c7}! This is an important idea; it transpires that the a7-bishop is in danger. 19.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}a6} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}a8} 20.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}b5} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}d7} Black will capture the d5-pawn and will obtain good attacking chances, in addition to the unpleasant pin of the white bishop.

17...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xf3}† 18.gxf3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}c8} 19.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}d4}

19.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}d4} is refuted very nicely: 19...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}g4}! 20.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xg7} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xh2}! 21.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}d3} (21.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xf8} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}h3} leads to a quick mate) 21...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xg7} Black is clearly better, since the h2-knight is untouchable.

19...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}xd4} 20.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xd4} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}h3} 21.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xf6}

The natural 21.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}e2} runs into the unpleasant 21...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}xd5}!

**21...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xf6} 22.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}e2} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}c8} 23.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}e4} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}e5} 24.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{D}g3} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}d6}**

Miton – Tyomin, Philadelphia 2004. Despite White’s extra pawn, it is clear that Black’s chances are preferable, in view of the vulnerable white king.

**B222) 14.0–0 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}c4} 15.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}c5**

15...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}c7}!N

This is an important improvement over:

15...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}d2} 16.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}xe7} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xf3}† 17.gxf3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xd5} 18.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}xd8} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xb4} 19.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}e7} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}c2} 20.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}xf8} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{O}xc3} 21.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{E}ab1}! Black was in trouble in C. Horvath – Vegh, Hungary 1991.
16.\textbf{axa7}

16.\textbf{xe7?} loses to: 16...a5 17.d6 axb4 18.dxc7 bxc3 19.\textbf{xf8} cxb2--

16...\textbf{b6} 17.\textbf{fc1}

17.\textbf{b5} \textbf{d7} 18.a4 \textbf{e5}! looks dangerous for White.

17...\textbf{xa7} 18.\textbf{b5} \textbf{d7} 19.\textbf{xc4} \textbf{xd5} 20.\textbf{b3}

The position is equal.

\textbf{B23) 12.0-0 \textbf{b6}}

Black has often tried 12...\textbf{xd5} 13.\textbf{exd5} \textbf{c8}, but theory considers White's chances to be preferable after 14.\textbf{e1}±.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|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 & \\
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13.\textbf{a4}

The only challenging move. Other continuations are quite easy for Black to meet:

13.\textbf{xb6} axb6

The endgame is comfortable for Black.

14.\textbf{dxc6} bxc6 15.\textbf{e1}

After 15.\textbf{b1} \textbf{fd8} 16.\textbf{e2} \textbf{d7} 17.\textbf{e3} b5 18.\textbf{fc1} \textbf{c4} 19.\textbf{xc4} bxc4 Black had some pressure in Kaspi – Sutovsky, Ramat Aviv 2000.

15...\textbf{b3}N

The idea of exchanging White's dark-squared bishop appears very logical to me. Instead 15...\textbf{a7} was played in Radjabov – Rowson, Torshavn 2000, and although Black managed to draw this game, the text seems simpler.

16.\textbf{b1} \textbf{xc1} 17.\textbf{xb1} e6=

White cannot hope for any advantage without his dark-squared bishop.

13.\textbf{xe7} \textbf{c4} 14.\textbf{dxc6}

The inclusion of 14.a3 a5! does not really change the situation.

Note that White does have the option of forcing a repetition by: 14.\textbf{a4} \textbf{a5} 15.\textbf{c3} \textbf{b6}= 14...\textbf{bxc6} 15.\textbf{f4} \textbf{fe8} 16.\textbf{c7} \textbf{xc7}

Black may also play: 16...\textbf{xb2} 17.\textbf{a1} \textbf{b6} 18.\textbf{a4} \textbf{xc7}!N (but not 18...\textbf{b5)? Gyimesi – Berkes, Hungary 2007, when White can obtain a serious advantage with 19.\textbf{e2}!) 19.\textbf{xc7} \textbf{d2} 20.\textbf{fd1} \textbf{fe4} 21.\textbf{xd2} \textbf{xd2} 22.\textbf{xc6} \textbf{d4} The position is equal.

17.\textbf{xc7} \textbf{ac8} 18.\textbf{g3} \textbf{h5}! 19.\textbf{a1} \textbf{xc3} 20.\textbf{hxg3} \textbf{xb2} 21.\textbf{ec2} \textbf{d3} 22.a3

The game was balanced in Gyimesi – Swinkels, Liverpool 2006.

13...\textbf{d7}
We have arrived at an important crossroads, with four options for White: B231) 14.\textit{e}3, B232) 14.dxc6, B233) 14.\textit{e}2 and B234) 14.\textit{d}d1.

B231) 14.\textit{e}3

This leads to a forced sequence.

14...\textit{w}xb2 15.\textit{w}c1 \textit{xc}3 16.\textit{a}b1

16...b5

Black has good chances to hold the position after 16...\textit{b}6 17.\textit{xb}6 axb6 18.\textit{xb}2 \textit{xb}2 19.\textit{b}1 \textit{f}6 Kovacs - Roiz, Oberwart 2004. But the text seems to be more active.

17.\textit{xb}2 \textit{bxa}4 18.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xd}5 19.\textit{xd}5

White has also tried: 19.\textit{b}5 \textit{c}4 20.\textit{xd}5 \textit{db}6 21.\textit{xb}6 \textit{d}6 22.\textit{b}4 \textit{xb}6 23.\textit{xb}6 \textit{f}b8 Black was slightly better in Gyimesi - Roiz, Tel Aviv 2001.

19...\textit{a}c8 20.\textit{b}c2 \textit{b}6 21.\textit{c}7

21.\textit{f}1 \textit{ac}4 22.\textit{f}4 \textit{fd}8 gives Black easy equality.

21.\textit{c}5?! runs into 21...\textit{ac}4! and White cannot take the pawn due to back rank problems: 22.\textit{xe}7 \textit{fe}8 23.\textit{e}2 \textit{e}5!

21...\textit{ac}4 22.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}3 23.\textit{xc}8 \textit{xc}8 24.\textit{xc}3 \textit{d}d8 25.\textit{h}4 \textit{b}6

Black comfortably achieved a draw in Babula - Mirumian, Olomouc 1998.

B232) 14.dxc6 \textit{xc}6 15.\textit{d}5 \textit{wd}8 16.\textit{g}5

Black is comfortable after: 16.\textit{d}d1 e6 17.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}7 18.\textit{e}3 \textit{fd}8=

16...h6!N

In Cmilyte - Howell, Gibraltar 2005, Black played 16...\textit{b}6, which was enough to maintain the balance, but I prefer the text move.

17.\textit{h}4

17.\textit{c}e3 e6 18.\textit{c}3 \textit{b}6, followed by ...\textit{d}4, is also slightly better for Black.

17...\textit{g}5 18.\textit{g}3 e6 19.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}7!

Black has the better chances, thanks to the passivity of White's light-squared bishop.

B233) 14.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}5 15.\textit{c}2

White should avoid the following line: 15.\textit{a}3?! \textit{xc}3 16.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xe}4 17.\textit{e}5 cxd5 18.\textit{h}6 \textit{f}6 19.\textit{xf}8 \textit{fx}8 With two pawns for the exchange, Black has the better chances.

15...\textit{b}4
Chapter 28 – 8...\textit{e2}

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16...\textit{e3}

16...\textit{dxc6}?! \textit{xc6} 17...\textit{d5}? doesn't work:
17...\textit{xe4} 18...\textit{xc5} \textit{xe2}+

16...\textit{x3}! 17...\textit{c1} \textit{d4}! 18...\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4}
19...\textit{c5} \textit{xb2} 20...\textit{b3} b6

20...\textit{xa2}? loses to: 21...\textit{a1} \textit{b3} 22...\textit{c3}!
\textit{xa1} 23...\textit{xa1} +- 

21...\textit{xc7} \textit{f8} 22...\textit{g5}

The alternative is: 22...\textit{d7} \textit{e5}!N (this is an important improvement over 22...\textit{ed8}?! 23...\textit{c7}! and White was better in Bareev – Lalic, Jahorina 2003) 23...\textit{xc6}
(23...\textit{d1} \textit{e7} 24...\textit{g4} \textit{d8} 25...\textit{xc6} \textit{xd1} \textit{xc7} 27...\textit{g3} \textit{g7} also results in an equal position) 23...\textit{ed8} 24...\textit{g4}
\textit{ac8=} Black regains the pawn and has no problems.

22...\textit{e5} 23...\textit{d2} \textit{ad8} 24...\textit{g3} \textit{xd5} 25...\textit{xd5}
\textit{b7} 26...\textit{e1} \textit{f6} 27...\textit{g2} \textit{xe1} 28...\textit{xel}
\textit{c5}

Black had equalized without any difficulty in Babula – Ruck, Novi Sad 2009.

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15...\textit{c2}

Black is ready to meet 15...\textit{xc6} with 15...\textit{c5}
16...\textit{c2} \textit{xd1} \textit{xd1} 17...\textit{xc6} 18...\textit{d5} \textit{b5}! with full equality.

15...\textit{e2} In the following encounter Black demonstrated the correct route to equality:
15...\textit{c5} 16...\textit{c2} \textit{b4} 17...\textit{e3} \textit{xc3}

18...\textit{ac1} b6! 19...\textit{xc5} \textit{xc5} 20...\textit{xc3} \textit{xc3}
21...\textit{xc3} \textit{xd5} 22...\textit{xd5} \textit{dc8}! 23...\textit{a6} \textit{xc3}
24...\textit{xc3} \textit{f8} 25...\textit{f1} \textit{e8} 26...\textit{e2} \textit{e6} 27...\textit{b5} \textit{f8} 28...\textit{d7} \textit{a6} 29...\textit{d3} \textit{c8} Rakay – Van den Bos, e-mail 2008. Incredibly, I had all these moves written in my notes in 2007.

15...\textit{ac8}

15...\textit{c4}?! is pointless on account of 16...\textit{e2}.

16...\textit{e3}

14...\textit{c5} 15...\textit{c2} \textit{c4} 16...\textit{b1}! led to serious problems for Black in Kasimdzhanov – Sutovsky, Batumi 2001.
After 16.dxc6 ază6! 17.ázd5 ąc5 Black is slightly better, thanks to his powerful dark-squared bishop.

16...ąc7!N
This is an important improvement over a game of mine in which I opted for 16...ąb4 but failed to equalize after 17.dxc6± in Onischuk – Avrukh, Biel 2007.

17.ąac1
I also examined 17.dxc6 ąxc6 18.ąac1 and here Black shouldn't have any problems after: 18...ąb8 19.ąb3 e6=

17...çxd5 18.ąa4
This is the move I was worried about during the above-mentioned game. Instead 18.ąxd5 e6 19.ądd1 a6= is not dangerous.

18...ąc5!
This solves all Black's problems, but it requires accurate calculation.

19.ąa3
The alternative is: 19.ąxc5 ąxc5 20.ąg4 (20.ąb4 ąc6 21.ąxa5 ąc3 is just equal) 20...ąc7 21.ąb4 ąc6 22.ąxc6 ąxc6 23.ąxd5 ęxc1 24.ąxe7+ ąf8 25.ąxc1 ąxe7 26.ąxa5 ęd2 27.ąc7+ ąf8=

Conclusion

When White develops with A) 9.ąe3 Black should immediately strike in the centre with 9...ąxf3 and 10...e5, which promises him equal chances in all lines.

Chasing the black knight away with B) 9.d5 is a more challenging approach, but in return White loses time with his queen, and with careful play Black can be confident of equalizing. However White must also play with care; as I point out in the notes to line B11, the pawn sacrifice with 14...ąd7 and 15...c5 can be dangerous in certain circumstances. Finally in line B234 I refer to a game in which I suffered, but that was because I chose the wrong square for my queen; with 16...ąc7!N Black can solve all his problems.
Chapter 1

1.d4 e5 2.c4 g6
A) 3.dxe5 c6 8
B) 3.d5 9
C) 3.g5 e4 4.g4 c5 10
   C1) 5.d5 10
   C2) 5.dxc6 11

Chapter 2

1.d4 e5 2.c4 g6 3.f3 d5 4.cxd5 e6 5.e4 d5 6.dxe5
e6 7.exf6
A) 6.a4 14
B) 6.dxc6 g7 7.e3 0-0 15
   B1) 8.dxc6 15
   B2) 8.f4 g5 9.d5 a5! 10.d4 e5! 11.xe5 xex5 12.fxe5 h4! 13.g3 e7 14.d4 d8!
       15.b4 eac4 16
          B21) 16.xxc4 wxb4 17.f3 wxc4 18.e3 e8! 19
          B211) 19.d1 20
          B212) 19.e6 20
          B213) 19.d1 20
   B22) 16.d3 21
   B3) 8.d2 c6 9.0-0-0 f5 22
      B31) 10.exf5 23
      B32) 10.h4 xe4 11.h5 gxh5! 23
         B321) 12.d5 24
         B322) 12.xhx5 25
   B33) 10.e5 b4 29
      B331) 11.g6 29
      B332) 11.h4 e6 30
         B3321) 12.b1 31
         B3322) 12.h5 31
         B3323) 12.a3 32
      B333) 11.h3 34

Chapter 3

1.d4 e5 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6
A) 4.d5 38
B) 4..g2 d5 39
   B1) 5.b3 39
   B2) 5.a4 39
   B3) 5.a4 41
Chapter 4

1.d4 .gf6 2.c4 6 3.g3 6 4.gf3 6 5.b3 6g7 6g2 0–0
A) 7.4b2 44
B) 7.0-0 dxc4 8.bxc4 c5 45
   B1) 9.e3 45
   B2) 9.4b2 6b6 10.6b3 6e4 11.e3 6c6 12.6e5 6d6 47
   B21) 13.6d2 47
   B22) 13.6xc6 48

Chapter 5

1.d4 .gf6 2.c4 6 3.g3 6 4.g2 6 5.6f3 6g7 6.0–0 0–0
A) 7.6a4 51
B) 7.6bd2 51
C) 7.6c3 dxc4 55
   C1) 8.e4 55
   C2) 8.a4 56
   C3) 8.6e5 57

Chapter 6

1.d4 .gf6 2.c4 6 3.g3 6 4.g2 6 5.6f3 6g7 6.0–0 0–0 7.6b3 6b6
A) 8.c5 59
B) 8.6xb6 59
C) 8.6c3 6d8 60
   C1) 9.cxd5 61
   C2) 9.gf4 61
   C3) 9.6a3 62
   C4) 9.6d1 63
   C5) 9.h3 64
   C6) 9.c5 64

Chapter 7

1.d4 .gf6 2.c4 6 3.g3 6
A) 4.gf3 68
B) 4.6g2 65 69
   B1) 5.6f3 69
   B2) 5.cxd5 cxd5 70
      B21) 6.6c3 6g7 70
         B211) 7.6h3 70
         B212) 7.e3 71
      B22) 6.6f3 6g7 72
         B221) 7.6c3 72
         B222) 7.6e5 6e4 74
Chapter 8

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5
A) 4.g4 86
B) 4.h4 87
C) 4.f3 c5! 90
   C1) 5.cxd5 90
   C2) 5.dxc5 91
D) 4.♘d2 92

Chapter 9

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♗a4+ ♞d7 5.♗b3 dxc4 6.♗xc4 ♝g7
A) 7.♗f4 ♞a6 8.♗f3 0–0 9.e4 c5 95
   A1) 10.e5 96
   A2) 10.dxc5 97
B) 7.e4 0–0 100
   B1) 8.♗f3 100
   B2) 8.e5 102

Chapter 10

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♗b3 dxc4 5.♗xc4 ♝g7 6.e4 0–0
A) 7.♗f4 ♞a6 8.♗f3 c5 106
   A1) 9.♗d1 107
   A2) 9.e5 108
   A3) 9.d5 e6 109
      A31) 10.♗e2 110
      A32) 10.d6 e5! 11.♗xe5 ♞b4 110
         A321) 12.♗c1 111
         A322) 12.♗d1 112
B) 7.♗e2 112

Chapter 11

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.e3 ♝g7
A) 5.b4 0–0 6.♗f3 c6 116
   A1) 7.♗e2 117
   A2) 7.♗b2 118
B) 5.♗b3 e6 120
B1) 6.\(\text{d}f3\) 0–0 120
B11) 7.\(\text{e}e2\) 120
B12) 7.\(\text{d}d2\) 121
B2) 6.\(\text{a}3\) 122
C) 5.\(\text{d}d2\) 124
D) 5.\(\text{c}xd5\) 125

Chapter 12

1.\(d4\) \(\text{d}f6\) 2.\(c4\) \(\text{g}6\) 3.\(\text{c}c3\) \(d5\) 4.\(e3\) \(\text{g}7\) 5.\(\text{f}3\) 0–0
A) 6.\(\text{e}e2\) \(c5\) 128
   A1) 7.\(\text{d}xc5\) 128
   A2) 7.\(\text{c}xd5\) 130
   A3) 7.0–0 \(\text{cxd4}\) 8.\(\text{exd4}\) \(\text{d}c6\) 131
      A31) 9.\(c5\) \(\text{e}e4\) 133
      A311) 10.\(\text{f}4\) 134
      A312) 10.\(\text{e}e3\) 135
   A32) 9.\(\text{c}xd5\) 135
   A33) 9.\(\text{e}el\) \(\text{g}4\) 136
      A331) 10.\(c5\) 136
      A332) 10.\(\text{c}xd5\) 137
      A34) 9.\(h3\) 138
B) 6.\(\text{d}d2\) 139
C) 6.\(\text{d}d3\) 141
D) 6.\(\text{c}xd5\) \(\text{c}xd5\) 7.\(\text{c}c4\) \(\text{b}6\) 143
   D1) 8.\(\text{e}e2\) 143
   D2) 8.\(\text{b}3\) 144

Chapter 13

1.\(d4\) \(\text{d}f6\) 2.\(c4\) \(\text{g}6\) 3.\(\text{c}c3\) \(d5\) 4.\(f4\) \(\text{g}7\)
A) 5.\(\text{b}3\) 149
B) 5.\(\text{a}4\) 150
C) 5.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{h}5\) 152
   C1) 6.\(\text{g}5\) 152
   C2) 6.\(\text{e}3\) 153
   C3) 6.\(\text{d}2\) 154

Chapter 14

1.\(d4\) \(\text{d}f6\) 2.\(c4\) \(\text{g}6\) 3.\(\text{c}c3\) \(d5\) 4.\(f4\) \(\text{g}7\) 5.\(\text{f}3\) 0–0 6.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{dxc4}\)
A) 7.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 8.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{d}5\) 9.\(e4\) \(\text{h}6\) 10.\(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{hxg5}\) 11.\(\text{xg5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 12.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{b}6\) 13.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 160
   A1) 14.\(\text{d}5\) 161
   A2) 14.\(\text{e}2\) 163
B) 7.\(e4\) \(\text{g}4\) 8.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{h}5\) 9.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{xf}3\) 165
   B1) 10.\(\text{xf}3\) 166
Chapter 15

1.d4 ə6 2.c4 g6 3.əc3 d5 4.əf4 əg7 5.e3 c5
A) 6.əxb8?! 173
B) 6.əf3 cxd4 174
   B1) 7.exd4 174
   B2) 7.əxd4 175
C) 6.dxc5 əa5 177
   C1) 7.cxd5 əxd5 178
   C2) 7.əb3 179
   C3) 7.əa4 əxa4 8.əxa4 əd7 9.əc3 əe4! 10.əxd5 əa6 11.f3 əexc5 180
       C31) 12.əg5 182
       C32) 12.əb1 183
       C33) 12.0–0–0 184

Chapter 16

1.d4 əf6 2.c4 g6 3.əc3 d5 4.əf4 əg7 5.e3 c5 6.dxc5 əa5 7.əc1 dxc4 8.əxc4 0–0
A) 9.a3 189
B) 9.əge2 əxc5 10.əb3 əc6 11.əb5 əh5 189
   B1) 12.əc7 192
   B2) 12.əg3 əh4 13.əc7 e5! 193
       B21) 14.əxe5 194
       B22) 14.əg5 əxg5 198
       B221) 15.əxa8 198
       B222) 15.h4 199

Chapter 17

1.d4 əf6 2.c4 g6 3.əc3 d5 4.əf4 əg7 5.e3 c5 6.dxc5 əa5 7.əc1 dxc4 8.əxc4 0–0 9.əf3 əxc5
A) 10.əb5 əe6 205
   A1) 11.əc7?! 205
   A2) 11.əxe6 207
B) 10.əb3 208
C) 10.əb3 əc6 11.0–0 əa5 209
   C1) 12.əe2 210
   C2) 12.h3 əf5 212
       C21) 13.əg5 212
       C22) 13.əe2 əe4 215
       C221) 14.əxe4 əxe4 215
       C222) 14.g4?! 217
       C223) 14.əd5 e5 219
Chapter 18

1. d4 ♜f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♜c3 d5 4. g5 ♜e4

A) 5. ♜f3 227
B) 5. h4 228
C) 5. cxd5 ♜xg5 6. h4 ♜e4! 7. ♜xe4 ♞xd5 8. ♜c3 ♞a5 229
   C1) 9. ♞a4† 230
   C2) 9. e3 231
   C3) 9. ♜f3 232
   C4) 9. h5 233
D) 5. ♜xe4 dxe4 233
   D1) 6. ♞a4† 234
   D2) 6. f3 234
   D3) 6. e3 235
   D4) 6. ♞d2 ♞g7 7. e3 c5 237
      D41) 8. ♜e2 238
      D42) 8. d5 ♞b6! 239
         D421) 9.0–0–0 239
         D422) 9. ♞b1 240

Chapter 19

1. d4 ♜f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♜c3 d5 4. g5 ♜e4 5. ♜f4 ♞xc3 6. bxc3 g7 7. e3 c5 8. ♜f3 0–0

A) 9. ♜b1 245
B) 9. ♞b3 246
C) 9. cxd5 cxd4 10. cxd4 ♞xd5 11. ♜e2 ♜c6 12.0–0 ♞f5 13. ♞a4 ♞a5 247
   C1) 14. ♞xa5 250
   C2) 14. ♞b3 251

Chapter 20

1. d4 ♜f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♜c3 d5 4. g5 ♜e4 5. ♜h4 ♞xc3 6. bxc3 dxc4

A) 7. e4! 256
B) 7. ♞a4† 257
Chapter 21

1. d4 df6 2.c4 g6 3.d3 d5 4.Ag5 De4 5.Ah4 xc3 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 Ac6
   A) 8.Ac3 260
   B) 8.Ae2 261
      C1) 13.Ae2 263
      C2) 13.Ae2 264

Chapter 22

1. d4 df6 2.c4 g6 3.d3 d5 4.Ag5 De4 5.Ah4 xc3 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 Ac6 8.Ae1 Ac7
   A) 9.Ae2 267
   B) 9.Ae1 267
   C) 9.Ae1 Ac6 271
      C1) 10.Ae2 271
      C2) 10.Ae2 273

Chapter 23

1. d4 df6 2.c4 g6 3.d3 d5 4.Ag5 De4 5.Ah4 xc3 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 Ac6 8.Af3 Ag7
   A) 9.Ae2 c5 10.0-0 0-0 277
      A1) 11.Ac5 277
         A21) 14.e4 281
         A22) 14.Af1 282
   B) 9.Ac2 Ac5 10.Ae2 b6 283
      B1) 11.Ac4 283
      B2) 11.Ac2 285
   C) 9.Ac2 b6 285
      C1) 10.Ac5 286
      C2) 10.Ac5 287
      C3) 10.Ac2 0-0 288
         C31) 11.Ac2 288
         C32) 11.0-0 289

Chapter 24

1. d4 df6 2.c4 g6 3.d3 d5 4.Af3 Ag7
   A) 5.Ac4 292
   B) 5.g3 dxc4 6.Ac4 Ac7 7.Ac4 Ac6 293
      B1) 8.Ac5 293
      B2) 8.Ac3 294
Chapter 25

1. d4 ♞f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♞c3 d5 4. ♞f3 ♞g7 5. ♘g5 ♙e4 6. ♙h4 ♙xc3 7. ♙xc3 dxc4

A) 8. ♙e3 297
B) 8. ♙a4+ 298
   B1) 8... ♙d7?! 298
   B2) 8... ♙d7 9. ♙xc4 b6! 299
      B21) 10. ♙g3 300
      B22) 10. ♙b3 ♙a6 11. e3 ♙xf1 301
         B221) 12. ♙xf1 301
         B222) 12. ♙xf1 0–0 13. ♙e2 c5 303
            B2221) 14. ♙fd1 303
            B2222) 14. dxc5 303

Chapter 26

1. d4 ♞f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♞c3 d5 4. ♞f3 ♞g7 5. ♘g5 ♙e4 6. ♙xd5 ♙xc3 7. ♙xc3 dxc4

A) 8. ♙a4+ 306
B) 8. ♙d2 h6 307
   B1) 9. ♙f3 exd5 307
      B11) 10. ♙e3+ 307
      B12) 10. b4 308
   B2) 9. ♙h3 exd5 309
      B21) 10. ♙f4 309
      B22) 10. ♙e3+ ♙f8 11. ♙f4 310
         B221) 11...c6 310
         B222) 11...c5 312
C) 8. ♙f3 exd5 9. e3 0–0 312
   C1) 10. b4 313
   C2) 10. ♙e2 c6 11. 0–0 ♙c6 12. b4 ♙d7 314
      C21) 13. a4 315
      C22) 13. ♙c1 315

Chapter 27

1. d4 ♞f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♞c3 d5 4. ♞f3 ♞g7 5. ♙b3 dxc4 6. ♙xc4 0–0 7. e4 ♙c6

A) 8. ♙d5!! 318
B) 8. ♙f4 318
C) 8. ♙e3 320
D) 8. ♙g5 322
E) 8. h3 323
F) 8. e5 324
Chapter 28

1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.e3 d5 4.f3 g7 5.b3 dxc4 6.xc4 0-0 7.e4 c6 8.e2 g4
A) 9.e3 xf3 328
   A1) 10.xf3 328
   A2) 10.gxf3 e5 329
      A21) 11.dxe5 329
      A22) 11.d5 331
B) 9.d5 a5 332
   B1) 10.a4 xf3 11.xf3 c6 12.0-0 b5! 332
      B11) 13.e4 333
      B12) 13.e1 334
   B2) 10.b4 xf3 11.xf3 c6 334
      B21) 12.dxc6 335
      B22) 12.e3 cxd5 13.exd5 c8 335
         B221) 14.a7 336
         B222) 14.0-0 336
   B23) 12.0-0 b6 13.a4 d7 337
      B231) 14.e3 338
      B232) 14.dxc6 338
      B233) 14.e2 338
      B234) 14.d1 339
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