Grandmaster Repertoire

Boris Avrukh

The Grünfeld Defence

VOLUME TWO

Tired of bad positions? Try the main lines!

QUALITY CHESS
The Grünfeld Defence
Volume Two

By

Boris Avrukh

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The position which occurs after the opening moves 1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.d3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 will provide the starting point for this, the second volume in my two-part work on the Grünfeld. (I am not sure if “Grünfeld Defence” is really an accurate term.) In case the reader is not yet familiar with Volume One, I will once again share the story of how I became a devotee of this wonderful opening. As I wrote in the Preface to the first volume:

“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.”

In the first volume I mentioned the problem of fighting against the Fianchetto Variation, which I had recommended in Grandmaster Repertoire 2 – 1.d4 Volume Two. But this was not the only time I had to offer an antidote ‘against myself’. I have used the main lines involving 3.d3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.e4 in numerous games with the white pieces, and I continue to relish the challenges presented by the Grünfeld from either side of the board. One of my favourite weapons with the white pieces has been the famous 8.b1 system, but as you can see in Chapters 13-16, Black is currently doing fine there, so I have been forced to explore other avenues when playing against my pet opening. Another critical battleground is the 7.c4 system, against which I decided to offer a choice between two different approaches for Black, details of which can be found in Chapters 17-21.

This second volume completes my Grandmaster Repertoire in the Grünfeld. I have gained a lot of enjoyment as well as excellent results over the board with this great opening, and I hope that my two books will help the reader to do the same.

Boris Avrukh
Beer-Sheva, June 2011
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Key to symbols used

± White is slightly better
+i Black is slightly better
± White is better
+i Black is better
→ White has a decisive advantage
→ Black has a decisive advantage
= equality
w with compensation
w 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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Various 5th Moves

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Variation Index

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A) 6.g3  
B) 6.\( \text{d}d2 \) 0–0 7.\( \text{e}c1 \) \( \text{b}b6 \)
   B1) 8.e3  
   B2) 8.\( \text{g}g5 \)
C) 6.\( \text{b}b3 \)
D) 6.\( \text{a}a4^\dagger \)
E) 6.\( \text{g}g5 \) c5 7.\( \text{c}c1 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 8.bxc3 0–0
   E1) 9.\( \text{d}d2 \)
   E2) 9.e3

B2) note to 11.d5!?

B2) after 11.d5!?

E2) after 11.\( \text{d}d2 \)
Various 5th Moves

1.d4 ��f6 2.c4 ��g6 3.�c3 ��d5 4.cxd5 ��xd5 5.�f3 ��g7

This position is frequently reached via the move order of 4.tt':f3 ��g7 5.c xd5 tt:lxd5. The main line is of course 6.e4, but in the present chapter we will pay attention to the significant sidelines of A) 6.g3, B) 6.��d2, C) 6.��b3, D) 6.��a41 and E) 6.��g5.

6.��a4 0–0 7.e4 ��b6 leads to a position from Chapter 2, beginning with the 4.cxd5 ��xd5 5.��a4 move order.

A) 6.g3

10.��e3

10.��a3 was played in the older game Cotta – Mori, Belo Horizonte 1966. At this point Black could have questioned the positioning of the bishop with the energetic 10...c51, with the point that after 11.dxc5 ��d7 12.��b1 ��c7 13.cxb6 ��xb6 Black has promising compensation.

10...��d7 11.��c1 c5 12.��h6 ��c8 13.��xg7 ��xg7

White has managed to trade the dark-squared bishops, but the idea has cost him quite a lot of time, and in the following game Black was able to obtain the upper hand.

14.��a3 ��c7 15.��d1 e6 16.��acl ��f8 17.e3
Chapter 1 – 4.cxd5 \( \text{cxd5} \) 5.\( \text{\textit{d}f3} \)

\( \text{e4} \) 18.e4 \( \text{\textit{b}7} \) 19.\( \text{\textit{e}e1} \) \( \text{\textit{x}g2} \) 20.\( \text{\textit{x}g2} \) \( \text{\textit{xf6}} \)

Black was more comfortable in Meier – Vachier Lagrave, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

B) 6.\( \text{\textit{d}d2} \)

This can sometimes transpose to the better-known 5.\( \text{\textit{d}d2} \) line, but there are also some independent possibilities.

6...0–0 7.\( \text{\textit{e}e1} \)

7.e4 \( \text{\textit{x}c3} \) 8.\( \text{\textit{x}c3} \) \( \text{\textit{g}4} \) reaches a position examined via the 5.\( \text{\textit{d}d2} \) move order in line E of Chapter 3.

7...\( \text{\textit{b}6} \)

Now White’s main possibilities are B1) 8.e3 and B2) 8.\( \text{\textit{g}5} \).

8.\( \text{\textit{f}4} \)

This is not dangerous at all.

8...c5 9.dxc5

9...\( \text{\textit{x}c3} \)

This is an important idea which solves Black’s problems easily.

10.bxc3

10.\( \text{\textit{x}c3} \) also leads nowhere for White:

10...\( \text{\textit{xd}1} \)† 11.\( \text{\textit{xd}1} \) \( \text{\textit{a}4} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{a}a3} \) (12.\( \text{\textit{a}c1} \) \( \text{\textit{d}d8} \)† 13.\( \text{\textit{c}c1} \) \( \text{\textit{xb}2} \) also gives Black no problems.) 12...\( \text{\textit{xb}2} \)† 13.\( \text{\textit{c}c1} \) \( \text{\textit{c}c4} \) 14.\( \text{\textit{a}c3} \) \( \text{\textit{a}a5} \) 15.e4 \( \text{\textit{g}4} \) 16.\( \text{\textit{e}e5} \) \( \text{\textit{e}e6} \) Black was absolutely fine in Partanen – Halmeenmaki, Finland 2001.

10...\( \text{\textit{xd}1} \)† 11.\( \text{\textit{xd}1} \) \( \text{\textit{a}a4} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{c}c6} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{h}h6} \)!! \( \text{\textit{e}e8} \) 14.\( \text{\textit{e}e3} \) \( \text{\textit{e}e6} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{f}b1} \) \( \text{\textit{x}c4} \) 16.g3 \( \text{\textit{a}a6} \)

Black’s position was already preferable in R. Nilsson – Koranyi, corr. 1988.

B1) 8.e3

8...\( \text{\textit{c}6} \! \)

Black prepares the \( \ldots \text{e}5 \) advance, which should ensure an active game for him.

It is worth mentioning that 8...\( \text{\textit{d}d7} \) is too passive, and following 9.a4! a5 10.e4 e5 11.d5 c6 12.\( \text{\textit{g}g5} \)!! \( \text{\textit{f}f6} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{e}e3} \) White obtained some advantage and won a very nice game, Topalov – Cheparinov, Sofia 2008.

9.\( \text{\textit{b}b5} \)

It is natural for White to try and discourage his opponent’s idea. In the event of 9.\( \text{\textit{e}e2} \) \( \text{\textit{e}5} \)
10. dxe5  
9...e5!  
This thematic move still works in spite of White's last move!

10...exd4 11. cxd4 bxc6 12. dxe5  
Black has absolutely no problems.

9...e5!  
This thematic move still works in spite of White's last move!

10. dxe5  
Black has absolutely no problems.

10...exd4 11. cxd4 bxc6 12. dxe5  
Black has absolutely no problems.

12...exd4 11. cxd4 bxc6 12. dxe5  
Black has absolutely no problems.

12...exd4 11. cxd4 bxc6 12. dxe5  
Black has absolutely no problems.

15...e7N 16. c3  
Black has the more promising game, as his bishop pair and active pieces are more significant than his damaged pawn structure.

B2) 8. g5

15...e7N 16. c3  
Black has the more promising game, as his bishop pair and active pieces are more significant than his damaged pawn structure.

B2) 8. g5

8...h6 9. h4  
An interesting alternative is:
9... e6?  
This move is tricky and relatively unexplored.
9... a6?  
One of the points of White's idea is that Black is unable to equalize in the same way as after 8. e4, as after 9... c5?! 10. dxc5  
White gets a winning position with the simple 13. xh6.

Some players have responded with 9... c6  
Black wants to carry out the usual ...c5 advance. In the following encounter White was unable to pose his opponent any problems.

10.e3  
Maybe White should search in the direction of 10.e4?N. In this case I am pretty sure Black should go for the sharp 10... c5 11. d5  
with double-edged play.

10...c5
Chapter 1 – 4.cxd5 \( \triangleleft \) xd5 5.\( \triangleleft \) f3

11.e2

11.exa6 can be met by 11...cxd4! 12.exd4 bxa6 13.e5 \( \triangleleft \) b7 when Black has no problems.
11...cxd4 12.exd4 \( \triangleleft \)! 13.0-0 \( \triangleleft \) e6 14.a3 \( \triangleleft \) c6 15.\( \triangleleft \) e1 \( \triangleleft \) c8
Black easily solved his opening problems in Epishin – Lalic, Seville 2006.

9...g5!
By safeguarding the e7-pawn Black prepares to counterattack using his c-pawn.

10.\( \triangleleft \) g3 c5
From here White can choose between aggression and solidity.

11.d5?!
According to the database this ambitious move has scored 3\( \frac{1}{2} \)/4 for White, including a win by Morozevich over Shirov. Naturally we will consider the alternatives as well.

In the event of 11.dxc5, Black should play in exactly the same way as he does against 8.\( \triangleleft \) f4, as given on page 9: 11...\( \triangleleft \) xc3?! 12.\( \triangleleft \) xc3 \( \triangleleft \) xd1?! 13.\( \triangleleft \) xd1 \( \triangleleft \) a4 14.\( \triangleleft \) c1 \( \triangleleft \) d8?! 15.\( \triangleleft \) e1 Ulibin – Ris, Hoogeveen 2010.

15...\( \triangleleft \) xb2N This natural improvement gives Black a good game with at least equal chances.

11.\( \triangleleft \) b5?!
This kind of material-hunting rarely works well against the Grünfeld, especially when White is behind in development.

11...cxd4 12.\( \triangleleft \) bxd4
In the event of 12.\( \triangleleft \) c7 \( \triangleleft \) c6 13.\( \triangleleft \) xa8 \( \triangleleft \) xa8 Black has more than enough compensation for the exchange.
The same player later 'improved' with 12.\(\textsf{c}6\)xd4?! but soon came unstuck:
12...a6! 13.\(\textsf{c}7\)d5 14.\(\textsf{x}b6\) axb5 15.e3 \(\textsf{xA}2\) Black was already winning in Priehoda – Sutovsky, Kaskady 2002.

12...g4!N
After 12...\(\textsf{c}6\) 13.\(\textsf{xc}6\) \(\textsf{xd}1\)† 14.\(\textsf{xd}1\) bxc6 15.\(\textsf{xe}5\) \(\textsf{xe}6\) 16.\(\textsf{xg}7\) \(\textsf{xe}7\) 17.b3 a5! Black equalized comfortably in Priehoda – Rotstein, Wattens 2000, but thanks to his lead in development can play for more.
13.\(\textsf{e}5\)d6! 14.\(\textsf{f}4\)
14.\(\textsf{e}5\)b4† 15.\(\textsf{c}3\) \(\textsf{xb}2\)† is even worse for White.
14.\(\textsf{g}8\)d7
White is obviously in trouble.

Finally, White has also tried the quiet move:
11.e3
Needless to say, this is unlikely to cause Black any serious problems.
11...\(\textsf{c}6\)

12.d5
12.\(\textsf{xc}5\) is harmless: 12...\(\textsf{xc}3\)† 13.bxc3 \(\textsf{xd}1\)† 14.\(\textsf{xd}1\) \(\textsf{a}4\) Black regains his pawn with a comfortable game, for example:
15.\(\textsf{c}1\) \(\textsf{xc}5\) 16.\(\textsf{d}4\) \(\textsf{e}4\) (Another idea is 16...\(\textsf{d}7\)??N intending ...\(\textsf{ac}8\).)
17.\(\textsf{xc}6\) bxc6 18.\(\textsf{c}4\) \(\textsf{xc}3\) 19.\(\textsf{xg}3\) \(\textsf{g}7\) = Schmidt – Ribli, Wijk aan Zee 1972.
12...\(\textsf{xc}3\)†
This is the simplest solution, although Black can also consider 12...\(\textsf{b}4\)? 13.d6 with complex play, as in Safin – Greenfeld, Calicut 2007.
13.\(\textsf{xc}3\) \(\textsf{xd}5\) 14.\(\textsf{xd}5\) \(\textsf{xd}5\) 15.\(\textsf{xc}5\)
We have been following the game Bukic – Ribli, Bucharest 1971. At this point Black's most accurate continuation would have been:

15...\(\textsf{f}6\)!N
With the following possible continuation:
16.\(\textsf{b}5\)
After 16.\(\textsf{d}3\) \(\textsf{e}6\) 17.\(\textsf{b}1\) \(\textsf{d}8\) White's bishop pair is not particularly significant, and in the event of 18.0–0 Black can even think about the sharp 18...g4?! followed by ...\(\textsf{d}2\).
16...\(\textsf{d}7\) 17.0–0 \(\textsf{e}4\) 18.\(\textsf{d}5\) \(\textsf{e}8\)
I prefer this over 18...\(\textsf{e}6\) 19.\(\textsf{xc}6\) bxc6 20.\(\textsf{a}5\)! when White has a nagging edge.
19.\(\textsf{c}1\) \(\textsf{f}6\)
Black is absolutely fine.
This new move enables Black to solve his problems with ease. So far the only move to have been tested is 11...e6, after which 12.d6 exd5 13.h4 led to an extremely complex game in Morozevich – Shirov, Pamplona 2006.

12...exd5 13.exd5

Obviously 13.exd5? can be met by 13...a5†.

13...d6! 14.xd8

14.d4 e4 looks risky for White.

14...xd8

Black is at least equal in this queenless position, for instance:

15.e7

Otherwise ...e4 might prove annoying.

15...e8 16.e3 e6

Black has the initiative.

I was surprised to discover that this odd-looking move has been played in over 500 games, and has been tested by several strong players from Capablanca to Kasimdzhanov.

6...xc3 7.bxc3 c5

This thematic reaction should enable Black to count on a good game.

8.e3 0–0 9.a3

The only significant alternative is 9.e2, which transposes to line A2 of Chapter 12 in Volume One, in which the position is reached via the move order 4.e3 g7 5.f3 0–0 6.e2 c5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.b3 xc3 9.bxc3.

9...xd4!

A well-timed decision.

10.xd4

10.cxd4

This natural recapture has been less popular, for reasons that will soon become clear.
14 Various 5th Moves

10...<e8
The point is that Black now threatens an annoying check on a5.

11.<e1
Preparing to block with the queen on c3.

11...<e6 12.<b2 <a5† 13.<d2
Now in the game Sandoval - Corsi Ferrari, Mar del Plata 2008, Black should have played:

13...<c8N 14.<e2 <b6
Attacking the a2-pawn.

15.<b3 <d5 16.0-0 <e5
Black has obtained comfortable equality without any difficulties.

10...<c6
It is hard to imagine that White can aspire to an opening advantage in a position with this pawn structure.

11.<e2 <d5 12.<b4 <c6

13.<b2?! This strange-looking move was an attempt to continue the fight. The intention is admirable, but objectively White should have admitted that he achieved nothing from the opening and settled for 13.<xc6 (or 13.<b3 repeating the position) 13...<xc6 14.0-0 <f6 when the position is equal.

13...<b6! 14.0-0 <xb2 15.<xb2 <d7
In this position the players agreed a draw in Bruzon Bautista - Sutovsky, Pamplona 2004. However, it seems to me that Black's superior pawn structure offers him the better long-term chances.

D) 6.<a4†
This early queen sortie has not attracted many followers, but it is occasionally used as a surprise weapon.

6...\texttt{xd7} 7.\texttt{c2}

7.\texttt{b3}

This move is also harmless.

7...\texttt{xc3}

Black has more frequently defended or retreated his knight, but exchanging it is the simplest way to solve his opening problems.

8.\texttt{bxc3 c5 9.e3 0–0 10.\texttt{e2 c7 11.0–0 c6}}

We have already seen several examples featuring the same pawn structure. It is virtually always good for Black, and the present case is no exception.

12.\texttt{d1 ac8 13.b3}

This was Turner – Seidman, New York 1957, and here I would recommend the natural-looking continuation:

13...\texttt{a5N 14.b2 b6}

Black has a comfortable game.

7...\texttt{xc3 8.bxc3 c5 9.e3}

9.e4?! looks too loosening, and after 9...\texttt{xd4 10.cxd4 \texttt{xc6 11.e3 g4 12.d1 0–0}} Black was already more than happy in Berezovics – Pribyl, Decin 1996.

9...\texttt{c6 10.e2 0–0 11.0–0}

Once again, the same pawn structure results in a pleasant game for Black, especially with the white queen misplaced on c2.

11...\texttt{xd4?}

Normally Black would be in no hurry to release the tension, but in the present position it makes some sense to harass the white queen.

12.\texttt{xd4 \texttt{xc8 13.b3}}

The b5-pawn is untouchable, as demonstrated by 14.\texttt{xb5? b8 15.a4 \texttt{xb5! 16.xb5 dxd4}} when Black wins.

14...\texttt{e5! 15.dxe5}

15.d5 runs into 15...\texttt{e4 16.dxc6 e6!} when Black is doing well.

15...\texttt{xe5 16.xe5}

This position occurred in Mohr – Krasenkow, Palma de Mallorca 1989. At this point I would suggest:
16...\(\text{Ke6}N\)

Based on the following line:

17.\(\text{Bxb}5\) \(\text{Bxd}2\) 18.\(\text{Bf}3\) \(\text{Bd}5\) 19.\(\text{Bxd}5\) \(\text{Bxd}5\) 20.\(\text{Bd}4\) \(\text{Bxd}4\) 21.\(\text{exd}4\) \(\text{Bf}d8\)

Black will regain his pawn to reach an absolutely equal endgame.

E) 6.\(\text{Bg}5\)

This is quite a serious sideline which should be considered carefully.

6...\(\text{c5}\) 7.\(\text{Ec}1\)

This is the consistent follow-up to the previous move.

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

This has been employed by some strong players, and overall it seems like the best solution for Black.

8.\(\text{Bxc}3\) 0–0

In this position White's main moves are E1) 9.\(\text{Bd}2\) and E2) 9.\(\text{e}3\).

9.\(\text{e}4\) transposes to variation B of Chapter 15.

E1) 9.\(\text{Bd}2\)

Here I believe we should follow the example of Emil Sutovsky, a leading Grünfeld expert.

9...\(\text{Bg}4\) 10.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{Bxf}3\) 11.\(\text{gx}f3\) \(\text{Cc}6\) 12.\(\text{Bg}2\)

Another idea is:

12.d5 \(\text{Ce}5\) 13.\(\text{Bc}2\)

Gavrilo – Bagon, Vladimir 2008. Now an obvious improvement would be:

13...\(\text{c}4!)N\)

Preventing White from supporting his centre by means of c3–c4, and even more importantly, creating tactical opportunities associated with a knight jump to d3. Here are some lines I analysed:

14.\(\text{h}4\)

14.\(\text{f}4?\) runs into 14...\(\text{Bd}3!\) 15.\(\text{Bxd}3\) \(\text{Cc}3\) with a serious advantage for Black.

14.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{f}5\) 15.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{Bf}7!\) is also poor for White.

14...\(\text{Cc}8\) 15.\(\text{Bg}1\)
In the event of 15.h5 Black once again has 15...d3† as after 16.xd3 wxd5 both of White's bishops are under attack.
15...wd6 16.h5 e6
Black has the better game.

12...wd5!
Black must play energetically, otherwise White will have time to consolidate his two-bishop advantage with f4.

13.h4 e5

14.dxe5?
This is a serious mistake which allows Black to obtain a powerful initiative.
The correct continuation was: 14.c4 wd6 15.dxe5 Attempting to open the position for the bishops must be the critical idea. (15.d5 e7 looks comfortable for Black.) 15...fxe5 16.d5 The most challenging move. (After 16.0-0 h5 17.g3 ad8 Black has a good game.) 16...h2 17.0-0 xa2 18.xc5 a5! The a-pawn offers Black good counterplay.

14...wc4! 15.f4

15.xe5!
This strong idea was missed by White.

16.fxe5 wh4 17.0-0 ad8 18.wxe2 xex5 19.f4 xc7
Despite the opposite-coloured bishops Black maintained a strong initiative in Hochstrasser – Sutovsky, Zurich 2009.

E2) 9.e3
9...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textbullet}}\textbf{\textbullet}}\textbf{\textbullet}\textbf{\textbullet} a6?\
Black ignores the traditional rule of “knights before bishops” in order to attack the a2-pawn, highlighting a drawback of White’s early rook development. In my view it is Black’s most promising idea in the position.

10.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}}\textbf{\textbullet}{\textbullet} a4
In one subsequent game White tried 10.\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}\textbf{\textbullet}{\textbullet} d2 but without much success: 10...\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}\textbf{\textbullet}{\textbullet} c6 11.\textbf{\textbullet}c2 \textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}c8 12.0–0 \textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}h6 13.\textbf{\textbullet}f4 cxd4 14.\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}xd4 \textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}a5! 15.\textbf{\textbullet}c4 \textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}xc4 16.\textbf{\textbullet}xc4 \textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}xd2 17.\textbf{\textbullet}xd2 e5 18.dxe5 \textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}xe5+ Babu - Gupta, Hyderabad 2005.

10...\textbf{\textbullet}d6 11.\textbf{\textbullet}e2
Now in the game Banikas - Eljanov, Plovdiv 2003, Black missed a very strong idea:

11...\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}\textbf{\textbullet}{\textbullet} d5!N
This queen activation is surprisingly problematic for White. First he must worry about the a2-pawn.

12.c4
In the event of 12.\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}b1 Black can simply play 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 a6! followed by ...b5.

12...\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}\textbf{\textbullet}{\textbullet} e4!
The queen does a great job on this unusual square.

13.\textbf{\textbullet}xc5
White cannot play 13.d5? in view of 13...\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}xd5!, exploiting the pin along the fourth rank.

13...h6 14.\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}f4

14...g5!
Black continues to play energetically.

15.\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}g3 g4 16.\textbf{\textbullet}h4 \textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}ad8 17.0–0 \textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}d2↑
Black has great compensation for the pawn.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Over the course of this chapter we have examined a wide variety of set-ups, each giving rise to disparate sets of problems for each player. There are not really any common themes that can be applied across all the variations examined here, although certain ideas, most notably the inclusion of a timely ...\textcolor{blue}{\textbullet}xc3†, occurred in a few different lines. Instead of trying to formulate general principles, in the present chapter we would do better to keep in mind that all of the lines examined are distinct from one another. Only by focusing on the specific features of the position in front of us can we optimize our chances of success. I hope that the material presented here will help to facilitate that goal.
Various 5th Moves

5.\( \textit{a4} \)

Variation Index

1.\( d4 \) \( f6 \) 2.\( c4 \) \( g6 \) 3.\( c3 \) \( d5 \) 4.\( cxd5 \) \( \textit{xd5} \) 5.\( \textit{a4} \)

A) 8.\( \textit{xb6}?! \)
B) 8.\( \textit{f3} \) \( \textit{g4} \)
   B1) 9.\( \textit{e2} \)
   B2) 9.\( \textit{c5} \)

B1) after 13.f4

B2) note to 11.\( \textit{a6} \)

B2) after 15.\( \textit{exe3} \)

13...\( \textit{f6}! \)N

12...\( \textit{d8}?! \)N

15...\( \textit{xh3} \)N
20 Various 5th Moves

I.d4 ��f6 2.c4 ��g6 3.��c3 ��d5 4.cxd5 ��xd5
5.��a4

This remarkable move was introduced into practice by the Armenian IM Nadanian in 1996. It quickly gained considerable popularity, but Black has gradually found some effective weapons against it. White is aiming to get control over the centre, while avoiding the knight swap on c3.

5 ... ��g7

The most natural move and a good one. There are several alternatives for Black and I would just like to mention 5...c5!? 6.dxe5 ��c6, which I think leads to an interesting battle where Black is by no means worse.

6.e4 ��b6 7.��e3

7.��f3 does not have any independent value, since 7...0–0 8.��e2 ��g4 9.��e3 leads into line B1.

7...0–0

We shall examine A) 8.��xb6? and B) 8.��f3, although White also has:

8.��c5 doesn't make much sense when the b7-pawn is defended. Play may continue: 8...��d7 9.��c1 ��xc5 10.��xc5 ��c6 11.��f3 ��g4

12.��e2 ��b6 White is behind in development and his next move doesn't help. 13.��c2?! ��xf3 14.gxf3 ��d8 15.��d2 ��a5 Black had an edge in Legky – Mrdja, Cannes 1999.

8.��e2 ��c6 9.��f3 ��g4 transposes to B1.

A) 8.��xb6?!

The knight exchange on b6 cannot promise White any advantage, but it has nevertheless occurred several times in tournament practice.

8...��xb6

9.��c4

In one game my opponent chose the prophylactic 9.h3?! but that appears too slow when White is lagging in development. Black managed to seize the initiative with energetic play: 9...c5 10.��f3 ��c6 11.d5 ��b4! 12.��d2 (the tactic 12.a3? ��xb2 shows how useful the semi-open a-file is to Black) 12...f5! Black was clearly better in Legky – Avrukh, Paris 1998.

9...c5 10.��e2 ��c6 11.dxc5 ��xc5

11...��e5?! looks promising as well.

12.��xd8 ��xd8
Unexpectedly White finds himself in trouble, due to Black’s pressure on the queenside.

13.\textit{xc}5 \textit{e}5! 14.\textit{c}1 \textit{e}6 15.\textit{b}5 \textit{d}7!
Black is making all the best moves.

16.\textit{f}4 \textit{x}b5 17.\textit{f}xe5 \textit{h}6! 18.\textit{a}1 \textit{d}2+–
Black had a decisive advantage in Suvrajit – Konguvel, Raipur 2002.

\textbf{B) 8.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}4}

Black shouldn’t rush to strike in the centre with 8...\textit{xa}4 9.\textit{xa}4 \textit{c}5 since White can obtain the better chances by: 10.\textit{d}1 \textit{b}6 11.\textit{d}2!

10...\textit{e}5
Black can temporarily win a pawn by 10...\textit{xa}4 11.\textit{wa}4 \textit{xb}2, but after 12.\textit{b}1 \textit{c}3+ 13.\textit{f}1 White will regain the b7-pawn with dividends, Juszczak – Zielinska, Wisla 1998.

\textbf{11.\textit{xe}5}
I don’t believe in the knight exchange:
11.\textit{xb}6!! \textit{xb}6
White’s score from this position is horrible, and surely the most White can hope for is equality.

12.\textit{xe}5
Clearly inferior is: 12.\textit{d}4 \textit{xe}2 13.\textit{xe}2 \textit{c}5!
Black takes over the initiative. 14.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 15.\textit{d}1 \textit{c}8 16.a3 \textit{c}5 17.\textit{b}5 \textit{c}4! 18.0–0 \textit{c}6 19.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}6 Black had a clear positional edge in Schnider – Feher, Zalakaros 2004.
Black has comfortable play in this roughly equal position.
14...\texttt{d7} 15.a3 e6
15...f5 also comes into consideration.
16.\texttt{ad1} fxe5 17.\texttt{e}d5+ \texttt{e}6 18.\texttt{b}d1 \texttt{g}7
The position was balanced in Legky – Mikhalevski, Montreal 2003.

11...\texttt{e}xe2 12.\texttt{f}xe2 \texttt{xa}4 13.f4

Another possibility is 14.\texttt{f}3 f5 and now it's important that the tactical idea 15.d6 is not dangerous for Black: 15...fxe4 16.\texttt{c}4+ e6! 17.dxc7 \texttt{d}3! 18.\texttt{x}d3 exd3 19.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{ac}8 Only Black can be better here.

14...f5
The point of Black's novelty; White is unable to maintain his centre.

15.0-0
Or 15.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{d}7 16.0-0 (16.0-0-0 fxe4 17.\texttt{x}e4 \texttt{ad}8 is also fine for Black) 16...fxe4 17.\texttt{ad}1 \texttt{b}6 18.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{f}5 with roughly equal play.

15...fxe4 16.\texttt{ad}1 \texttt{b}6! 17.\texttt{x}b6 axb6 18.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{d}7 19.a3 b5 20.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{d}6 Black is by no means worse.

B2) 9.\texttt{e}5

This makes some sense here, as White is attacking the b7-pawn.

9...\texttt{c}6
I like this approach, which is clearly in the spirit of the Grünfeld; Black sacrifices the b7-pawn for the initiative.
White has to accept the challenge, as otherwise he is not really fighting for an advantage. For instance: 10.d5 \( \square e5 \) 11.\( \square e2 \) \( \square xf3 \) 12.gxf3 \( \square c4 \) 13.\( \square c2 \) (13.\( \square d4?! \) \( \square xb2 \) 14.\( \square d2 \) \( \square c4 \) 15.\( \square c3 \) e5! left White a pawn down for no compensation in Kantorik – Llaneza Vega, Pardubice 2008) 13...\( \square xe3 \) (13...\( \squarexb2 \) 14.\( \square b1 \) \( \square xe3 \) 15.\( \square xe3 \) \( \square g7 \) 16.a4! is far from clear) 14.\( \square xe3 \) e6! 15.\( \square xe6 \) \( \square h4\uparrow \) Black has an initiative.

10...\( \square b8\uparrow \)

Weaker is: 10...\( \square c8 \) 11.\( \square c5 \) \( \square xf3 \) 12.\( \square xf3 \) \( \square xd4 \) 13.\( \square d1 \) \( \square d8 \) (13...\( \square d8 \) 14.\( \square a6 \) \( \square b8 \) 15.0–0 is good for White) 14.\( \square c1 \) White was slightly better. Luehrig – Svartho, e-mail 2001.

11.\( \square a6 \)

This is clearly the critical continuation. Black has no problems after:

11.\( \square c5 \) \( \square xf3 \) 12.gxf3
Recapturing with the queen is no good:
12.\( \square xf3 \) \( \square xd4 \) 13.\( \square d1 \) \( \square c4 \) This tactic strikingly demonstrates why the black queen should go to b8 rather than c8. 14.\( \square xc4 \) (after 14.\( \square xd4 \) \( \square b4\uparrow \) 15.\( \square e2 \) \( \square xb2 \) White has nothing better than 16.a3 \( \square xd4 \) 17.\( \square xd4 \) \( \square xd4 \) and Black is a healthy pawn up) 14...\( \square b4\uparrow \) 15.\( \square d2 \) \( \square xc4 \) 16.\( \square c1 \) \( \square xa2 \) Black was just a pawn up in Cody – Baronsley, e-mail 1998.

12.d5

I also examined 12.dxe5 \( \square xe5 \) 13.0–0 and from several attractive ideas my preference is for:
13...\( \square c8 \) 14.\( \square f4 \) \( \square xf3 \) 15.gxf3 \( \square b8 \)! Chasing the knight from b7 so that the d8-square will
Various 5th Moves

become available for a black rook. 16.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{h3}\)
17.\(\text{e2}\) (17.\(\text{g3}\) leads to a difficult position for
White after 17...\(\text{fd8}\) 18.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{d2!}\) 19.\(\text{e3}\)
\(\text{bc4}\!\)) 17...\(\text{bc4}\) 18.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{fd8!}\) Black has
a serious initiative. (Less strong is 18...\(\text{xc4}\)
19.\(\text{d3!} \text{e5}\) 20.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 21.\(\text{f4!}\) and White
forces simplification to an equal endgame.)

12...\(\text{b4}\) 13.\(\text{c5}\)

13...\(\text{b6xd5!}\)
A nice tactical idea that gives Black good
play.

14.\(\text{b7}\)
I also looked at: 14.exd5 \(\text{e4}\)

15.\(\text{ex4}\) (or 15.0-0 \(\text{xa6}\) [15...\(\text{xf3}\) 16.\(\text{gf3}\)
\(\text{h3}\) 17.\(\text{b7!} \text{xf1}\) 18.\(\text{xf1}\) \(\text{xc5}\)
17.\(\text{xc7} \text{xc7}\) 18.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{xf3}\) 19.\(\text{gf3}\) \(\text{ae8!}\)

15...\(\text{xf3}\!\)
I found this relatively clear-cut route to
equality. Instead in Kiss - Gara, Hungary 2008,
Black understandably couldn't resist playing
the fantastic 15...\(\text{xa6}\) 16.\(\text{xa8}\) \(\text{xc5}\) 17.\(\text{d5}\).
The situation is rather unclear, although Black
should have enough compensation for the
exchange.

16.\(\text{gf3} \text{d8}\) 17.\(\text{b3}\)
After 17.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{d3\text{f}}\) 18.\(\text{xd3} \text{xb7}\) White
is worse.

17...\(\text{xf3!}\)
The key move.

18.\(\text{xa8}\)
Another important line is: 18.\(\text{xb4}\) \(\text{a5!}\)
19.\(\text{b5}\) (After 19.\(\text{b3} \text{a7}\) 20.\(\text{d5} \text{xc5}\)
White can win a pawn but he finds himself
in trouble: 21.\(\text{xf7\text{t}} \text{g7}\) 22.\(\text{d5 c6!}\) 23.\(\text{xc6}\)
\(\text{b4\text{f}}\) Black will continue 24...\(\text{ed2}\) with a
powerful initiative.) 19...\(\text{xc5}\) 20.\(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{xb7}\)
21.\(\text{exe5} \text{bab8}\) Despite being a pawn up, it is
White who is fighting for equality.
Conclusion

Nadanian's 5. \( \text{d}a4 \) can be answered in many ways, but I consider the natural 5... \( \text{g}7 \) 6.e4 \( \text{b}6 \) 7.e3 0–0 to be entirely satisfactory for Black. The most critical line is then 8.f3 \text{g}4 9.c5, but I believe that the combative 9... \text{c}6 10.xb7 \text{b}8! offers Black full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

I believe that only Black can try to win this endgame.

22.\text{e}2 \text{d}4 23.\text{hd}1 \text{xe}5 24.xa7 \text{b}5 25.a3 \text{g}7

Black is marginally better, although White should be able to hold.
Various 5th Moves

5.\( \text{d2} \)

Variation Index

1.d4 \( \text{f6} \) 2.c4 \( \text{g6} \) 3.\( \text{c3} \) d5 4.cxd5 \( \text{xd5} \) 5.\( \text{d2} \)

5...\( \text{g7} \) 6.e4 \( \text{xc3} \) 7.\( \text{xc3} \) 0–0

A) 8.\( \text{e2} \)
B) 8.\( \text{c1} \) c5! 9.d5 \( \text{xc3†} \) 10.\( \text{xc3} \) e6
   B1) 11.\( \text{c4} \)
   B2) 11.d6
C) 8.\( \text{d2} \) c5!
   C1) 9.dxc5
   C2) 9.d5
D) 8.\( \text{c4} \) c5 9.d5 \( \text{xc3†} \) 10.bxc3 \( \text{d6}! \)
   D1) 11.\( \text{e2} \)
   D2) 11.\( \text{f3} \)
   D3) 11.\( \text{e2} \)
E) 8.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{g4} \)
   E1) 9.\( \text{d2} \)
   E2) 9.\( \text{e2} \)

C2) after 12.\( \text{f3} \)
E1) after 18.\( \text{d1} \)
E2) after 13.\( \text{b3} \)
White’s last move sets up a clear idea: he would like to play e4 next, and in the event of a knight capture on c3, to recapture with bishop. For some reason this rather fashionable line has rarely occurred in my own games. Of course I was always aware of it, and for many years my intended response was the system starting with the retreat 5...\texttt{d}b6. However, I have more recently been inspired by the ease with which Emil Sutovsky, one of the world’s leading Grünfeld theoreticians - not to mention my team-mate from both the “Ashdod” Club and the Israeli national team - has solved his problems in this line.

5...\texttt{g}7 6.e4
6.\texttt{f}3 reaches line B of Chapter 1.

6...\texttt{xc}3

In terms of both popularity and statistical success, this move ranks as a clear second choice behind the main line of 6...\texttt{b}6. However, as long as it is followed up correctly, I believe it is the preferable solution for Black.

7.\texttt{xc}3

Another interesting idea which has recently become popular is 7...c5 8.d5 \texttt{xc}3\texttt{t} 9.\texttt{xc}3 0–0. Black has achieved decent results from this position, nevertheless castling immediately is my preferred choice.

We have reached the main tabiya for this variation. At this point White has a wide choice, the main options being A) 8.\texttt{e}2, B) 8.\texttt{c}1, C) 8.\texttt{d}2, D) 8.\texttt{c}4 and E) 8.\texttt{f}3.

A) 8.\texttt{e}2

At first glance this move looks strange, but it is actually quite logical as White wants to play \texttt{f}3 without running into the pinning ...\texttt{g}4. The drawback is that this move does not exert...
any direct influence on the centre and Black easily carries out his planned counterplay.

8...\(\text{c5}\) 9.d5 \(\text{e6}\)

This undermining move is typical for the present variation, and for the Grünfeld in general.

10.\(\text{f3}\) exd5 11.exd5

8...\(\text{d7}\)

11...\(\text{d6}\)? This natural blockading move is a good alternative. 12.\(\text{xg7}\) This seems slightly inaccurate. (Preferable was 12.0–0, although after 12...\(\text{d7}\) 13.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{b6}\) 14.\(\text{fd1}\) \(\text{g4}\) Black has a decent position.) 12...\(\text{xg7}\) 13.\(\text{d2}\)

12.0–0

In the event of 12.\(\text{d2}\)? as played in B. Schmidt – Schlick, Germany 2009, Black can reply with the extremely strong 12...\(\text{f6!}\) with the point that 13.\(\text{d1}\) \(\text{e4}\) 14.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 15.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{a5}\) is highly unpleasant for White.

12...\(\text{b6}\) 13.\(\text{xg7}\) \(\text{xc7}\) 14.\(\text{c2}\)

White must work for equality, and this move looks like the right way to do it.

14.d6 is riskier as the d-pawn lacks support:

14...\(\text{f6}\) 15.\(\text{d8}\) \(\text{fd1}\) This was Teodorescu – Ocnarescu, Buzias 2002, and now after the strong 16...\(\text{e6!}\) (intending ...\(\text{d5}\)) it will be hard for White to hold onto the d6-pawn.

14...\(\text{xd5}\) 15.\(\text{fd1}\) \(\text{f5}\) 16.\(\text{c3}\)\(\text{f6}\)

16...\(\text{g8}\) is not an improvement, as after 17.\(\text{d3}\) the c-pawn will soon fall.

17.\(\text{xc5}\)

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

Black wisely avoids 17...\(\text{xb2}\), after which 18.\(\text{d4}\) gives White a nice initiative for the pawn, while Black's pieces remain very passive.
18.\textit{\textbf{\textit{d4}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f6}}}} 19.\textit{\textit{\textbf{x6}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{x6}}}

The position was equal in Zueger – Schlick, Germany 2006.

**B) 8.\textit{\textbf{\textit{c1}}}**

![Chess diagram 1]

This can be considered a thematic move for the present line, as White once again wants to recapture on c3 with a piece rather than a pawn.

8...\textit{\textbf{\textit{c5}}?!}

Amazingly this natural move has only been seen in two games, but a more telling fact is that both of them were high-level grandmaster affairs.

9.\textit{\textbf{\textit{d5}}}

This was White's choice in both games. Presumably the reason why Black's previous move has been so rare is that players have been worried about:

9.\textit{\textbf{\textit{dxc5N}}}

This is playable enough, but Black's resources are quite sufficient.

9...\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xd1}}}†} 10.\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xd1}}}}

The exposed position of White's king clearly gives Black some compensation, although it is not completely clear how he should proceed on the next move.

10...\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{h6}}?!}}

This is my first choice, although Black is probably also fine after 10...\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d8}}}†} or 10...\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e6}}}†}.

11.\textit{\textbf{\textit{d2}}?!}

This looks like White's best move.

Instead after 11.\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c2}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e6}}} 12.\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b3}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c8}}} 13.\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d2}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xd2}}} 14.\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xd2}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c6}}} Black has powerful compensation and it seems to me that it is White who will be fighting for equality.**

11...\textit{\textbf{\textit{d8}}} 12.\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f3}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{g4}}}}

Black can also consider 12...\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e6}}}†}.

13.\textit{\textbf{\textit{e1}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xf3}}} 14.\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xh6}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xe4}}} 15.\textit{\textit{f3}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d5}}}}

The position is roughly equal, as White's bishop pair is balanced by Black's healthy development and coordination.

9...\textit{\textbf{\textit{xc3}}}† 10.\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xc3}}}}

Of course White recaptures this way in order to make sense of his previous rook move.
10...e6
Black follows his usual plan. I would also like to point out an interesting alternative, which is in the spirit of line D below: 10...d6N
The following line looks logical: 11.\texttt{g}f3 \texttt{g}g4 12.\texttt{e}e2 \texttt{xf}3 It is important to play this before White can retreat his knight to d2. 13.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{d}d7 14.0–0 b5 Black has reasonable chances in this complex position.

After the text move Black has a positional threat of ...exd5, leading to a pawn structure which is almost always pleasant for him in the present variation, as the previous exchange of two sets of minor pieces reduces the dynamic potential of White’s position with the passed d-pawn.

With this in mind, it is logical for White to try and prevent this structure from occurring, and so far he has tried both B1) 11.\texttt{c}c4 and B2) 11.d6.

It is hardly worth mentioning that 11.\texttt{xe}c5?! is too greedy, and after 11...\texttt{d}d7 or simply 11...exd5 Black will obtain more than enough activity for the pawn.

\textbf{B1) 11.\texttt{c}c4}

11...exd5 12.\texttt{x}d5 \texttt{d}d7 13.\texttt{e}e2
13.\texttt{f}f3 can be met by: 13...\texttt{f}f6 14.\texttt{xc}5 (14.0–0 \texttt{xd}5 15.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{d}d6 gives Black a comfortable position.) 14...\texttt{e}7! Black easily solves his problems.

13...\texttt{f}6 14.0–0

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

14...\texttt{xd}5
Perhaps an even simpler route to equality would have been 14...\texttt{e}8N 15.\texttt{xc}5 \texttt{e}7 16.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{xd}5 17.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{xe}4 18.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{xe}4 19.\texttt{d}8+ \texttt{g}7 when White is unable to exploit the pin along the back rank.

15.\texttt{ex}d5 \texttt{b}6
This move not only defends the c5-pawn, but also prepares to activate the bishop via b7 or a6.

16.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{a}6 17.\texttt{e}1

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{figure}
\end{center}
17...\textit{dxe2}!
This secures an equal major piece middlegame.

18.\textit{xe}2 \textit{d}6 19.\textit{h}4 \textit{ad}8 20.\textit{d}2 \textit{fe}8
Black has no problems and the players soon agreed a draw in Shirov – Sutovsky, Kallithea 2008.

B2) 11.d6

This is a more challenging move, although the resulting positions are just as dangerous for White as for Black.

11...\textit{e}5!
With this strong reaction Black not only isolates the d6-pawn, but also creates a nice outpost for his knight in the future.

12.\textit{f}3
If White takes the pawn immediately with 12.\textit{xc}5 then 12...\textit{d}7 13.\textit{d}5 \textit{b}6 gives Black enough counterplay, for instance: 14.\textit{f}3 \textit{b}4† 15.\textit{d}2 \textit{xe}4† 16.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}1† 17.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}4† The game ends in perpetual check.

12...\textit{g}4 13.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xf}3 14.\textit{xf}3 \textit{c}6
Black’s strategy is clear: he will strive to maintain control over the dark squares and install his knight on the ideal outpost d4 (and perhaps later f4).

15.\textit{h}3
I also examined 15.d7 \textit{e}7 16.\textit{d}5 \textit{d}4 17.\textit{h}3 f5! when Black has great compensation.

15...\textit{f}6
This is not a bad move, but the following alternative may be even stronger:
15...\textit{d}4?N
This energetic move is very much in the spirit of Black’s previous play.
16.\textit{d}5
16.\textit{xe}5?! \textit{xd}6 17.\textit{d}5 \textit{b}4† is unpleasant for White.
16...\textit{h}4 17.\textit{g}2
17.\textit{exe}5? \textit{c}6!–+
17...\textit{fd}8
Black is doing well, for instance:
18.0–0 \textit{ac}8 19.\textit{a}4
19...\texttt{\textdagger$\textsection$}}f4!
Not only attacking the f3-pawn, but also threatening an invasion on c1. White's position already looks precarious.

16.0–0

\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard1.png}

16...\texttt{\textdagger$\textsection$}$d4$ 17.d7 $\texttt{\textsection}d8$ 18.$\texttt{\textsection}d5$

We have been following the game Moiseenko – Rodshtein, Rijeka 2010. At this point the most consistent continuation would have been:

\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard2.png}

18...\texttt{\textdagger$\textsection$}xf3\texttt{\textdagger$\textsection$}\texttt{\textdagger$\textsection$}$N$ 19.$\texttt{\textsection}g2$ $\texttt{\textsection}g5$

This irregular position seems to be balanced. I analysed the following continuation:

20.f3 $\texttt{\textsection}e7$ 21.$\texttt{\textsection}a4$ f5 22.exf5 $\texttt{\textsection}xh3$ 23.$\texttt{\textsection}xh3$

\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard3.png}

$\texttt{\textsection}xf5$ 24.$\texttt{\textsection}g2$ $\texttt{\textsection}g7$
To me the position seems dynamically equal, as White's strong passed pawn is balanced by the exposed position of his king.

C) 8.$\texttt{\textsection}d2$

\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard4.png}

8...c5!
This temporary pawn sacrifice is more challenging than the more frequently played 8...d7. White can choose between C1) 9.dxc5 and C2) 9.d5.

C1) 9.dxc5 $\texttt{\textsection}xd2\texttt{\textdagger$\textsection$}$ 10.$\texttt{\textsection}xd2$ $\texttt{\textsection}d8\texttt{\textdagger$\textsection$}$
The misplaced position of White's king should offer Black full compensation.

11.$\texttt{\textsection}c2$

\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard5.png}
11...\(\text{d7}^\text{N}\)
I decided to analyse this interesting new idea, although it is certainly not the only playable continuation.

The following is perhaps the simplest route to equality: 11.\(\text{xc3}\) 12.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{e6}\) White can hardly hope to retain his extra pawn with his king in such an exposed position. 13.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{d7}\) (13...\(\text{c8N}\) 14.b4 \(\text{a5}\) was also good enough.) 14.b4 \(\text{a5}\) 15.\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{f6}\) 16.\(\text{he1}\) \(\text{axb4t}\) 17.\(\text{xb4}\) \(\text{xa2}\) Black had no trouble holding the draw in Dreev – Roiz, Russia 2009.

12.\(\text{c1}\)
This seems like the only serious attempt for White to hang onto his extra pawn.

12...\(\text{c6}\) 13.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 14.\(\text{xc7}\) \(\text{xc7}\) 15.\(\text{b1}\)

15...\(\text{ac8}\)
Black calmly activates his last piece.

16.\(\text{e2}\)
White's biggest problem is that the natural 16.\(\text{h3}\) allows 16...\(\text{xc5}\) with the following justification: 17.\(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{xe4t}\) 18.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xc5}\) 19.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{d2t}\)

Another idea is 16.b4, but after 16...\(\text{e5}\) White's queenside pawns could easily become vulnerable in the near future, and his kingside pieces still need to be developed.

16...\(\text{d6}\)
In this position 16...\(\text{xc5}\) does not work: 17.\(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{xe4t}\) 18.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xc5}\) 19.\(\text{f3}\) The resulting position may still be tenable, but it is only White who can play for a win.

After the text move Black has rich compensation for the pawn, especially taking into account the fact that White is still unable to complete his development in the natural way, as shown by the following line.

17.\(\text{h3}\)?
This careless move can be refuted tactically:

17...\(\text{xe4!}\) 18.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xe4t}\) 19.\(\text{a1}\) \(\text{gxg2}\) 20.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{hhl}\) 21.\(\text{xc8}\) \(\text{c6}\) 22.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{Ed2}\)

After a forced sequence of moves, the arising endgame is clearly in Black's favour.

C2) 9.d5

9...\(\text{e6}\)
I like this more than 9...\(\text{xc3}\) 10.bxc3, even though Black has achieved good results with the latter.

10.\(\text{xc7}\) \(\text{tg7}\) 11.\(\text{c4}\)
Another idea is 11.0-0 exd5 12.exd5 as played in Lampen – Holmsten, Tampere 1994. The position is complicated, but I find it hard to believe in the concept of long castling for White. After spending some time on this position I finally found a strong idea for Black:

12...Nd6!N This move is directed against the development of the white knight to e2, which would now drop the f2-pawn. 13.f3 seems like a logical reply, but after 13...d8 14.e2 c6! Black has an excellent game.

12...Nd7! 12...f3 The justification for Black’s last move is revealed after 12.dxe6? dxe5 13.c3 d4! when Black is already better.

12.e2 f6 (12...b6N 13.b3 h4! also comes into consideration.) 13.c3 exd5

14.xd5 So far we have followed Mamedyarov – Sutovsky, Baku 2010. At this point Black should have played:

14...e6N 15.xe6 (15.0-0? xe4!) 15...xh2+ 16.fh1 xh2 17.e2 c5 The endgame is roughly balanced.

12...b6!N
Even better than 12...exd5 13.xd5 f6 14.c3 g8 which was also decent for Black in D. Rombaldoni – Cmilyte, Novi Sad 2009.

13.0-0 xc4 14.f3 f6 15.xc4 exd5
16.xd5
After 16.exd5 b5 the d-pawn is more of a weakness than a strength.

16...g4!
Black has the more pleasant position.
This time White arranges his bishops into an attractive formation.

8...c5 9.d5
Harmless is:
9...e2 cxd4 10.exd4
10.exd4 c6 11.exg7 hxg7 12.0-0 occurred in Roussel Roozmon - Prahov, Montreal 2000. At this point Black should have played 12...g4N 13.d5 b6 when he is slightly better.
10.b6! 11.e2
White felt compelled to play this in view of the impending ...d8.
11...xc3† 12.bxc3 d6
Black was already better due to White's damaged queenside structure, Fries - Mendeg, Budapest 2006.

9...xc3† 10.bxc3 d6!
This is a thematic idea in positions with this central structure. Black takes control over the important e5- and f4-squares before deciding how to deploy his pieces. White has tried three moves: D1) 11.e2, D2) 11.f3 and D3) 11.e2.

D1) 11.e2

This logical move has so far only been tried once. White threatens to push his e-pawn, but the plan can be thwarted by the following remarkable idea:

11...e5!
The natural 11...d7 is met by 12.f3 when Black's position does not look very promising.

12.e3 f5!
The following continuation looks sensible enough.

13.f3 xe4 14.xe4 fxe4 15.g5 f5 16.0-0-0
16.b1 can be met by 16...g7! 17.xb7 d7 intending ...xb8 when Black is by no means worse.
Various 5th Moves

16...\(\text{d}d7\) 17.d6\(\text{g}7\) 18.\(\text{dxe}4\) \(\text{d}e5\) 19.\(\text{dxe}7\) \\
\(\text{d}e8\) 20.\(\text{d}d6\) \(\text{dxc}4\) 21.\(\text{dxc}4\) \(\text{d}xe7=\)

The complications have subsided and the position remains balanced, Zhou Weiqi – Sutovsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

\[\text{D2) } 11.\text{d}f3\]

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

Obviously Black should take the opportunity to pin the knight.

12.e5

This must be the critical continuation. Instead after 12.h3 \(\text{dxf}3\) 13.\(\text{dxf}3\) \(f5?!\) (13...\(\text{d}d7\)N is also fine.) 14.0-0 \(\text{d}d7\) 15.\(\text{exe}5\)
\(\text{dxf}5\) Black had a healthy and active position in Gazarek – Bastijanic, Pula 1993.

12...\(\text{c}7\) 13.0-0 \(\text{d}f3\) 14.\(\text{exe}5\) \(\text{exe}5\) 15.\(\text{d}d1\)

White seems to have promising compensation, but with a few accurate moves Black can easily return his extra pawn and neutralize his opponent’s initiative.

15...\(\text{d}7\) 16.\(\text{exe}1\) \(\text{d}6\) 17.\(\text{exe}7\) \(\text{d}f8\) 18.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{d}e5\) 19.\(\text{exe}4\) \(\text{dxc}4\) 20.\(\text{exe}4\) \(\text{exe}3\) 21.\(\text{exe}3\) \(\text{d}8\)

In this equal position the players agreed a draw in Grachev – Vachier Lagrave, Moscow 2010.

\[\text{D3) } 11.\text{c}2\]

11...\(\text{f}5!\)

Thanks to Black’s control over the e5-square, this move is possible.

12.\(\text{exe}5\)

A recent game saw 12.\(\text{d}3\), Vidit – Vakhidov, Burdur 2010, and now instead of rushing with 12...\(\text{exe}4\), Black should have preferred 12...\(\text{d}d7\)N 13.0-0 \(\text{c}e5\) with a great position.

12...\(\text{exe}5\) 13.0-0 \(\text{d}7\) 14.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{b}6\) 15.\(\text{b}3\) \\
\(\text{f}4\) 16.\(\text{exe}2\) \(\text{c}4\) 17.\(\text{b}5\)

This position was reached in Dreev – Kozakov, France 2009, and one subsequent game. At this point I found a clear-cut path to equality:
17...\textit{d3}!N 18.\textit{xd3} \textit{cx3} 19.\textit{ad1}
19.\textit{xd3} is met by 19...\textit{ad8} regaining the
d5-pawn.

19...\textit{d2} 20.\textit{we2} \textit{xd5}=
Both sides have a weak pawn, and overall the
position is balanced.

This rare move has so far scored three wins
and two draws without a defeat for White, so it should not be underestimated. I like the
following idea of Sutovsky:

9...c5! 10.d5 \textit{xf3} 11.gxf3 \textit{xc3} 12.bxc3 e6
The position is rather irregular and double­
edged, but it seems to me that Black has
adequate play.

13.d6
This must be critical. I also examined 13.\textit{c4},
which can be met convincingly by means of:
13...\textit{f6}! 14.f4 \textit{d7} White's centre is starting
to look vulnerable, for instance: 15.e5 \textit{h4}
16.\textit{c2} (or 16.dxe6 \textit{xe5}!) 16...\textit{b6} 17.d6
\textit{d5}=

13...\textit{f6} 14.f4

Black must of course prevent his opponent
from setting up a pawn chain from f4 to d6.

15.fxe5
White should probably have preferred
15.f5N \textit{d7} although Black is not worse here
either.

15...\textit{f3}!
White must have underestimated this move.
16...\textit{g}1 \textit{c6} 17.\textit{g}2 \textit{xe5}!

This simple tactic justifies Black's previous play.

18.\textit{d}1

We have been following the game I. Sokolov – Sutovsky, Kragujevac 2009. At this point Black could have obtained better chances by means of:

18...\textit{g}4!N 19.\textit{e}2 \textit{h}4

19...\textit{f}4 is also good.

20.\textit{e}3 \textit{ad}8!

Bringing another piece into play. Black has the initiative in a position with equal material.

\textbf{E2) 9.\textit{c}2}

This natural move is the clear main line.

9...\textit{c}5

Black responds in the usual way.

10.\textit{d}5 \textit{e}6

Black has an interesting alternative:

10...\textit{xc}3† 11.\textit{bxc}3 \textit{e}6

This undermining move almost always figures in Black's plans at some point.

12.dxe6

I checked two alternatives as well:

12.c4 is risky due to 12...\textit{exd}5 13.\textit{cxd}5 \textit{e}8, for instance 14.\textit{d}2 \textit{xe}2 15.\textit{xe}2 \textit{a}6 and White still cannot castle as his d5-pawn would hang.

12.0–0 is safer, but after 12...\textit{exd}5 13.\textit{exd}5 \textit{d}6 14.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}6 Black has a pleasant position.

12...\textit{xd}1† 13.\textit{\textit{x}d}1

13.\textit{\textit{xd}}1 \textit{\textit{x}e}6 does not change much.
13...\texttt{\textit{\textipa{x}xe6}} 14.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{c}c2}} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{c}c6}} 15.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{h}d1}}

In this balanced position the players agreed a draw in Dreev – Smirin, Plovdiv 2010.

\textbf{11.0–0}

Before developing the knight on d7, the queen occupies her best possible square.

\textbf{13.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{b}b3}}}

In the event of 13.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{d}d2}} Black soon gets a comfortable position by playing natural moves: 13...\texttt{\textit{\textipa{d}d7}} 14.h3 \texttt{\textit{\textipa{xf}f3}} 15.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{xf}f3}} This was Mambrini – Beggi, Montecatini Terme 1994, and now after 15...\texttt{\textit{\textipa{fe8N}} 16.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{fe1}} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{x}c3}}}} 17.bxc3 b5 it is White who should be thinking about equalizing.

\textbf{13...\texttt{\textit{\textipa{d}d7?N}}}

This is my improvement over the following game: 13...\texttt{\textit{\textipa{xc}c3}} 14.bxc3 b6 15.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{fe1}} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{xf}f3}}}} 16.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{xf}f3}} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{d}d7}} 17.a4 \texttt{\textit{\textipa{e}e5}} 18.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{e}e2}} Black’s position was solid but slightly passive in Nikolov – Sutovsky, Rijeka 2010.

\textbf{14.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{xb}b7}}}

This is the most principled reply. Instead after 14.h3 \texttt{\textit{\textipa{xf}f3}} 15.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{xf}f3}} b6 16.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{fe1}} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{fe8}}}} Black is fine.

\textbf{14...\texttt{\textit{\textipa{xc}c3}} 15.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{b}c}c3} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{e}e5!}}}

Perhaps unexpectedly, it turns out that Black has full compensation for the pawn.

\textbf{16.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{b}b3}}}

I also analysed 16.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{a}a6}} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{xf}f3}} 17.gxf3 \texttt{\textit{\textipa{xa}a6}} 18.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{a}a6}} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{xf}f3}} 19.c4 \texttt{\textit{\textipa{fb}b8}} 20.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{fb}1}} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{b}b6}}! 21.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{xb}b6}} axb6 22.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{b}b5}} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{a}a3}} when White may even end up worse.

\textbf{16...\texttt{\textit{\textipa{xf}f3}} 17.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{xf}f3}} c4 18.\texttt{\textit{\textipa{d}d1}} \texttt{\textit{\textipa{ad}d8=}}}

Black easily regains his pawn and the resulting position will be equal.
Conclusion

The 5.\textit{d}2 system has become quite fashionable in recent years, and its popularity shows no sign of abating. Many players have favoured a knight retreat to b6, either immediately or on the following move, but I believe that my recommendation of 5...\textit{g}7 6.e4 \textit{d}xc3 7.dxc3 0–0 is a preferable solution. White has tried a number of different set-ups, but in virtually all cases Black will respond in the same way, by playing the thematic counterattacking move ...c5 at the earliest convenience. Normally White responds with d5, after which the further undermining ...e6 will form the basis of Black's counterplay. Throughout the chapter we have seen plenty of evidence for Black's dynamic potential and tactical resources, and overall I believe that the second player has a full share of the chances.
Various 5th Moves

5.g3

Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.g3

5...♗g7 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 c5

A) 8.e3 ♗a5
   A1) 9.♗e2
   A2) 9.♗d2

B) 8.♗f3 ♘c6!
   B1) 9.d5?!
   B2) 9.0–0
   B3) 9.e3 0–0 10.0–0 ♘e6
      B31) 11.♗a4
      B32) 11.♗d2
      B33) 11.♗a3

B4) 9.♗e3 0–0 10.0–0 cxd4
   B41) 11.cxd4
   B42) 11.♗xd4 ♗a5!
      B421) 12.♗c1
      B422) 12.♗b5
      B423) 12.♗a4
      B424) 12.♗d3
      B425) 12.♗b1
Various 5th Moves

1. d4  d5 2. c4  g6 3. c3  d5 4. cxd5  Qxd5 5. g3

This is a different version of the Fianchetto System, which was analysed in Chapters 3-7 of the first volume. This way White bypasses the ...c6 and ...d5 system which I recommended, but allows Black the option of creating a traditional Grinfeld structure by exchanging on c3.

5... g7 6. g2  xc3!

As I explained in the aforementioned chapter, I have no intention of entering the 6...h6 7. f3 line, unless I am sitting on the opposite side of the board.

7. bxc3  c5

From this position White can choose between A) 8. e3 and B) 8. f3. When I checked the database I was surprised to learn that the former has been played more frequently, as I believe the latter to be clearly the more challenging option.

A) 8. e3

This move ensures White of a solid foothold in the centre, but it is too slow to offer realistic prospects of an advantage.

8... a5

In the end I decided to recommend this slightly unusual move, although the more orthodox alternatives of 8...0-0 and 8...Cc6 also promise Black a good game.

From here we will analyse A1) 9. e2 and A2) 9. d2.

A1) 9. e2

This is not a bad move, but it allows Black to force a desirable pawn structure.

9...xd4 10. edx4

This structure is virtually always harmless for Black, as demonstrated in several lines in the first volume.

10...0-0 11.0-0  c6 12. wb3

This has been the usual choice, although two other moves have been tried.

12. a4  a5 13. a3  Cfd8?! (Black opts for an interesting pawn sacrifice, although there was nothing wrong with 13...fe8.) 14. xc6  bxc6 15. xe7  e8 16. b4  d5 17. f4  c4  Black's bishop pair and light-squared control gave him sufficient compensation for the missing pawn in Korchnoi – Huzman, Beersheba 2004.
12...e8d8 With this useful move Black prepares ...e5. Here is a nice illustrative game, which once again involved a sacrifice of the e7-pawn: 13...d2 g4 14.h3 e6 15.gf4 c4 16.xc6 bxc6 17.xe7

17...c5! 18.d5 g8 19.e1 a6 20.f3 d7 21.g4 a8d8 Black regained his pawn with a comfortable game in Louro – Krueger, e-mail 2006.

14...g8 15...e5 14...g5 occurred in Mamedyarov – Grischuk, Almaty 2008, and now 15...e8N would have transposed to the main line below.

14...e8 15...d4 d7 16.ab1 b6 17.f4 eac8

Black has absolutely no problems and positionally he stands better, so in the following game White took the opportunity to simplify.

18...e5

After other moves White would simply be worse.

18...e5 19.e6 xc3 20.xc3 xc3 21.xa7 e8 22.e6 xa2 23.eb6 eb2 At this point a draw was agreed in Ki. Georgiev – Kramnik, Belgrade 1997.

A2) 9...d2

With this move White prevents an unfavourable change in the pawn structure.
9...0–0 10.\textit{d}e2 \textit{c}c6 11.0–0
Black has tried several moves here, but my favourite is:

11...\textit{a}6!?  
11...\textit{d}8 has been the most popular choice, while 11...\textit{d}7 looks like another reasonable option.

12.\textit{f}4
White tries to improve his passive knight. He attempted a similar idea with 12.\textit{c}c1 in Avontuur – Schenning, Veldhoven 1992, and here I would suggest: 12...\textit{d}7N 13.\textit{b}b3 \textit{b}6 14.a4 (Black should almost never be afraid of 14.dxc5?! and indeed after 14...\textit{a}c8 he has wonderful compensation for the pawn, thanks to White’s dreadful queenside structure.) 14...\textit{ab}8 The position is unclear and approximately equal.

12...\textit{d}7
12...\textit{d}8 looks like a good alternative.

13.\textit{e}1 \textit{ac}8 14.\textit{f}1
White tries to harass his opponent’s queen, but the idea does not lead to any special benefit for him.

14...\textit{a}3 15.\textit{b}1 \textit{b}6
Black has a comfortable position, and in the following game White now went astray:

16.\textit{b}3?! \textit{xb}3 17.\textit{xb}3 \textit{e}5 18.dxe5 \textit{xe}5
This queenless position is more pleasant for Black thanks to his superior piece coordination, Annakov – Svidler, Internet (rapid) 1999.

B) 8.\textit{d}f3

8...\textit{c}c6!
Black must be precise with the move order. Instead after 8...0–0 9.0–0 \textit{c}c6 White has the promising option of 10.d5! which has recently yielded good results for him.

After the text move it is worth considering B1) 9.d5?; B2) 9.0–0; B3) 9.e3 and B4) 9.\textit{e}3.

B1) 9.d5?
Chapter 4 – 5.g3

This surprising new move was played for the first time in 2011.

9...b4??

This seems like a promising reply. White obtained interesting compensation after 9...xc3† 10.d2 xa1 11.wxa1 d4 12.xd4 cxd4 13.xd4 f6 14.0–0 0–0 15.b4 in Khismatullin – Kozul, Aix-les-Bains 2011.

10.cxb4

Otherwise White just loses material without getting much in return.

10...xa1 11.bxc5

I find it hard to believe that 11.0–0 cxb4 12.h6 c3 can be a serious option for White.

11...a5†!

Black should take the opportunity to pick up a pawn, while also activating his queen.

12.d2

In the event of 12.xd2 xc5 13.0–0 (or 13.e4 w d4†) 13...g7 14.e4 w d4 Black is doing great.

12...xa1 13.0–0 g7

Since move 9 both sides have played logically, and the present position seems critical for the assessment of the whole line. I was unable to find any truly dangerous ideas for White, for instance:

14.f4

Or 14.e4 a5! 15.e3 a4 16.e5 0–0 and Black is better.

14...0–0 15.d6

Another line is 15.e5 xe5 16.e5 w b2 17.d3 w d4 when Black seems to be safe enough.

15...xd6 16.xd6 e6

Black is certainly not worse.

B2) 9.0–0

9...xd4!
Black should accept the pawn sacrifice. Besides, 9...0-0 would transpose to the undesirable line mentioned in the note to Black's eighth move after 10.d5!

10.cxd4 0-0 11.0xd4 0xd4 12.b1
White clearly has compensation for the pawn, thanks to his superior development and powerful light-squared bishop. Nevertheless it is doubtful that he can aspire to anything more than equality.

12...xd4?!
Black should be happy to see this inaccurate move.
12...0-0 13.b1
Now Black has a strong defensive idea.

13...b6!
Blocking the b-file makes Black's life a lot easier.

14.a4
Black should not be concerned by 14.h6 preventing castling, as he can solve his problems easily by means of 14...f6 intending ...g7.

14...0-0 15.a3 e8
Black has managed to protect all his pawns and will soon be ready to develop his queen's bishop.

16.a5 a5 17.xb7 xxb7 18.xb7 e6
It was clearly White who was fighting for the draw in Schroeder – Hebels, corr. 1990.

12...0-0 13.e3 e4
This is the move I like best. 13...xd1 14.xd1 a5 gave Black a tenable, though somewhat passive position in Gritsak – Schmidt, Warsaw 2009. Please note that 14...b8?! would not be an improvement, as after 15.xa7 c8 16.c5 xxa2 17.xe7 e8 18.f3 White retains unpleasant pressure.

14.d5
I consider this the most important move, not least as it was the choice of Aronian. Nevertheless White has a few playable alternatives.

According to theory, 14.d2 leads to a drawish position after the following sequence: 14.e6 15.e7 d8 16.a5 e2
17.\( \text{a} \text{x} \text{a}7 \) (17.\( \text{e} \text{x} \text{e}7 \) \( \text{a} \text{x} \text{a}2 \) leads to dry equality.) 17...\( \text{e} \text{d} \) 18.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{x} \text{f}1 \uparrow \) 19.\( \text{x} \text{f}1 \) \( \text{w} \text{d}1 \) 20.\( \text{w} \text{x} \text{d}2 \) \( \text{w} \text{x} \text{d}2 \) 21.\( \text{w} \text{d}2 \) \( \text{w} \text{d}2 \) 22.\( \text{e} \text{x} \text{e}7 \) \( \text{a} \text{x} \text{a}2 \) Krivonosovs - Sykora, Spain 2004.

14.\( \text{a} \) 15.\( \text{e}4 \)!! Being a pawn down, White should play more incisively. (15.\( \text{b}5 \) looks better, after which 15...\( \text{b}8 \) 16.\( \text{f}4 \) e5 17.\( \text{x} \text{e}5 \) \( \text{x} \text{e}5 \) 18.\( \text{x} \text{e}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) reaches a balanced position.)

15.\( \text{b}8 \)! White's compensation is in question and after the further mistake 16.\( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{h}3 \) Black was clearly better in Grynszpan - S. Alonso, Argentina 2000.

14...\( \text{a} \text{a}6 \) 15.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{w} \text{x} \text{e}2 \)

Black should take the opportunity to bag another pawn. Instead after 15...\( \text{b}8 \) 16.\( \text{f}4 \) e5 17.\( \text{e} \text{e}3 \) White retains some pressure.

16.\( \text{c}5 \)
21.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xc}b}7}

After 21.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xe}e}7} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{ad}8}} 22.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xb}b}7} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{fe}8}} the
evaluation is the same.

21...\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{ab}b}8} 22.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xe}e}7} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{fe}8}}
The position is equal.

17...\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{yd}d}3}

18.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xe}e}7}

In the event of 18.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xb}b}7} Black can simply
play 18...\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{fe}6}}.

18...\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xb}b}3} 19.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{axb}b}3}
19.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xb}b}3} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{b}6}} 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{a}a}3} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{fe}6}} is also equal.

19...\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{ad}d}8} 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xb}b}7} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{fe}6}}

White has nothing here, for instance:

21.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{cc}c}7} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{fe}5}}=

B3) 9.e3

This time White plays more patiently and
securities his centre before castling.

9...0–0 10.0–0 \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{fe}6}}

This is my preferred choice although there
are numerous alternatives. Now it is White
who must make a choice, the main options
being B31) 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{a}a}4}, B32) 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{d}d}2} and B33)
11.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{a}a}3}.

11.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{we}e}2}

This has been played in a few games, but it
should be harmless.

11...\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{ec}c}8} 12.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{ed}d}1}

Jedlicka – Akesson, Pardubice 2008. Now I
developed the following idea:

12...\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xd}d}4N} 13.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xd}d}4}

Alternatively after 13.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xd}d}4} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xd}d}4} 14.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xd}d}4}
\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{ac}c}4} 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{d}d}2} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{d}d}7=} Black has a good game.

13...\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{a}a}5} 14.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{ae}e}5} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{b}6}} 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{a}a}3} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{c}c}4} 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xc}c}4}
\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xc}c}4} 17.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{wd}d}2} \texttt{\textbf{\textsc{d}d}7=}

The position is balanced.

B31) 11.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{a}a}4}

11...\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xd}d}4}

The untested 11...\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{ec}c}8?N also looks
interesting.

12.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xd}d}4}

12.\texttt{\textbf{\textsc{xd}d}4} was played in Ngo – Vu Dinh
Hung, Kuala Lumpur 2001. Here I would
suggest 12...\texttt{d7}! when 13.\texttt{x}c6 \texttt{x}c6
14.\texttt{x}c6 bxc6 15.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{c}c7= is just equal.

12...\texttt{d7}!

Setting up an important tactical motif.

13.\texttt{d}1

Defending, at least for the moment.

In the following game both players were oblivious to the opportunity: 13.\texttt{a}3? This was Stajic - Szekely, Kecskemet 1990, and here Black missed: 13...\texttt{xd}4!N 14.\texttt{xd}7 \texttt{e}e2+ 15.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{xd}7 16.\texttt{ab}1 \texttt{b}6 17.\texttt{xe}7 \texttt{fe}8 18.\texttt{b}4 \texttt{ac}8 Material is equal, but Black's superior pieces give him the advantage.

13...\texttt{f}d8 14.\texttt{b}2?

White should have guarded against the following tactical strike, although Black has clearly solved his opening problems in any case. At this point, in the game Aaron - Geller, Stockholm 1962, Black should have played:

14...\texttt{xd}4!

Once again the complications work out well for him:

15.\texttt{xd}7 \texttt{xf}3+ 16.\texttt{x}f3 \texttt{xd}7 17.\texttt{xd}7 \texttt{xd}7 18.\texttt{xb}7 \texttt{xb}7 19.\texttt{b}8 \texttt{d}5 \texttt{b}2

White will have to fight for a draw.

B32) 11.\texttt{d}2

11...\texttt{bc}8 12.\texttt{a}3

12.\texttt{a}4 was played in Rodjko - Shadrin, Novosibirsk 1998, and one subsequent game.

12...\texttt{a}5!N when 13.\texttt{xc}6 leads to the following forced line: 13...\texttt{xc}3 14.\texttt{xb}7 \texttt{xa}1 15.\texttt{xc}8 \texttt{xc}8 16.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{b}1 17.\texttt{xc}5 \texttt{xa}2 18.\texttt{xa}2 \texttt{xa}2 Black is at least equal, and can try to make something of his two bishops and passed a-pawn in the endgame.

12...\texttt{xd}4 13.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{a}5

Immediately exploiting the vulnerable position of White's dark-squared bishop.

14.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{b}4 15.\texttt{a}4
We have been following the game Barlov – Akesson, Valjevo 1984. At this point Black should have continued:

15...b6N

The position remains complex, but Black's active pieces give him the better chances.

B33) 11.a3

Forcing Black to release the tension.

11...cxd4 12.cxd4

Recapturing with the knight is quite thematic for this variation. The alternative is 12.cxd4 wa5 13.wd3 wac8 14.wf1 Edouard – Vachier Lagrave, Chalons 2008, and here Black should have played:

16...wac8N

This natural move would have maintained easy equality.
White supports his centre while developing a piece. In my view this is the most challenging continuation at his disposal.

9...0-0 10.0-0 cxd4

From this position White can play both B41) 11.cxd4 and B42) 11.Qxd4.

B41) 11.cxd4

By recapturing with the pawn White keeps his structure intact, but in doing so he restricts his dark-squared bishop.

11...e6 12.Wd2

White has also tried a different queen move: 12.Wa4

Here I recommend:
12...Wd7!? 13.afd1 ef8 14.Wa3

I also examined: 14.ac1N ac8 15.Qg5

15...b5! 16.Wxb5 Qxd4 17.Wxd7 Qxd7 18.Qxc8 Qxc8 19.Qf1 With equality.
14...Qd5 15.Qab1

This position was reached in A. Rodriguez – Valverde Lopez, Peru 2000. Here Black could have safely played:

15...b6N

In the game he was most probably worried about:
16.Qe5

But there is a clever retort available.
16...Qxe5 17.dxe5 Qf5!

Black takes over the initiative.

12...Qd5 13.Qab1

Another game continued 13.efd1 ec8 14.Qh6 Qd6 15.Qxf7 Qxf7 16.Qab1 b6 when Black had no problems in Faraci – Tortarolo, Imperia 1996.
13...\textit{c}c8 14.a\textit{fd}1
This position was reached in Beliavsky – Balogh, Austria 2005, and here Black should have played actively by means of:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\foreach \x in {1,...,8} \foreach \y in {1,...,8} {
\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.1cm);
\if\x=1\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.1cm);
\fi
\if\x=2\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.1cm);
\fi
\if\x=3\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.1cm);
\fi
\if\x=4\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.1cm);
\fi
\if\x=5\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.1cm);
\fi
\if\x=6\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.1cm);
\fi
\if\x=7\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.1cm);
\fi
\if\x=8\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.1cm);
\fi
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

14...\textit{da}5N
The following continuation looks normal:

15.\textit{h}6 \textit{c}c4 16.\textit{f}f4 \textit{d}6 17.\textit{h}h4 \textit{x}xh6
18.\textit{x}xh6 \textit{f}6=
Black is by no means worse in this complicated position.

B42) 11.\textit{xd}4

11...\textit{da}5!
With this multi-purpose move Black safeguards his knight, defends the b7-pawn and eyes the c4-square, which could become a juicy outpost for his knight later in the game.

In this complex position White has a wide choice between B421) 12.\textit{c}c1, B422) 12.\textit{b}b5, B423) 12.\textit{a}a4, B424) 12.\textit{d}d3 and B425) 12.\textit{b}b1.

B421) 12.\textit{c}c1
The plan of trading the dark-squared bishops is slow and absolutely harmless for Black.

12...\textit{c}c4 13.\textit{ed}1
The consistent 13.\textit{h}h6 actually leads to trouble for White: 13...e5! 14.\textit{x}xg7 \textit{g}xg7 15.\textit{c}c2 \textit{c}c7 16.\textit{b}b4 \textit{e}e6? Black is in control.

13...\textit{xe}3 14.\textit{xe}3 \textit{c}7

This is considered to be the main direction. White 'sacrifices' his pawn structure in order to maximize the activity of his pieces.
This move is a bit premature and not dangerous for Black.

**B422) 12.\(b5\)**

This move was played in Rustemov - Yuferov, Minsk 1994. Here Black could have solved all his problems by means of:

13...a6N 14.\(c7\)

Senseless is 14.\(d4?!\) \(c7\) when Black is just better.

14...\(xc7\) 15.\(b6\) \(c8\) 16.\(xa5\) \(c6=\)

Black is doing fine.

**B423) 12.\(a4\)**

This is playable but slightly risky for White, as his queen can become a target for Black's pieces, starting from the very next move.
Various 5th Moves

19...\textbackslash e4N 20.\textbackslash e7 \textbackslash e7 21.\textbackslash e7 \textbackslash e8
22.\textbackslash e3 \textbackslash x c3 23.\textbackslash e d2 \textbackslash x a3

With a level endgame.

14...\textbackslash c4 15.\textbackslash w b2

In another game White tried a different queen move:
15.\textbackslash w a3 b6 16.\textbackslash g 5?!

Every move has a high price for White, and with this inaccuracy he slips into a worse position.
Instead 16.\textbackslash b 3 N would have maintained the balance.
16...\textbackslash c 5 ! 17.h4 h6 18.\textbackslash b 3 ?

A blunder in a bad position.
18...\textbackslash x b 3 19.axb3 hxg5 20.\textbackslash w x a 7 \textbackslash e 7 +


15...\textbackslash e 8

It is useful for Black to remove the queen from d-file in anticipation of \textbackslash b 5 .

16.\textbackslash w x a 3

16.\textbackslash b 5 N \textbackslash e 8 ?! (Alternatively 16...\textbackslash x b 5
17.\textbackslash b 5 b6 looks extremely solid.) 17.\textbackslash a b 1
a6 18.\textbackslash a 3 \textbackslash a 4 ∞ In this complex position Black's chances are by no means worse.

12...\textbackslash a 6

The need for this prophylactic move is demonstrated by the line 12...\textbackslash d 7 ?! 13.\textbackslash b 3 !
\textbackslash x b 3 14.axb3† when White obtained some pressure in Benko - Chandler, Lone Pine 1979.

13.\textbackslash a c 1

13.c4 \textbackslash c 7 14.\textbackslash a c 1 is an equally valid move order.

13...\textbackslash c 7 14.c4 \textbackslash d 8 N

I found a convincing route to equality, beginning with this move.

14...\textbackslash d 7 was Black's choice in Bolbochan - Najdorf, Buenos Aires 1949, but after the natural 15.\textbackslash f d 1 N White has promising play.
(The game continued with the inferior 15.\textbackslash b 3 ?!
\textbackslash f 5 ! when Black was already better.)

15.\textbackslash f d 1
15...\textbf{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}x}x}d4!}

This exchanging operation solves all Black's problems.

16.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}x}d4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}c}c}6 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}e}3}}

17.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}}w}c3 can be met in exactly the same way.

17...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}x}x}d4 18.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}}a}x}d4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}x}x}d4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}d}6 19.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}}w}x}d4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}e}6}

Black has comfortable equality, as demonstrated by the following lines:

20.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}}w}b2}

20.c5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}d}8 21.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}}b}b4 \texttt{\texttt{d}d}5 is also equal.

20...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}e}c8 21.c5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}}a}5! 22.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}g}x}b7 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}e}c5 23.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}e}c5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}c}x}c5 24.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}d}x\texttt{a}6 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}}a}5}

Black regains his pawn to reach a dead equal endgame.

16...b5! This temporary sacrifice solves all Black's problems. 17.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}x}b5 axb5 18.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}}w}xa8
Various 5th Moves

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\[ \text{Various 5th Moves} \]

13...\text{\textit{c}4} 14.\text{\textit{d}4}  
This position occurred in Banusz – Wittmann, Balatonlelle 2005, and here I suggest the natural improvement:

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

14...\text{\textit{e}7N}  
In the game Black opted for the passive 14...\text{\textit{d}6}?! and soon found himself in a difficult position.

15.\text{\textit{d}2}  
White needs to exchange the strong knight at some point. My analysis continues as follows:

15...\text{\textit{d}8} 16.\text{\textit{xc}4} \text{\textit{xc}4} 17.\text{\textit{b}3} \text{\textit{xb}3}  
18.\text{\textit{xb}3} \text{\textit{xd}4} 19.\text{\textit{xd}4} \text{\textit{xd}4} 20.\text{\textit{xb}7} \text{\textit{b}8}  
21.\text{\textit{xc}8} \text{\textit{xc}8} =  
With full equality.

\[ \text{Conclusion} \]

The idea of fighting against the Grünfeld bishop by employing a symmetrical set-up with a bishop on g2 is not without logic. Nevertheless we have seen that this does not stop Black from obtaining his typical pressure against the enemy pawn centre.

In variation A with 8.e3, White supports his centre solidly but is slow in developing his pieces, which enables Black to develop smoothly and actively, and so B) 8.\text{\textit{f}3} is rightly considered more challenging. Then after the correct 8...\text{\textit{c}6}! White has a surprisingly wide choice. The aggressive B1) 9.d5?! is a nice idea, but I believe I have shown a good way to defuse it. The pawn sacrifice B2) 9.0–0 leads to a simplified position in which White has full compensation, but no advantage. B3) 9.e3 can be compared with 8.e3 on the previous move; again, Black obtains easy development with good chances in the middlegame. Finally, the more active B4) 9.\text{\textit{e}3} aims for more fluid development, but we have seen that Black can claim a full share of the chances here too.
Various 7th Moves

7.\( \textit{g5} \)

Variation Index

1. d4 \( \textit{\textit{d}} \)6 2. c4 g6 3. \( \textit{\textit{c}} \)3 d5 4. cxd5 \( \textit{\textit{x}} \)5 d5 5. e4 \( \textit{\textit{x}} \)xc3 6. bxc3 \( \textit{\textit{g}} \)7 7. \( \textit{\textit{g}} \)5

7...c5 8. \( \textit{\textit{c}} \)1 0–0

A) 9. d5
B) 9. \( \textit{\textit{f}} \)3 \( \textit{\textit{g}} \)4 10. d5 \( \textit{\textit{\textit{d}} \textit{d}} \)6 11. \( \textit{\textit{e}} \)2 \( \textit{\textit{d}} \)7

B1) 12. 0–0
B2) 12. h3

A) after 9. d5

B) note to 11...\( \textit{\textit{d}} \)7

B2) after 14. c4

9...f5! – the spirit of the Grünfeld

13...e6N

14...bxc4!N
1.d4 ��f6 2.c4 g6 3.��c3 d5 4.cxd5 ��xd5
5.e4 ��xc3 6.bxc3 ��g7 7.��g5

White's main idea in this line is to provoke the move ...h6, and then to continue with ��e3 and ��d2; compared with Chapter 11, White would gain a tempo by attacking the black h-pawn. However Black can easily manage without moving his h-pawn.

7...c5 8.��c1 0-0

Here play may take two directions: A) 9.d5 or B) 9.��f3.

A) 9.d5 f5!

This is very much in the spirit of the Grünfeld; Black attacks the white centre, aiming to use his lead in development.

10.��c4 ��h8 11.��e2

Probably the most challenging move. The alternatives are:

11.exf5 ��xf5 12.��f3 ��d7 13.��e2 ��e5 14.��xe5 ��xe5 15.��e3 e6 Black has comfortably equalized.

In Troff – Haessel, Las Vegas 2010, White tried to hold the centre with 11.f3. It is now very tempting to play: 11...��d6N 12.��d3 ��d7 13.��e2 c4 14.��b1 fxe4 15.��xe4 ��c5 16.0-0 ��f5 Black has the better chances.

11...fxe4 12.��g3 ��f5

If Black would prefer to avoid the repetition in the main line, I can offer a reasonable alternative in 12...��d7N 13.��e4 ��b6 14.��e2 h6 15.��e3 ��xc4 16.��xc4 b6 with double-edged play.

13.0-0

Inferior for White is 13.��e2 ��d7 14.��xe4 h6 15.��h4 g5 16.��g3 ��b6 17.��d1 Lysyj – Sutovsky, Dagomys 2008. Now I recommend the straightforward: 17...��xc4N 18.��xc4 b5 19.��e2 ��xe4 20.��xe4 ��xc3+ 21.��f1 ��d7 Black is clearly better.
13...\(\text{d7}\) 14.d6

White cannot afford to play slowly, for example: 14.\(\text{w}2\) \(\text{d}5\) 15.\(\text{ex}e4\) \(\text{xc}4\) 16.\(\text{xc}4\) \(b5\) 16.\(\text{dd}3\) c4 White is losing his d-pawn.

14...\(\text{f}6\) 15.\(\text{h}6\) \(\text{g}7\) 16.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{f}6\) 17.\(\text{h}6\)

It seems that neither side can avoid the repetition, Polak – Fracnik, Czech Republic 2009.

B) 9.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{g}4\) 10.d5 \(\text{d}6\)

I much prefer this positional concept to the sharp 10...f5 which leads to crazy complications: 11.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{h}8\) 12.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{f}4\) 13.\(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{d}7\) 14.h3 I don’t have much faith in Black’s position here.

\[\text{Diagram 1}\]

11.\(\text{e}2\)

It is quite risky for White to play: 11.\(\text{dd}2\) \(\text{d}7\) (I would prefer to limit White’s options with the move order 11...\(\text{xf}3\) 12.\(\text{gxf}3\) \(\text{d}7\)) 12.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{xf}3\) 13.\(\text{gxf}3\)? (This is a serious strategical mistake; it was necessary to recapture with 13.\(\text{xf}3\), when a logical continuation is 13...f5 14.exf5 \(\text{xf}5\) 15.0–0 \(\text{e}5\)! 16.h3 \(\text{g}5\) 17.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{h}2\)† 18.\(\text{xe}1\) \(\text{f}4\) 19.\(\text{h}4\) \(\text{g}5\) 20.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{e}5\) 21.\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{xf}3\) 22.\(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{xc}1\) 23.\(\text{exc}1\) \(\text{f}8\) 24.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xd}5\) 25.\(c}d5\) \(\text{f}5\) 26.\(\text{exe}7\) \(\text{f}7\) with an equal position.) 13...f5! 14.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{e}5\) Black was clearly better in Eperjesi – Farkas, Hungary 2007.

\[\text{Diagram 2}\]

11...\(\text{d}7\)

White’s main options are B1) 12.0–0 and B2) 12.h3, although he has also tried:

12.\(\text{dd}2\) It looks quite natural for the knight to head for the c4-square, but Black’s counterplay arrives just in time. 12...\(\text{xe}2\) 13.\(\text{xe}2\)

This was Jenkinson – Fenwick, e-mail 2008. Black should now play: 13...e6N 14.\(\text{c}4\) (no good is 14.c4 \(\text{ae}8\)! and White cannot hold the centre) 14...\(\text{a}6\) 15.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{xe}2\)† 16.\(\text{xe}2\) \(\text{exd}5\) 17.exd5 (after 17.\(\text{xd}5\) f6! Black shouldn’t experience any problems) 17...\(\text{f}8\)

The position is pretty much balanced.

B1) 12.0–0 \(\text{xf}3\) 13.\(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{b}5\)

A very interesting concept. Black has given up his light-squared bishop, but in return
has made various gains: he has completed his
development and connected his rooks, his
queen is well-placed on d6, and he has started
to advance his queenside pawns.

14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}e2 c4!
Black now has the c5-square at his disposal.

15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}f4
White has also tried:
15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}c2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}c5
15...f5 deserves serious attention.
16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}fd1
After 16.f4 Black has the strong idea
16...f6 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}h4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}h6 and White has problems
defending the f4-pawn.
White’s best option is 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}e3, although
16...a6 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}fd1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}a4 secures Black good
counterplay.

16...f5! 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xf5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xf5 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}e3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}af8
Black had taken over the initiative in

15...f6
There is an interesting alternative: 15...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}b6N
16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}c2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}ad8 Black is intending to continue
with ...f5.

16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}h4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}c5 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}d4 e5!
The key move, otherwise Black would be in
trouble.

18.dxe6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xd4† 19.cxd4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xe6

20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xc4?!
The best try. Black is out of danger after
20.d5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xf4! 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xf4 g5.

20...f5!
A very strong response. After 20...bx\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}c4
21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xc4 followed by 22.f5 White has good
chances of obtaining an advantage.

21.e5?
This is going too far. White could maintain
equality with 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}b4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xd4 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xb5.

21...bx\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}c4
Now taking the rook is a different story.

22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}xc4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}e8 23.d5
23...g5!
This is simply a refutation of White's idea.

24.fxg5 dxc5 25.d6† Wh8 26.e6 Aed8
27.Axd1 Axe6!
Black had a winning position in Nyback – Kovchan, Aix-les-Bains 2011.

B2) 12.h3 gxf3 13.gxf3 b5 14.c4
White decides to prevent Black playing ...c4.

14...bxc4!N
This is a natural improvement over 14...b4
15.0–0 a5, which led to complex strategical
play in Nyback – Svidler, Khanty-Mansiysk
2009.

15.Axc4 Ad4! 16.0–0 Ac5 17.Aa4 f5
Black has an excellent game.

Conclusion
Developing the bishop to g5 leaves the d4-
square poorly defended and means that the
white d-pawn will soon have to advance.
After A) 9.d5 Black can immediately attack
the centre with 9...f5, easily obtaining equal
chances. When White opts for B) 9.Df3 g4
10.d5, then 10...f5 is not so clear; however
10...Wd6 and 11...d7 offers Black fine play.
Various 7th Moves

7.\textit{a3}

Variation Index

1.\textit{d}4  \textit{d}f6 2.\textit{c}4  \textit{g}6 3.\textit{\diamond}c3  \textit{d}5 4.\textit{c}xd5  \textit{\diamond}xd5 5.e4  \textit{\diamond}xc3 6.bxc3  \textit{\diamond}g7 7.\textit{\diamond}a3

7...\textit{\diamond}d7!

A) 8.\textit{\diamond}b3

B) 8.\textit{\diamond}f3  \textit{c}5

B1) 9.\textit{\diamond}c4

B2) 9.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\diamond}b3} 0–0

B21) 10.\textit{\diamond}d3

B22) 10.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\diamond}e2}

A) after 13.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\diamond}b4}

B1) after 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\diamond}b4}

B22) after 13.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\diamond}d2}

13...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\diamond}b6}!N

17...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\diamond}c7}N

13...b5!N
1.d4 ¤f6 2.c4 g6 3.¤c3 d5 4.cxd5 ¤xd5 5.e4 ¤xc3 6.bxc3 ¤g7 7.¤a3
Quite a popular sideline, directed against ...c5.

7...¤d7!

A very concrete approach, preparing to carry out ...c5 anyway. An important point is that White will then be forced to waste time defending against the threat of ...cxd4 followed by ...wa5.

We have arrived at the first crossroads in this variation, with the main options being A) 8.¤b3 and B) 8.¤f3.

Other possibilities to take into account are:

8.¢c4 c5 9.¢b3 0–0 10.¢f3 cxd4 leads into line B1.

8.¢c1 c5 9.d5 An interesting idea, but the white bishop on a3 is clearly misplaced. 9...wa5 10.¢b3 0–0 11.¢f3 Garcia Gonzales – Lechthnysky, Cienfuegos 1985. Black should now play 11...¢f6 12.¢d2 c6 and White is in trouble.

A) 8.¢b3 c5 9.¢d1

9.¢c4 0–0 10.¢f3 transposes to B1, while 9.¢f3 is B2.

9...0–0 10.¢e2

10.¢f3 is another transposition, this time to the note on 10.¢d1 in line B2.

10...wa5 11.¢f3 ¤f6!

A very strong idea; before White manages to escape with his king, Black starts to attack his central pawns. The main idea of White’s set-up can be seen in the following continuation: 11...cxd4 12.¢b4 ¤c7 13.cxd4 ¤f6 14.¢e3 White had the better chances in V. Milov – V. Mikhailovsky, Biel 2002.

12.¢xc5

Black’s 11th move was a novelty I found several years ago, although it has since been played. I would like to share some of the variations I examined:


12.¢d3 ¤e6! 13.¢b2 (After 13.d5 ¤d7 14.¢c1 ¤ac8 Black threatens ...¢c4 and holds the initiative. For example 15.¢b2 ¢e6 16.¢d6 ¤c6 17.¢d2 ¤d8 18.¢c5 ¤xe4 and Black is doing well.) 13...¢b6 14.0–0 ¤g4! Black has the better chances.

12...¤xe4 13.¢b4
It is dangerous for White to capture the e-pawn: 13.\textit{\texttt{b}}e7 e8 14.\textit{\texttt{b}}b4 \textit{\texttt{c}}c7 15.c4 (after 15.0-0 a5 White loses his c-pawn) 15...a5 16.\textit{\texttt{a}}a3 a4 17.\textit{\texttt{b}}b2 \textit{\texttt{g}}g4 18.0-0 \textit{\texttt{g}}g5 Black has the initiative.

This occurred in De Virgilio – Molo, e-mail 2008. I believe that here Black should play:

... \textit{\texttt{b}}6\textit{\texttt{N}} 14.\textit{\texttt{d}}d2

After 14.c4 a5 15.\textit{\texttt{a}}a3 \textit{\texttt{xb}}b3 16.axb3 \textit{\texttt{c}}c3 17.\textit{\texttt{d}}d3 \textit{\texttt{xe}}2 18.\textit{\texttt{xe}}2 a4! only Black can be better.

14...\textit{\texttt{e}}e6 15.\textit{\texttt{a}}a3

Of course not 15.d5 \textit{\texttt{xf}}2#.

15...\textit{\texttt{d}}d6 16.0-0 \textit{\texttt{c}}c7

Black is planning 17...a5 next, and he is absolutely fine.

B) 8.\textit{\texttt{f}}f3 c5

White now chooses between B1) 9.\textit{\texttt{c}}c4 and B2) 9.\textit{\texttt{b}}3, although the two moves quite often transpose.

B1) 9.\textit{\texttt{c}}c4 cxd4

10.\textit{\texttt{b}}b3

The idea 10.0-0? as played in Hvenekilde – Fries Nielsen, Aalborg 1979, is not correct. Black should accept the challenge: 10...dxc3! 11.\textit{\texttt{xf}}7\textit{\texttt{xf}}7 12.\textit{\texttt{g}}g5\textit{\texttt{e}}e8 13.\textit{\texttt{e}}e6 (13.\textit{\texttt{b}}b3 \textit{\texttt{e}}e5\textit{\texttt{N}}) 13...\textit{\texttt{a}}a5
14. hxg7+ hxg7 15. fxg7 16. h4 g6 17. a4 b6 18. axc3 e8 Black is clearly better.

10...0-0 11. cxd4 e6 12.0-0

White can try to retain his light-squared bishop:
12. e2 e6 13. b4 c8

The thematic idea 13...f5?! is worth considering, aiming to secure the d5-square for the knight. After 14.e5 d5 15. d2 c8 16.0-0 c3 Black was doing very well in Dinerchtein – Wister, e-mail 2009.

14.0-0

After 14. xex7 Svidler, in his comments in Chess Informant 83, provides the following line: 14... c7 (14... c4 looks tempting as well) 15. xex7 e8 16. d6 (or 16. g5 c4 17. e5 f6!) 16... c4 17. e5 xexe2 (17...f6 may be even stronger) 18. xex2 c4 Black is fine.

14...c4

Svidler pointed out that 14... c4?! is a worthy alternative.
15. e1 c2 16. xex2 c4

Black had no problems in V. Milov – Svidler, Moscow (3.2) 2001.

12... cxd4 13. xex4

In my opinion, the power of the bishop pair ensures that Black will not face any problems.

13...g4 14. c1

I also checked: 14. e5 e6 15. b4 b6!
16. xex6 a6 17. c5 e8 18. b4 xex2=

14... c8 is also promising.

15. xex3 d7

Black already has the better chances.

16. d3 c8 17. b4

We have been following I. Ivanov – Lonoff, Chicago 1990. Here I recommend the natural:

17... c7N 18. c1 xcl 19. xcl a5 20. b3 b5
Black's chances are better thanks to the plan of advancing his queenside pawns.

B2) 9.\textit{b}3 0–0

Another crossroads, the main choices being B21) 10.\textit{d}3 and B22) 10.\textit{e}2. Other possibilities are:

10.c4 \textit{b}8?!  
I played this idea in Golod – Avrukh, Gibraltar 2009, but here it's quite dangerous in view of White's concrete threats. The simplest option for Black is to play 10...\textit{xd}4 11.\textit{xd}4 \textit{b}6 transposing to B1 above.

11.\textit{g}5?!  
My opponent missed this brilliant idea.

11...e6 12.\textit{x}f7! \textit{xf}7 13.\textit{xe}6 \textit{e}8 14.0–0  
I don’t like Black's position.

10.\textit{c}d1 \textit{c}7!  
Black shouldn’t rush with 10...\textit{xd}4 11.\textit{xd}4 \textit{f}6 12.\textit{d}3 \textit{g}4, as White can play the natural 13.0–0N with chances for an advantage. (Instead, in every game that reached this position, White has continued with the risky 13.\textit{xb}7 against which Black has scored terrifically.)

11.e5  
Defending against the idea of ...\textit{f}6. After 11.\textit{d}3 Black can strike with the unexpected

11...\textit{b}5! and the pawn seems to be taboo. For example: 12.\textit{xb}5 \textit{xb}8 13.\textit{c}4 \textit{a}5! 14.\textit{xd}7 \textit{xa}3 15.\textit{xc}8 (or 15.\textit{xc}5 \textit{b}2!) 15...\textit{xc}8 Black clearly has the better chances.

B21) 10.\textit{d}3 \textit{b}8!  
This is an obvious improvement over Katki – Koch, corr. 1958, in which 11...\textit{b}6 12.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}7 13.e6! gave White the initiative.

12.\textit{xd}4 \textit{b}6  
Black has good play.

B21) 10.\textit{d}3 \textit{b}8!  
This strong idea introduces the correct plan. Black is going to play ...\textit{b}5, which will make the white pieces feel uncomfortable on the queenside.

11.0–0 \textit{b}5
12...c2

Another line is: 12.e2 b7 13.c2 (13.d5 is strongly met by 13...b4!) 13...b4 (13...a5 is also very promising) 14.cxb4 cxd4 15.ad1 c8 Black was better in Gomez Fontal – Herrera, Santa Clara 2001.

12...a5 13.b2 a6 14.e2 b6!

The black knight is heading for the a4-square.

15.dxc5 a4 16.d4 xb2 17.xb2 b4

Black had a clear advantage in Goldenberg–Roos, Courchevel 1979.

B22) 10.e2 c7 11.0–0 b8

The reader should always remember this thematic idea when the white queen is placed on b3.

12.e5 e6

Stopping e5–e6. Not so good is: 12...b5 13.e6 c4 14.b4! White benefits from his bishop being on e2, rather than hanging on d3! 14...fxe6 15.xc7 White is better.

13.d2

With his last move Black weakened the d6-square, so the white knight immediately heads there.

13...b5+!

An interesting improvement over the quiet 13...b6. Evidently Black was concerned about the c5-pawn, but I don't believe it is such a big deal.

14.e4 b7!

I consider this to be stronger than 14...b4 15.cxb4 cxd4 16.f4! when White is doing well. (Instead 16.b5 xe5 17.d3 b7 is far from clear.)

15.xc5

Black is ready to meet 15.d6 with: 15...d5 16.xb5 (or 16.e2 a6 17.ac1 c6 18.g3 f6 and only Black can be better) 16...c6 17.c4 xg2 18.fd1 a6 19.d5 exd5 20.cxd5 b6 21.xg2 xe5 22.ab1 axb5 23.xb5 d6 White should be worried about his weakened king.

15...xc5 16.xc5

16...xe5!

The point behind Black's play.

17.xf8 xh2+ 18.h1 xf8

There is no doubt that Black has excellent compensation for the exchange.

19.f3
Defending against Black's idea of ...\( \text{f4-h4(h6)} \).

19...\( \text{xf3} \)

Very entertaining play arises after 19...\( \text{f4} \), with the following line looking more or less forced: 20.\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{h4} \) 21.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{g3\#} \) 22.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{d6} \) 23.\( \text{h1} \) \( \text{g4\#} \) 24.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 25.\( \text{h7} \) \( \text{g8} \) Black is not in any danger.

20.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xf4} \)

Black has fine compensation, although White probably has good chances to hold.

Conclusion

I recommend 7...\( \text{d7}! \) followed by 8...\( \text{c5} \) as an entirely adequate way to meet White's early bishop excursion to a3. White will usually continue with \( \text{b3} \) at some point, after which preparing ...\( \text{b5} \) with ...\( \text{b8}! \) is generally Black's correct reaction - although not in all cases, as my comments on Golod – Avrukh in B2 indicate. However, in line B22 for example, the improvement 13...\( \text{b5}! \) provides a good illustration of Black's active possibilities in this variation.
Chapter 7

Various 7th Moves

7. $\mathbb{Wa}_4^+$

Variation Index

1.d4 $\mathbb{Af}_6$ 2.c4 $g_6$ 3.$\mathbb{Ac}_3$ $d_5$ 4.cxd5 $\mathbb{Ad}_5$ 5.e4 $\mathbb{Ax}_c3$ 6.bxc3 $\mathbb{Ag}_7$ 7.$\mathbb{Wa}_4^+$

7... $\mathbb{Fd}_7$

A) 8.$\mathbb{Ac}_3$ 70
B) 8.$\mathbb{Ag}_5$ 71
C) 8.$\mathbb{Af}_3$ 0–0 72
   C1) 9.$\mathbb{Ac}_2$ 72
   C2) 9.$\mathbb{Ac}_3$ 73
   C3) 9.$\mathbb{Ag}_5$ $c_5$ 74
      C31) 10.$\mathbb{Ab}_1$ 74
      C32) 10.$\mathbb{Ad}_1$ 75
      C33) 10.$\mathbb{Ac}_1$ 75

C1) after 14.$\mathbb{Af}_3$ 14... $\mathbb{Ad}_4$!N 70
C31) after 13.cxd4 13... $\mathbb{Ad}_6$!N 70
C33) after 17.$\mathbb{Ab}_1$ 17... $\mathbb{Ab}_5$!N 70
Various 7th Moves

1. d4 \( \square f6 \) 2. c4 g6 3. \( \square c3 \) d5 4. cxd5 \( \square x d5 \) 5. e4 \( \square x c3 \) 6. bxc3 \( \square g 7 \) 7. \( \square a 4 \)

Black's most popular option in practice, and in my opinion justifiably so, although theory considers 7... \( \square d 7 \) to be playable too.

White now chooses from A) 8... \( \square e 3 \), B) 8... \( \square g 5 \) and C) 8... \( \square f 3 \), though the first two moves frequently transpose into line C if White subsequently plays \( \square f 3 \).

A) 8... \( \square e 3 \) 0–0 9. \( \square d 1 \)

9. \( \square c 1 \) c5 10. \( \square f 3 \) transposes to C2.

9...c5

10. \( \square f 3 \)

Another possible set-up is:

10. \( \square d 3 \) \( \square b 6 \) 11. \( \square a 3 \)

11. \( \square b 3 \) places the queen on a none too safe square. For example 11... \( \square d 7 \) threatens ... \( \square a 4 \), and the queen has to move again.

11...cxd4 12. cxd4

12... \( \square d 6 \)!

This typical idea helps Black to easily solve his problems.

13. \( \square x d 6 \) exd6 14. \( \square e 2 \) \( f 5 \) 15.0–0

Also after 15. \( f 3 \) fxe4 16. fxe4 \( \square e 6 \) White is hardly fighting for an advantage.

15...fxe4 16. \( \square x e 4 \) \( \square g 4 \) 17. \( f 3 \) \( \square a 8 \) 18. \( \square c 3 \) \( \square f 5 \)

Black had slightly the better chances in V. Milov – Ivanchuk, Warsaw 2005.

10... \( \square c 7 \)
11...\texttt{d}3 \texttt{b}6  
This is a thematic set-up in this variation, and promises Black decent play.

Black can also consider the more active:  
11...\texttt{cxd}4 12.\texttt{cxd}4 \texttt{c}3\textsuperscript{f} 13.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{b}6 14.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{xb}3 15.\texttt{axb}3

15...f5 (15...\texttt{g}4 was played in Holm – Borge, Denmark 1998. Now White should play 16.h3N \texttt{xf}3\textsuperscript{f} 17.\texttt{xf}3 and retain some pressure.) 16.h4 This was Yurkov – Pospelov, Vitebsky 2006. Here I like 16...\texttt{e}6 fighting for the d5-square and at the same time attacking the b3-pawn. After 17.exf5 gxf5 18.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{d}5 Black has a nice game.

12.0-0 \texttt{b}7 13.\texttt{fe}1

Another good option is 11...\texttt{f}6 12.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{g}4 13.\texttt{e}3 Berczes – Sebestyen, Hungary 2009. It is now tempting to play the aggressive: 13...\texttt{c}4N (the more restrained 13...\texttt{fd}8 14.0-0 \texttt{ac}8 is also fine for Black) 14.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{h}5 15.0-0 \texttt{f}4 Black has a promising game.

12.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{b}7 13.0-0  
White should avoid 13.d5 \texttt{e}5! when continuing with 14.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{xe}5 15.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{xd}5 would just lose him a pawn.

13...\texttt{e}6 14.\texttt{fe}1 \texttt{a}6  
Preparing ...b5.
15.e5
Quite a thematic idea with this type of pawn structure. White wants to transfer his knight to the d6-square, while e7-d6 might also be an option.

15...\textit{f}c8!
A very accurate move, which allows Black to equalize comfortably.

16.e4?!
White should prefer 16.\textit{d}2N after which 16...cxd4 17.cxd4 \textit{f}8 18.\textit{b}2 \textit{c}3 19.\textit{x}c3 \textit{x}c3 20.e4 \textit{x}e4 21.\textit{x}e4 \textit{c}2 leads to an equal game.

16...\textit{x}e4 17.\textit{x}e4 \textit{b}5
Black easily develops good play on the queenside.

18.h4 cxd4 19.cxd4 \textit{b}6 20.h5 \textit{c}3
Black was definitely better in Plisunov – Neverov, St Petersburg 2003.

\textbf{C1) 8.\textit{f}3 0–0}

White now has various ways of developing his bishops: \textbf{C1) 9.e2, C2) 9.e3 or C3) 9.g5.}

\textbf{C1) 9.e2 c5}

10.0–0
10.e3 \textit{f}6
Black starts to attack the white centre.

11.\textit{d}2
11.c3 was Danner – Birnboim, Lugano 1989. I do not see any reason for Black to avoid: 11...g4N 12.e4 \textit{d}7 13.\textit{a}3 cxd4 14.cxd4 \textit{c}6 15.ed1 \textit{x}d4 Black seems to be able to get away with grabbing this pawn. 16.\textit{x}d4 \textit{x}d4 17.0–0 \textit{f}e8 After this calm move Black has nothing to worry about.

11...g4 12.xg4 \textit{x}g4
White cannot seriously hope for an advantage against the bishop pair.

13.f3 \textit{d}7 14.\textit{b}3 cxd4 15.cxd4
This was Korobov – Obodchuk, Moscow 2002, and now I recommend:

15...\textit{e}6N 16.\textit{b}2 \textit{a}5 17.0–0 \textit{f}c8
Black has the better chances.
10...\textit{cxd4} 11.\textit{cxd4} \textit{\textgreek{c}5}!

A key idea in this variation; this elegant tactic allows Black to create pressure against the \textit{d4}-pawn.

\textbf{12.\textit{\textw{c}2} \textit{\textg{g}4}}

12...\textit{\textw{e}6} is also enough for equality: 13.\textit{\texte{e}3} \textit{\textx{xd}4} 14.\textit{\textx{xd}4} \textit{\textx{xd}4} 15.\textit{\texte{e}1} \textit{\texte}5 16.\textit{\textx{xd}4} \textit{\textx{xd}4} 17.\textit{\textb{b}2} \textit{\texte}6 18.\textit{\textx{xb}7} 19.\textit{\textx{b}6} axb6 20.\textit{\textx{xd}4} \textit{\texte}2 Black managed to convert his slight advantage into a full point in Miton – Ivanchuk, Havana 2007.

\textbf{13.\textit{\textb{b}2}?!}

This is a serious inaccuracy. White should settle for an equal position after: 13.\textit{\textb{b}1} \textit{\textx{f}3} 14.\textit{\textd{x}c}5 \textit{\textx{xe}2} 15.\textit{\textx{xe}2} \textit{\textc}7=

\textbf{13...\textit{\textx{xf}3}}

Also interesting is 13...\textit{\textw{e}6}? 14.d5 \textit{\texte}8 15.\textit{\textw{d}2} \textit{\textx{xb}2} 16.\textit{\textw{b}2} \textit{\textf}4 when Black had an edge in Loeffler – Balleer, e-mail 2007.

\textbf{14.\textit{\textx{xf}3}}

\textbf{14...\textit{\textx{xd}4}!N}

In Thilaganathan – Knott, Hastings 2006/7, Black opted for 14...\textit{\textw{e}6}, which was good enough for equality.

\textbf{15.\textit{\textf{d}1} \textit{\texte}6}

White must fight to equalize.
12...\texttt{\textit{g}}4N
This natural move seems to me more convincing than 12...f5 Pisulinski – Malisauskas, Warsaw 1989, when 13.\texttt{\textit{d}}3\?N is rather unclear.

13.\texttt{\textit{e}}5 \texttt{\textit{e}}6 14.\texttt{\textit{e}}2 f5!
Black advances his f-pawn in a better version.

15.exf5\texttt{\textit{xf}}5 16.0–0 \texttt{\textit{d}}5
Black is at least equal.

\textbf{C3) 9.\texttt{\textit{g}}5 c5}

We have reached the last big crossroads in this variation, as White decides where to place his rook: \textbf{C31) 10.\texttt{\textit{b}}1}, \textbf{C32) 10.\texttt{\textit{d}}1} or \textbf{C33) 10.\texttt{\textit{c}}1}.

White has also tried 10.\texttt{\textit{a}}3 h6 11.\texttt{\textit{e}}3 b6 12.\texttt{\textit{d}}3?! which runs into: 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 \texttt{\textit{c}}5! 14.0–0 \texttt{\textit{x}}d3 15.\texttt{\textit{x}}d3 \texttt{\textit{b}}7 16.\texttt{\textit{a}}d1 e6 17.\texttt{\textit{d}}2 \texttt{\textit{d}}7 18.f3 \texttt{\textit{ac}}8 Black enjoyed the better chances in Varga – Navara, Pula 2003.

\textbf{C31) 10.\texttt{\textit{b}}1 \texttt{\textit{b}}6}

The most aggressive approach, although there is nothing wrong with 10...h6 11.\texttt{\textit{e}}3 \texttt{\textit{c}}7.

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chessboard1}
\caption{Position after 10.\texttt{\textit{b}}1 \texttt{\textit{b}}6}
\end{figure}

11.\texttt{\textit{a}}3
Instead 11.\texttt{\textit{a}}5 would not be so good, in view of 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 \texttt{\textit{g}}4! targeting the d4-pawn.

11...h6
It is essential to relieve the pressure on the e7-pawn.

12.\texttt{\textit{e}}3 cxd4 13.cxd4

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chessboard2}
\caption{Position after 13.cxd4}
\end{figure}

13...\texttt{\textit{d}}6\?N
Yet again, this idea crops up. It is clearly an improvement over: 13...f5 14.\texttt{\textit{d}}3 \texttt{\textit{xe}}4 15.\texttt{\textit{xe}}4 \texttt{\textit{f}}5 16.\texttt{\textit{xf}}5 \texttt{\textit{xf}}5 17.0–0 White was better in Moiseenko – Ganguly, Edmonton 2008.
14.\textit{ wxd6 exd6 } 15.\textit{ \textit{ d3 } f5 } 16.0-0 \textit{ fxe4 } 17.\textit{ \textit{ exf5 } \textit{ gxf5} }

Black should have no problems at all.

\textbf{C32) 10.\textit{ \textit{ e1 } \textit{ c7 } 11.\textit{ \textit{ e2}}} \textit{ }}

11.\textit{ \textit{ w3}} is a transposition to line B. White has also tried:

11.\textit{ \textit{ d3 } cxd4 } 12.\textit{ cxd4}

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This occurred in Széberényi – An. Horváth, Budapest 2006. A clear improvement of Black’s play here is:

12...\textit{ \textit{ c3}}!N 13.\textit{ \textit{ d2}}

Or 13.\textit{ \textit{ f1 } b6 } 14.\textit{ \textit{ b3 } c7}! and White’s king cannot feel safe on f1 in this middlegame.

13...e5 14.d5

A nice variation is 14.dxe5 \textit{ \textit{ ex5 } 15.\textit{ \textit{ dxex5 } w5 } 16.\textit{ \textit{ e3 } a1}! 17.\textit{ \textit{ d1 } xd1}! 18.\textit{ \textit{ xd1 } e6} and Black is slightly better.

14...\textit{ \textit{ c5 } 15.\textit{ \textit{ c2 } x3d3}! 16.\textit{ \textit{ x3d3 } xd3} 17.\textit{ \textit{ x3d3 } f6 } 18.\textit{ \textit{ e3 b6}}

Black has a fine game.

\textbf{11...\textit{ \textit{ f6 } 12.d5}}

If White could complete his development safely then the pawn structure would be favourable for him; however Black is in time to create enough counter-chances.

12...\textit{ \textit{ d7 } 13.\textit{ \textit{ c2 } a5}}!

Threatening ...\textit{ \textit{ a4}}.

\textbf{14.\textit{ \textit{ d2}}}

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We have been following Schandorff – Jasnikowski, Copenhagen 1989. Black should now continue:

14...\textit{ \textit{ a4 } 15.\textit{ \textit{ b3 } c7 } 16.c4 \textit{ \textit{ e5}}! 17.\textit{ \textit{ x6 } x6 } 18.0-0 \textit{ b6 } 19.f4 \textit{ \textit{ c3}! 20.\textit{ \textit{ xc3 } x3}}

The chances are equal.

\textbf{C33) 10.\textit{ \textit{ c1 } c7} }

This is more flexible than: 10...\textit{ h6 } 11.\textit{ \textit{ e3 } e6 } 12.\textit{ \textit{ e2 } b6 } 13.0-0 \textit{ b7 } 14.\textit{ \textit{ d2 a6 } 15.\textit{ \textit{ b3 } c7 } 16.f3 White was slightly better in Belichev – Avrukh, Cappelle la Grande 1999.

\textbf{11.\textit{ \textit{ d3 a6}}}
12.\textit{\texttt{Ba3}}

This is the right way to defend against the idea of \ldots \texttt{b5}. After 12.0-0 \texttt{b5} 13.\textit{\texttt{d1}} (13.\textit{\texttt{xb5?}} loses to 13...\textit{\texttt{b6}}) 13...\texttt{e5} 14.\textit{\texttt{d2}} \texttt{e8} 15.\textit{\texttt{b1}} Gavrilov - Yuferov, Moscow 1990,

the simple 15...\textit{\texttt{b6}}N 16.\texttt{d5} \texttt{c4} leads to a
good game for Black; if necessary he can later
blockade the d-pawn by \ldots \textit{\texttt{d6}}.

12...\texttt{e5} 13.0-0 \texttt{e8}

14.\textit{\texttt{c4}}

White has also tried:

14.\textit{\texttt{dxe5}}

This looks very natural, but somehow it fails
to impress.
14...\textit{\texttt{dxe5}} 15.dxe5 \texttt{c4}!

A key intermediate move.

16.\textit{\texttt{b1}} \textit{\texttt{xe5}} 17.\texttt{f4}

It is more circumspect to play 17.h3, as in
the variation with 14.dxe5 below, although
Black still has a comfortable position.

17...\textit{\texttt{d6f}} 18.\textit{\texttt{b2}} \texttt{f6}! 19.\textit{\texttt{xf6}}

Practically forced, since 19.\textit{\texttt{h6?}} loses
unexpectedly to 19...\textit{\texttt{c5}}† 20.\textit{\texttt{h1}} \textit{\texttt{h5}}!.
19.\textit{\texttt{xf4}} \textit{\texttt{g4}}†

White is losing material, Shipov - Ma.

14.dxe5 \texttt{c4}! 15.\textit{\texttt{c2}} \textit{\texttt{dxe5}} 16.\textit{\texttt{xe5}} \textit{\texttt{xe5}}

We have almost the same position as above,
but with the bishop on \texttt{c2}.

17.h3

This was Nagel - Roeschlau, Kaufungen
2003. Now I like:
17...\textit{\texttt{d6N}} 18.\textit{\texttt{b2}} \textit{\texttt{c5}}

\texttt{a3} winning the exchange with 18...\texttt{a5} 19.\texttt{f6}
\texttt{a3} may be objectively stronger, but after
Chapter 7 – \( \text{Na}4 \)

20.\( \text{Nb}1 \) \( \text{Ne}6 \) 21.\( \text{Nd}4 \) \( \text{Nxc1} \) 22.\( \text{Nxc1} \) White obtains reasonable compensation.

19.\( \text{Nh1} \) \( \text{b5} \)
Black has a pleasant game.

14.\( \text{Nd1} \) \( \text{Nf8}?! \)

With this unusual manoeuvre, Black forces through the \( ... \text{b5} \) advance.

15.\( \text{Nc3} \) \( \text{b5} \) 16.\( \text{Nc2} \) \( \text{b7} \) 17.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{c4} \) 18.\( \text{Nc2} \) \( \text{f6} \)

Black was fine in Gavrilov – Smikovski, St Petersburg 2004.

14.\( ... \) \( \text{b6} \) 15.\( \text{Na5} \)

The alternative is: 15.\( \text{Nd2} \) \( \text{b5} \) 16.\( \text{Nc2} \) \( \text{b7} \) 17.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{c4} \) 18.\( \text{Nc2} \) \( \text{f6} \)

19.\( \text{Nh6} \) \( \text{c5} \) 20.\( \text{Nxf8} \) \( \text{Nxf8} \) 21.\( \text{Ne3} \) \( \text{d6} \)

We have been following Lev – Ma. Tseitlin, Israel 1990. Here a nice continuation for Black is:

17.\( ... \) \( \text{b5}?! \) 18.\( \text{Nxb5} \) \( \text{axb5} \) 19.\( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{Nd7}?! \)

An interesting positional idea. A natural alternative is to regain the pawn with 19.\( \text{Nd7} \) 20.\( \text{Nxd4} \) \( \text{Nxe5} \). The position is roughly level,

since after 21.\( \text{Nxb5} \) \( \text{a5} \) White cannot keep his extra pawn.

20.\( \text{Nc3} \) \( \text{a4} \) 21.\( \text{Nh3} \) \( \text{c6} \)

Black is not interested in regaining the \( e5 \)-pawn at the cost of his dark-squared bishop. Instead he intends to start play on the queenside with \( ... \text{b8} \) followed by \( ... \text{b4} \). It looks very promising for Black.

**Conclusion**

After 7.\( \text{Na4} \) \( \text{Nd7} \) it seems to me Black is not seriously inconvenienced by having developed the knight to the slightly passive \( d7 \)-square. In some instances, for example line C1, Black can utilize the pin on the long diagonal to later activate the knight by \( ... \text{Nc5} \) with good play. More commonly the knight will hit the white queen from the \( b6 \)-square. When the white queen retreats to \( a3 \), an important resource for Black, which features in several lines throughout the chapter, is to offer the exchange of queens with \( ... \text{d6} \); this generally offers Black comfortable equality.
Various 7th Moves

7...\texttt{b5}†

Variation Index

1.d4 \texttt{f6} 2.c4 \texttt{g6} 3.g3 \texttt{d5} 4.cxd5 \texttt{xd5} 5.e4 \texttt{xc3} 6.bxc3 \texttt{g7} 7.b5†

7...c6 8.a4 0–0 9.ee2 c5

A) 10.d5 80

B) 10.e3 82

C) 10.0–0 \texttt{c6} 11.e3 \texttt{a5} 83

C1) 12.dxc5 84

C2) 12.b3 85

C3) 12.d5 85

C4) 12.b1 86

A) after 17.d2

C1) after 17.c2

C4) note to 14.b3

17...c7N

17...a6N

16...b6N
1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.d3 c5 4.cxd5 4...xd5
5.e4 5...xc3 6.bxc3 g7 7...b5

7...c6
This natural response is considered most reliable for Black, according to the latest theory.

8...a4
Other retreats do not make much sense. I would just mention that 8...c4 c5 leads into Chapters 17-21.

8...0-0

9.e2
This flexible move is by far the most popular.

Other options include:

9...c5 10...e2 transposes to line B.

9...a5?
This is Black's most annoying approach, although he can also play 9...c5 10.0-0 cxd4 11.cxd4 d6 12.e3 g4 13.xc6 bxc6, leading to a position which is examined as line D of Chapter 12.

10...d2
After 10.0-0 bxc3 it is hard to believe that White has sufficient compensation. The only game from this position continued: 11...g5! g4! 12.xe7 e8 13.b5 d7 14.d1 a5 15.b3 Tighanov - Richtrova, Germany 1995. Now 15...b6!N would take control of the g5-square, thereby defending against the threat of xf7+. Black is clearly better.

10...a6!
Temporarily keeping the white king in the centre.

11.b3 c5 12.d5 e6!
Logical and very strong.

13...e2 xe2 14...xe2 exd5 15...xd5 d7 16...ab1 b6
Black was already better in Drozdovskij - Sutovsky, Moscow 2007.

9...a3
This has been played by a couple of strong players. Here I found a remarkable idea:
Various 7th Moves

9...\text{\texttt{a5}}! N
Not only attacking the c3-pawn, but also threatening ...b5. White’s reply is practically forced.

10.\text{\texttt{b4}} \text{\texttt{c7}} 11.\text{\texttt{c2}} \text{\texttt{b6}}

The white bishop is misplaced on b4, allowing Black to create counterplay very quickly. 11...\text{\texttt{a5}} 12.\text{\texttt{a3}} \text{\texttt{b5}} 13.\text{\texttt{b3}} \text{\texttt{a6}} 14.0-0 \text{\texttt{c5}}? also comes into consideration.

12.0-0 \text{\texttt{c5}} 13.\text{\texttt{a3}} \text{\texttt{a6}}

Black has an excellent position, especially taking into account that White cannot play:

14.\text{\texttt{d5}}? \text{\texttt{b5}} 15.\text{\texttt{c2}} \text{\texttt{b4}}

Black wins material.

9...\text{\texttt{c5}}

White now chooses from A) 10.\text{\texttt{d5}}, B) 10.\text{\texttt{e3}} and C) 10.0-0. Instead 10.\text{\texttt{b1}} \text{\texttt{c6}} 11.\text{\texttt{e3}} \text{\texttt{a5}} 12.0-0 transposes to line C4.

A) 10.\text{\texttt{d5}}

Quite an interesting alternative. As White I have scored two nice wins using this continuation, but objectively Black is doing fine.

10...\text{\texttt{e6}}

The key idea in this kind of Grünfeld position.

11.0-0

When I played this variation, my idea was to play:

11.\text{\texttt{e3}}

But Black has a strong response.

11...\text{\texttt{a5}}!

After the natural 11...\texttt{b6} 12.\text{\texttt{b3}} Avrukh – Greenfeld, Haifa (rapid) 2000, Black can no longer exchange pawns on d5, and White has chances to fight for the advantage.
12.\textit{\textbf{b}}3
After 12.\textit{\textbf{c}}1 exd5 13.exd5 b5 14.\textit{\textbf{c}}2 \textit{\textbf{d}}8
15.0–0 \textit{\textbf{b}}7 Black has the better chances.
However, White should prefer 12.0–0, after
which 12...exd5 13.exd5 \textit{\textbf{d}}7 transposes to
the main line.
12...exd5 13.exd5 \textit{\textbf{x}}c3† 14.\textit{\textbf{xc}}3 \textit{\textbf{xc}}3†
15.\textit{\textbf{f}}1
This happened in Tyomkin – Ma. Tseitlin,
Givataim 2000. Here simplest for Black is:
15...b6 16.\textit{\textbf{c}}1 \textit{\textbf{e}}5†
Black will continue with ...\textit{\textbf{d}}7–f6. I do not
see enough compensation for the pawn.

11...exd5 12.exd5 \textit{\textbf{d}}7
White will have to worry about the knight
jumping to any of the squares b6, e5 or f6.

13.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 \textit{\textbf{a}}5 14.\textit{\textbf{b}}3
Another continuation is:
14.\textit{\textbf{b}}1 \textit{\textbf{b}}6 15.\textit{\textbf{b}}3N
This is of course critical. The strange
15.\textit{\textbf{b}}5? was played in Ristic – Misailovic,
Vrnjacka Banja 2006. Here I can find no
decent answer to 15...a6!N when White loses
material.
15...\textit{\textbf{e}}8 16.c4 \textit{\textbf{d}}7
It is too dangerous to win the exchange by
16...\textit{\textbf{f}}5 17.\textit{\textbf{c}}1 \textit{\textbf{b}}2. After 18.\textit{\textbf{g}}3 \textit{\textbf{x}}c1
19.\textit{\textbf{x}}c1 White has great compensation

because the black queen is too far from the
kingside.
17.\textit{\textbf{g}}3

17...\textit{\textbf{c}}8!
A very thematic idea for this kind of structure;
the knight is heading for the d6-square.
18.\textit{\textbf{e}}1
If White tries to stop Black's idea with
18.\textit{\textbf{f}}4, then Black can strike from other
side with 18...b5 followed by ...\textit{\textbf{b}}6, with
nice counterplay.
18...\textit{\textbf{d}}6 19.\textit{\textbf{f}}4 \textit{\textbf{a}}6
The position is balanced.

14...\textit{\textbf{e}}5 15.c4 \textit{\textbf{f}}5 16.\textit{\textbf{f}}4
In my game against the Topalov's manager,
I opted for:
16.\textit{\textbf{c}}1 \textit{\textbf{d}}3 17.\textit{\textbf{c}}2

The simplest way to solve all Black's problems
is:
17...\textit{\&e5}N
My opponent played 17...\textit{\&b2} 18.\textit{\&d}d2
\textit{\&xd}2 19.\textit{\&xd}2 b5?! and ran into trouble after
20.cx\textit{\&b}5 c4 21.\textit{\&d}4+ Avrukh – Danailov,
Wijk aan Zee 2000.
18.\textit{\&d}2
No good for White is: 18.\textit{\&d}2 \textit{\&b}4! 19.\textit{\&c}cl
a5!
Accepting a repetition with 18.\textit{\&c}1 may be
White’s best option.
18...\textit{\&e}8
I do not believe that Black can be worse, since
the white bishop on b3 is so badly placed.

16...\textit{\&g}4! 17.\textit{\&d}2

We have been following Hellsten – T. Ernst,
Sweden 2000. Here Black should play:

17...\textit{\&f}7N 18.\textit{\&c}1 \textit{\&b}2
Winning the exchange may look a bit risky;
however with such a passive light-squared
bishop, White can hardly create anything
dangerous. For example:

19.h3 \textit{\&e}5 20.\textit{\&c}3 \textit{\&xc}1 21.d6 \textit{\&c}6
22.\textit{\&xe}5
Or 22.\textit{\&xc}1 f6.

22...\textit{\&f}4 23.\textit{\&f}4 \textit{\&ad}8
Black has the better chances.
15.\text{\textit{b}3} \\
\begin{itemize}
\item Other moves are also unimpressive:
\item 15.d5 fails tactically to: 15...\textit{\textit{e}5} 16.\textit{\textit{x}d7? \textit{\textit{d}3}! 17.\textit{\textit{f}1 \textit{\textit{x}c1} 18.\textit{\textit{x}c1 \textit{\textit{a}c8}!}}
\item 15.\textit{\textit{x}c6 \textit{\textit{x}c6} 16.d5 \textit{\textit{b}5} is certainly fine for Black.
\end{itemize}
15...\textit{\textit{a}5} 16.d5 \textit{\textit{xb}3} 17.axb3 \textit{\textit{xc3}}
18.\textit{\textit{xc3} \textit{\textit{ac8}} 19.0-0 \textit{\textit{b5}}\textsuperscript{7}

\textbf{C) 10.0-0 \textit{\textit{c}6}}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Diagram}
\end{center}

11.\textit{\textit{c}3}
\begin{itemize}
\item By far the most popular continuation. A couple of rarer alternatives are:
\item 11.d5 \textit{\textit{a}5} 12.\textit{\textit{g}5} Here I propose the active: 12...f5?!N (I do not find the usual 12...b6 very convincing.)
\end{itemize}

13.\textit{\textit{c}2} (I also examined 13.\textit{\textit{d}3} h6! 14.\textit{\textit{e}3 \textit{\textit{x}e4} 15.\textit{\textit{x}e4 \textit{\textit{f}5} and Black is better.)}
13...\textit{\textit{c}4} 14.f3 \textit{\textit{b5}}\textsuperscript{6}

11.\textit{\textit{x}c6 \textit{\textit{b}xc6} 12.\textit{\textit{a}3 \textit{\textit{x}d4} 13.\textit{\textit{xd4}}}
13.\textit{\textit{x}d4?! has been played several times by Bonin, but there is a clear refutation:}
13...c5! 14.\textit{\textit{xc5} \textit{\textit{c}7} 15.\textit{\textit{b}3 \textit{\textit{a}6} 16.\textit{\textit{e}1 \textit{\textit{x}c3} 17.\textit{\textit{c}1 \textit{\textit{xe1} 18.\textit{\textit{xe1} \textit{\textit{fd8}}+ White did not have enough compensation for the exchange in Bonin – G. Shahade, New York 2002.}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Diagram}
\end{center}

13.\textit{\textit{a}5!N}
\begin{itemize}
\item This is a clear improvement over: 13...\textit{\textit{a}6} 14.\textit{\textit{c}5 \textit{\textit{xe2} 15.\textit{\textit{xe2} \textit{\textit{xd4} 16.\textit{\textit{ad1 \textit{\textit{xc5} 17.\textit{\textit{xd8 \textit{\textit{fxd8 Black had to fight hard for the draw in Karpov – Morovic, Kansas (rapid) 2003.}}}}}}}}}}}
\item 14.\textit{\textit{c}5}
\item Black has an edge after 14.\textit{\textit{xe7 \textit{\textit{e8} 15.\textit{\textit{c5 \textit{\textit{xe4}.}}}}}}
\item 14...\textit{\textit{ed8} 15.\textit{\textit{c2} c5 16.\textit{\textit{fd1 \textit{\textit{a6}}+ Only Black can be better here.}}}}
\end{itemize}

11...\textit{\textit{a}5}
\begin{itemize}
\item Black's main choice according to theory.
\item In my experience with this variation I have noticed that the c4-square is highly important in this structure, especially in this line when it is not controlled by the white bishop. We have now arrived at the most important crossroads in this variation, with White having a wide
choice: C1) 12.dxc5, C2) 12...b3, C3) 12.d5 or C4) 12...b1.

C1) 12.dxc5

I am never afraid to sacrifice the c5-pawn in return for damaging the white pawn structure. Nevertheless, capturing the c5-pawn is a very concrete approach and requires serious investigation.

12...c7!?

I prefer to keep the queens on the board here. First of all because it's more combative; and secondly I have not been able to find a clear route to equality after the exchange. For example: 12...c4 13...xd8 exd8 14...g5 d7 15...b3 a5 16...fd1 (This is of course more challenging than 16...xe7 e8 17...d6 xe4 18...d4 xb3 19.axb3 xd4 ½–½ Topalov – Kasparov, Linares 1998.) 16...c6 17.f3 f8 18.e5 xd1† 19.exd1 e6 20...e3 cc8

All these logical moves occurred in Avrukh – I. Sokolov, Amsterdam 1999, and now I missed a very strong positional idea: 21.c4 cc8 22...c3 xc5 23.xc5 cc5 24...d8 e8 25...e4 cc6 26...a4 cc6 27.xc6 bxc6 28...a8!

13...f4 e6 14...d3

14...d6 doesn't work, since after 14...xd6 15.cxd6 cc8 16...d1 d7 Black will eventually take the d6-pawn and then remain with the better pawn structure.

14...b6 15...b5

I also examined 15...b1, but Black can react with 15...a6 16...xb6 axb6 17...xh6 cc3 18...b5 xb5 19...xb5 d4. It is White who must take care to maintain the balance.

15...b7 16.f3...d8 17...c2

Also after 17...e2 Black can reply 17...a6! due to the following variation: 18...xb6 cc3 19...fc1 cc3 20...c5 dd4†! Black is at least equal.

17...a6!N

This is a convincing way to equalize. In Shariyazdanov – Dvoirys, Moscow 1998, Black traded light-squared bishops by 17...c6 18...xc6 cc6. After the further moves 19...fd1 bxc5 20...xc5 dc4 21...f2 Black
undoubtedly had positional compensation, but he still needed to prove that it was worth a pawn.

18.\texttt{\texttt{a4}}

The main point of Black's idea is that 18.cxb6 loses material after: 18...\texttt{xc3} 19.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{xc3} 20.\texttt{ac1} \texttt{f6} →

18...bxc5

White cannot take the c5-pawn with either piece, and so Black has no problems.

C2) 12.\texttt{b3}

In this line White is ready to give up his light-squared bishop in order to maintain control over the c4-square.

12...\texttt{d7}

Black is not obliged to rush with ...\texttt{xb3}.

13.\texttt{xc5}

A logical alternative is 13.\texttt{c1} C. Pedersen – P.H. Nielsen, Denmark 2001, although Black can now solve his opening problems with the help of a forced line: 13...\texttt{xd4}N 14.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{b5} 15.\texttt{e1} \texttt{c8} 16.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xc1} 17.\texttt{xc1} \texttt{xe2} 18.\texttt{xe2} \texttt{xd4} 19.\texttt{d1} \texttt{xb3} 20.axb3 e5 21.\texttt{xd4} exd4 22.\texttt{c4}=

13...\texttt{b5}!

This manoeuvre now appears in an even better version for Black.

14.\texttt{e1} \texttt{xd1} 15.\texttt{axd1} \texttt{fc8} 16.f3 e6

Black is absolutely fine.

17.\texttt{d4} \texttt{a6} 18.\texttt{a4}?

A move such as 18.\texttt{f2} would probably hold the balance, but after the text White's position goes quickly downhill.

18...\texttt{c4} 19.c6 bxc6 20.\texttt{c1} c5 21.\texttt{e2} \texttt{b6} 22.\texttt{b3} \texttt{xe2} 23.\texttt{xe2} \texttt{xc3}↑


C3) 12.d5
12...b6 13.\textit{\texttt{d3}}

Otherwise the black bishop will be very strongly placed on a6. For example: 13.\textit{\texttt{g5}} a6 14.\textit{\texttt{c2}} d6 Black prepares to undermine the white centre. 15.\textit{\texttt{e1}} e6 Black was already better in Beliavsky – Belov, Moscow 2005.

13...\textit{\texttt{e6}}

The calm 13...\textit{\texttt{d7}}?! also deserves attention.

14.\textit{\texttt{d6}}

A very ambitious move, but it risks the d6-pawn becoming a target.

14...\textit{\texttt{d7}} 15.\textit{\texttt{c2}}?!

White should probably prefer 15.\textit{\texttt{xd7}} \textit{\texttt{xd7}} 16.f4, but after 16...\textit{\texttt{ad8}} 17.\textit{\texttt{ad1}} f6! I still prefer Black.

15...\textit{\texttt{c6}} 16.f4 \textit{\texttt{d7}} 17.a4

17.e5 runs into 17...f6! when White cannot keep the pawn on e5.

17.\textit{\texttt{ad8}} 18.\textit{\texttt{fd1}}

We have been following Dyballa – Petzold, Germany 2009. Black now has the strong positional idea:

18...\textit{\texttt{f5}} 19.\textit{\texttt{g3}} e4

Black is clearly better.

C4) 12.\textit{\texttt{b1}} 1\textit{\texttt{c4}}

The alternative 12...b6 is more popular, but I definitely prefer this straightforward move – as White I have had some unpleasant experiences facing it.

13.\textit{\texttt{g5}}

The bishop may also retreat:

13.\textit{\texttt{c1}} \textit{\texttt{c7}}

Not so accurate is 13...b6 14.\textit{\texttt{c6}} \textit{\texttt{b8}} Avrukh – Simonenko, Ubeda 2001. Here I missed the chance to play: 15.\textit{\texttt{d5N}} a6 16.\textit{\texttt{d3}} b5 17.\textit{\texttt{f4}} White has a promising position.

14.\textit{\texttt{d5}}

After 14.\textit{\texttt{b3}} Black should react with 14...\textit{\texttt{xd4}} 15.\textit{\texttt{xd4}} b5 with complex play.
This natural idea is a novelty here.
In Shariyazdanov – Rade, Sibenik 2005, Black opted for 14...e5 15.a2 d6 16.f4. In this very complicated position it seems to me that White has the more promising chances.
15.b3 d6
15...exd5 runs into 16.f4! b6 17.xd5 dxe5 18.xd5 with better chances for White.
16.dxe6 xe6 17.f4 ad8 18.xe6 fxe6
We have reached a very complex position, from which I offer one illustrative line:
19.a4 e5 20.g5 e6 21.xa7 xe4 22.e3 c4
The game is balanced.

13.c7
Another option is 13.h6, but there is no need to kick the bishop yet, and I prefer to retain the possibility of playing ...f6.

14.b3
I once tried:
14.c1 b6 15.b5 d6
Black’s knight is well-placed on d6.
16.d3 f6
To secure the position of his knight Black needs to push ...e5.
17.h4 e5
18.g3N, as indicated by Krasenkow in ChessBase Magazine 71, although after 18.e6 19.d5 c4 20.c2 d7 Black is doing fine.
18.fxe5 19.c4
I had high hopes for the forthcoming transfer of my knight to d5, but it turns out not to be dangerous for Black.
19.e6 20.c3 f7 21.d5 xd5 22.cxd5 f6 23.g3 c7!

With this strong prophylactic manoeuvre Black has prevented f2-f4, and he is ready to advance his queenside pawns. The game ended in a painful loss for White in Avrukh – Ma. Tseitlin, Tel Aviv 1999.

14.d3 a3 15.b2 a5 16.d1 has occurred in three games, and here I offer the following improvement:

16...b6!N This has the concrete idea of ...a6, and an important point is that White cannot afford to take the e7-pawn. 17.xe7? e8 18.g5 a6 19.f3 (19.g3 Exe4 is unpleasant for White) 19...xd4 20.cxd4 c4 White cannot avoid losing material.

14.a3 15.c1 c4 16.c2 b5
The black knight looks strange on a3, but White’s light-squared bishop cannot easily escape from a future exchange.

17...d2
This was Lauber – Naumann, Bundesliga 1998. Now I suggest the following improvement:

17...\textit{b}7 18.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}5

Aiming to clarify the position in the centre.

19.d5 \textit{d}6!?

Black does not insist on exchanging knight for bishop, since it turns out that the a3-knight is useful for supporting the advance of the queenside pawns.

20.\textit{g}3 \textit{a}5

The position is very complex, but I feel Black has slightly the more promising chances, as he has a clear plan of advancing his queenside pawns.

Conclusion

As the reader will have gathered from many of the game references throughout the chapter, this variation used to form part of my repertoire as White. However, after several painful reverses I abandoned it a decade ago, and I have found no reason to be tempted back. Black seems assured of at least equal chances in all lines. Perhaps line C4 is most critical, leading to a complex strategical battle, but overall I would (nowadays!) certainly prefer to be playing the black side.
Variation Index

1. d4 d6 2. c4 g6 3. d4 e5 4. cxd5 exd5 5. e4 dxc3 6. bxc3 g7 7. e3

7...c5

A) 8. b1 a5 9. d2 cxd4 10. cxd4 xd2 11. xd2 0–0
   A1) 12. d3
   A2) 12. b5
   A3) 12. c4
   A4) 12. f3

B) 8. c1 a5 9. d2 cxd4 10. cxd4 xd2
   B1) 11. xd2 0–0
       B11) 12. d5
       B12) 12. f3 g4
           B121) 13. d5
           B122) 13. c7
           B123) 13. e3
   B2) 11. xd2 0–0
       B21) 12. d5
       B22) 12. c7
       B23) 12. b5
       B24) 12. d3

90 90 92 93 95 95 96 97 97 99 100 101 101 102 103 105
1. d4  d6 2. c4  g6 3. c3 d5 4. cxd5  xd5
5. e4  xxc3 6. bxc3  g7 7. e3

This became fashionable after Karpov adopted it in his 1990 match against Kasparov, and it has remained popular ever since.

7...c5
From this position 8. f3 will form the subject of Chapter 10, and 8. d2 will be covered in Chapter 11. In the present chapter we will focus on the two rook moves A) 8. b1 and B) 8. e1.

A) 8. b1

This move contains a few tricky points, but overall it should not worry us too much.

Certainly in terms of popularity it lags well behind the other rook move examined here.

8... a5
I prefer this to 8...0-0, after which 9. d2 prevents us from exchanging queens.

9. d2  cxd4 10. cxd4  xd2
A useful rule of thumb is that, as long as White is unable to recapture with the knight on d2, all queenless positions of this type should be fine for Black.

11. xd2 0-0

A1) 12. d3

12... d8 13. e2
White’s set-up does not work in the present variation, for reasons that will soon become clear.

13... c6
It turns out that White does not have a desirable way to protect his d-pawn; compared with the analogous position with the rook on cl instead of b1, he is unable to move his rook to the fourth rank.
14.d5

The alternative is 14.e5 as played in Garza Marco – Exposito Amaro, Sants 2001. This move is also a concession, and Black could have obtained a great game with:

14...f6!N With the following tactical point: 15.f4 fxe5 16.fxe5 fxe5 17.dxe5 c6 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.b3 a6 20.a4 The plan is ...axc1 followed by ...dxc3(†). It is obvious that White will have to fight for a draw.

14...e5

Now White will have to worry about ...e6.

15.dxe5 dxe5 16.b6

White was under pressure in Dearing – Varley, England 1998.

16...Ed7!

This strange-looking move appeals more to me than 16...Ed6. The point is that White has an interesting exchange sacrifice available: 17.Ed1 f5 18.f3 e6 19.c7 h6† 20.c3 dxc3 21.xd3 fxe4† 22.fxe4 Ed7 23.d6
\( \textbf{92} \)

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

\( \text{x}c1 \) 24.\( \text{xc}1 \) Black should be able to hold, but his position is a bit unpleasant all the same.

17.\( \text{h}c1 \) e6 18.\( \text{c}c3 \) f5!

It is useful for Black to clear some space for his bishops.

19.\( f3 \) fxe4 20.fxe4 f7 21.\( \text{f}f1 \) d7

Black has no problems, and the position is roughly equal.

A3) 12.\( \text{c}4 \)

This third bishop development looks reasonable, but it is harmless and normally leads to a drawn double-rook endgame.

12...\( \text{c}6 \) 13.\( \text{f}3 \)

13.\( \text{e}2 \) d8 (13...e6? has hardly ever been played, but the move is interesting and deserves consideration.) 14.d5 \( \text{xd}4 \) This can be compared with the main line below; the position of the knight on \( \text{e}2 \) makes no real difference, and the most likely outcome is a direct transposition.

13...\( \text{d}8 \) 14.d5

14.d5 gives Black easy counterplay:
14...e6 15.g5 f6 16.\( \text{f}4 \) edx5 17.\( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{xe}6 \)
18.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{xd}5 \) 19.exd5 \( \text{xd}5 \)

Black has already taken over the initiative and in the following game White went downhill rapidly: 20.\( \text{c}1 \) c8 21.\( \text{c}7 \)? (21.\( \text{b}1 \) was necessary) 21...c5+ 22.\( \text{d}1 \) ecx7 23.\( \text{xc}7 \) h6 24.\( \text{e}1 \) b4 25.\( \text{b}8 \) c1+ 26.\( \text{e}2 \) c2+ 27.\( \text{f}1 \) d3+ Varga - Szepernyi, Balatonlelle 2005.

14...\( \text{xd}4 \) 15.\( \text{xd}4 \)

15.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 16.\( \text{xd}4 \) e6 17.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{xb}7 \)
18.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{xd}4 \)† 19.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{a}4 \) was also just equal in Niebler - Laibold, Germany 2006.

15...e6

The game now follows a forcing path to dry equality.

16.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{xb}7 \) 17.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 18.\( \text{e}2 \)

Another game finished 18.\( \text{hb}1 \) \( \text{d}6 \)
19.\texttt{\textit{B}}x\texttt{d}4 \texttt{\textit{B}}xd4$^+$ 20.\texttt{\textit{B}}xe3 \texttt{\textit{B}}a4 21.\texttt{\textit{B}}b2 $\frac{1}{2}$-$\frac{1}{2}$ Dahmen - Mantler, Kranenburg 2003.

18...\texttt{\textit{B}}xe3 19.\texttt{\textit{B}}xe3

This position was reached in Kleyner – Verner, Moscow 1995. Now the easiest route to a draw would have been:

19...\texttt{\textit{B}}c8$^N$ 20.\texttt{\textit{B}}xa7 \texttt{\textit{B}}c3$^+$ 21.\texttt{\textit{B}}d2 \texttt{\textit{B}}f1 \texttt{\textit{B}}cc2

Regaining the pawn to reach a completely dead drawn endgame.

A4) 12.\texttt{\textit{B}}f3

12...\texttt{\textit{B}}d8 13.\texttt{\textit{B}}d3 \texttt{e}6

Black wants to develop his knight on the active \texttt{c}6-square, so first he prevents the \texttt{d}-pawn from advancing.

14.\texttt{\textit{B}}h1

14.\texttt{\textit{B}}hd1 \texttt{\textit{B}}c6 15.e5 was seen in Van Beek – Bolzoni, Antwerp 1999, but having the rook on \texttt{d}1 instead of \texttt{c}1 can hardly be an improvement for White. Black can try to take advantage by means of 15...\texttt{b}6$^N$ (this would not be possible with the rook on \texttt{c}1) intending ...\texttt{b}7 and ...\texttt{e}7 with a good position.

14...\texttt{\textit{B}}c6 15.e5

A serious alternative is:

15.\texttt{\textit{B}}c4 \texttt{\textit{B}}d7 16.\texttt{\textit{B}}e2

White has also tried 16.h4. The plan of advancing the \texttt{h}-pawn is unlikely to cause Black many problems in a position without queens. 16...\texttt{\textit{B}}e8 17.\texttt{\textit{B}}e2 \texttt{\textit{B}}d7 18.h5 gxh5! The queens are off and there is no rook on the \texttt{h}-file, so why not take the pawn? 19.\texttt{\textit{B}}b5 \texttt{\textit{B}}ad8 20.\texttt{\textit{B}}g5 \texttt{f}6 21.\texttt{\textit{B}}h4 Now in Sherbakov – V. Mikhalevski, Leeuwarden 1994, Black should have played 21...\texttt{\textit{B}}g6$^N$ to preserve his extra pawn, which is a significant asset, notwithstanding the fact that it is doubled.

16...\texttt{\textit{B}}e8$^N$

According to theory this is White's main line.

In my opinion this thematic idea makes total sense.

I should add that there is also nothing wrong with 16...\texttt{b}6 17.\texttt{\textit{B}}bc1 \texttt{\textit{B}}d8 18.\texttt{h}3. This was
Wiley – Voloshin, Olomouc 2000, and now Black should have played 18...\texttt{b}8N when the idea of ...\texttt{b}4 enables him to maintain the balance.

17...e5 \texttt{d}7 18.g3 \texttt{f}8 19.e4 \texttt{c}7=
Black intends ...\texttt{ac}8, with a compact and harmonious position.

15...h6!
It is essential to take control over the g5-square in order to prevent plans such as \texttt{g}5 and \texttt{g}5-e4. I am less attracted to the weakening 15...f6 16.exf6 \texttt{xf}6 which has been played in a few games.

16.e1
White has also tried:

16.e2
This makes no significant difference, and Black merely follows the same plan.

16...f8 17.e4 \texttt{b}4 18.e3

18...d5N

After the text move the following sequence looks logical:

19.xd5 exd5
After the more natural 19...\texttt{xd}5 White has the strong positional idea of 20.d2! heading for e4.

20.d2
Black's position looks a bit passive, but with accurate play he can equalize comfortably.

20...b6 21.cb1 \texttt{e}6 22.cb1 \texttt{d}c8 23.f3 a6
Black can also consider 23...a5 with the simple idea of trading both pairs of rooks. In both cases the position looks like a comfortable draw.

16...f8
Black should refrain from the tempting 16...\texttt{xe}5?! as the endgame arising after 17.e5 \texttt{xe}5 18.dxe5 \texttt{xd}3 19.xh6± is a bit unpleasant for him.

17.e4 \texttt{b}4 18.d2

I also checked:
18.e3N
This leads to similar play to the 16.e2 line examined above.
Chapter 9 – Two Rook Moves

18...\( \text{Qd5} \) 19.\( \text{exd5 exd5}! \)

We know already from the aforementioned line that 19...\( \text{exd5} \) runs into 20.\( \text{Qd2} \)++.

20.\( \text{Qxd2} \)

In the event of 20.\( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{b6} \) 21.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{e6} \) 22.\( \text{Bxc1} \) \( \text{Bc8} \) Black experiences no problems.

20...\( \text{b6} \) 21.\( \text{Bxc1} \)

The tempting idea of exchanging the dark-squared bishops does not really work:
21...\( \text{Qb4} \) \( \text{f5} \) 22.\( \text{Bb2} \) \( \text{Qxb4} \) 23.\( \text{Bxb4} \) \( \text{Bc8} \)++

Black seizes control over the c-file.

21...\( \text{Qa6} \) 22.\( \text{a3} \) \( \text{Bc8} \) 23.\( \text{Qb4} \) \( \text{Qc4} \)

The position is balanced.

18...\( \text{Qd5} \) 19.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 20.\( \text{a5} \)

20...\( \text{Qb7} \)

Black completes his development just in time.

21.\( \text{axb6} \) \( \text{axb6} \) 22.\( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) 23.\( \text{Bxb6} \) \( \text{Qxf3} \)

24.\( \text{gxf3} \) \( \text{Bxd4} = \)

The simplifications resulted in a drawn endgame in Gelfand – Ivanchuk, Astrakhan 2010.

B) 8.\( \text{Bc1} \)

This move has become quite topical in recent years, having been employed by Kramnik and Aronian amongst others.

8...\( \text{Qa5} \) 9.\( \text{Bd2} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) 10.\( \text{cxd4} \) \( \text{Qxd2} \)++

Now we must consider both B1) 11.\( \text{Qxd2} \) and B2) 11.\( \text{Qxd2} \).

B1) 11.\( \text{Qxd2} \)
This has been the less popular of the two options, but it is still a serious line which has been used twice by Kramnik.

11...0-0
From here White has dealt with the attack on his d-pawn with either B11) 12.d5 or B12) 12.df3.

B11) 12.d5
This allows Black to begin a rapid counterattack in the centre.

12...e6 13.db5
Weaker is:
13.db4 df8
Now White is more or less forced to play:
14.d6
This pawn will soon become a target for the black pieces.
14...dc6
Also worthy of consideration is 14...d7!? followed by ...dc6 and ...dc7.
15.d3
This position occurred in Vaisser – Schmidt, Trnava 1983. Now the most logical continuation would have been:

15...dc7 16.db7 dc7 17.de6 dc6
Black has also tried the interesting pawn sacrifice 15...dc5!? in a couple of games. The idea is probably sound, but the main line seems like a more reliable route to clear-cut equality.

16.d3
White can also try: 16.db7 dc6 17.f3

17...df7N I find this to be the simplest solution. (After the provocative 17...dfc8!? a draw was agreed in Yusferov – Lanka, USSR 1982. Logical would be 18.db7 dc2 19.db2 de2 de2 when the position indeed looks balanced.)
18.db7 df7 19.db3 d6 20.de2 dc8 21.db1 dxcl 22.db1 db7 The endgame is equal.
16...\( \text{Ra}8 \)
    The best reaction. Instead after 16...\( \text{Rf}5 \)
    17.\( \text{Rxe5} \) \( \text{Rxe5} \) 18.\( \text{Rf3} \) White retains a slight edge.

17.\( \text{Re}2 \) \( \text{Rc5} \) 18.\( \text{Rg5} \)
    We have been following the game Schmidt – Jansa, Vrnjacka Banja 1983. At this point I
    believe Black should have played:

18...\( \text{Rf}6 \) 19.\( \text{Rb4}?! \)
    After 19.f3 \( \text{Re}7 \) 20.\( \text{Rhd1} \) \( \text{Rac8} \) Black is fine.

19...\( \text{Rb4}?! \)
    This accurate move solves Black's problems with ease.

20.\( \text{Rxe6} \) \( \text{Rxc1} \) 21.\( \text{Rxc1} \) \( \text{Rxe8} \) 22.\( \text{Rc5} \) \( \text{Rxc5} \)
23.\( \text{Rxc5} \) \( \text{Rxe4}?! \)
    The ending is equal.

B12) 12.\( \text{Rf3} \) \( \text{Rg4} \)

12...\( \text{e6?!} \) is a reliable alternative, but the text move seems like the most challenging option.
White can choose between B121) 13.\( \text{d5} \),
B122) 13.\( \text{Rc7} \) and B123) 13.\( \text{Rg3} \).

B121) 13.\( \text{d5} \)

13...\( \text{Rd7} \) 14.\( \text{Rg5} \)
    Two other moves have been tried, but Black
    gets a comfortable game in all cases.

14.h3 \( \text{Rxf3} \) 15.\( \text{Rxf3} \) \( \text{Rc8} \) 16.\( \text{Rd3} \) was seen in
    Tomescu – Zentgraf, Cesenatico 2002, and
    now Black has a simple improvement:

16...\( \text{Rxc1} \) 17.\( \text{Rxc1} \) \( \text{Rc8} \) 18.\( \text{Rf2} \) \( \text{Rc5} \)
19.\( \text{Rd2} \) \( \text{e6} \) 20.\( \text{Rc1} \) \text{exd5} 21.exd5 \( \text{Rc5} \) With
    ...\( \text{Rd6} \) coming next, Black has easy equality.

14.\( \text{Rb5} \) \( \text{Rc8} \) 15.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{Rxc1} \) 16.\( \text{Rxc1} \) \( \text{Rxf3} \)
17.\( \text{Rxf3} \) \( \text{Rc8} \) 18.\( \text{Rxe5} \) \( \text{Rf5} \) 19.f4 \( \text{Rc4} \) 20.\( \text{Rxc4} \)!
    A clear inaccuracy. (White could still have
    maintained a balanced position with: 20.\( \text{Rxe2} \)
    \( \text{Rxe3} \) 21.\( \text{Rxe3} \) \( \text{Rxe3} \)=) 20...\( \text{Rxc4} \) 21.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{g5} \) 22.\( \text{Rxe5} \)
    \( \text{Rxe5} \) Black already had the better game and
    he went on to win in Kantorik – Bobras,
Pardubice 2002.
Improving the knight while also making room for the bishop to retreat.

Other moves are no better:

15.\textit{e}2

I also felt obliged to examine the active move:

15.\textit{c}7N

This has never been played, for reasons that are about to become clear.

It transpires that White's rook will run out of squares on the seventh rank.

Obviously the rook could retreat, but this would be a clear admission of failure.

The rook is trapped, so White has nothing better than:

Material is roughly balanced, but Black's chances are higher as his extra piece will enable him to create threats on the queenside. The immediate plan is \textit{\ldots}a4.

This aggressive idea enables Black to seize the initiative on the queenside.

For better or worse White should have played 20.d6N, although after 20.\textit{c}3 I still prefer Black.

Black's chances were higher in J. Pinter – Shirov, Izmir 2004.
15...\textit{\texttt{x}e2} 16.\textit{\texttt{x}e2} \textit{h6} 17.\textit{\texttt{f}f3}  
We have been following the game Maduekwe – Bongiovanni, e-mail 2003. Here I found a nice idea for Black:

17...\textit{\texttt{f}5!N}  
It is hard to imagine that Black will get a better chance to carry out this thematic undermining move, and indeed it works nicely here.

18.exf5 \textit{gx5} 19.\textit{gc7}  
Otherwise White simply loses his d-pawn.

19...\textit{\texttt{f}xf5} \textit{\texttt{f}xf5} 19.\textit{\texttt{c}c7}  
Otherwise White simply loses his d-pawn.

20.\textit{\texttt{b}xb7} e5=  
Black’s activity makes up for his isolated e-pawn, and the position remains dynamically balanced.

B122) 13.\textit{\texttt{c}c7}  
This principled move leads to sharp play, but the position soon peters out to equality.

13...\textit{\texttt{f}xf3} 14.\textit{\texttt{g}xf3} \textit{\texttt{x}d4}  
Black should accept the challenge.

15.\textit{\texttt{b}xb7}  
The alternative is:

15.\textit{\texttt{x}xe7} \textit{\texttt{c}c6!}  
This pawn sacrifice enables Black to activate his pieces quickly and efficiently.

16.\textit{\texttt{b}xb7} \textit{\texttt{a}b8} 17.\textit{\texttt{b}b3}  
17.\textit{\texttt{c}c7} can be met by 17...\textit{\texttt{e}e5} 18.\textit{\texttt{e}e2} \textit{\texttt{b}b2} 19.\textit{\texttt{f}f4} \textit{\texttt{b}b6} 20.\textit{\texttt{c}c1} \textit{\texttt{d}d7} 21.a4 \textit{\texttt{c}c5} when Black regains the pawn while keeping some initiative.

19...\textit{\texttt{x}xd5}  
Black can even consider 19...g5?! intending ...g4. Taking away the f4-square from the white bishop might also prove useful in some lines.
17...\textit{\textbf{f}d8!} 18.\textit{\textbf{e}e2} \textit{\textbf{bxb3}} 19.\textit{\textbf{axb3}} \textit{\textbf{xf2}†}
20.\textit{\textbf{xf2}} \textit{\textbf{xd2}}

The complications have subsided, and the resulting endgame should be equal.

21.\textit{\textbf{xe3}} \textit{\textbf{b2}} 22.\textit{\textbf{c4}}

From this position, in the game Fish – Van de Mortel, Haarlem 2001, Black played inaccurately and got into trouble. The correct path would have been:

22...\textit{\textbf{g7}N}

Black easily maintains the balance.

15...\textit{\textbf{c6}} 16.\textit{\textbf{a6}}

In this position the players agreed a draw in Kramnik – Svidler, Dortmund 2004. The continuation might have been:

16...\textit{\textbf{ab8}} 17.0-0

17...\textit{\textbf{e5}} 18.\textit{\textbf{g2}} \textit{\textbf{xb7}} 19.\textit{\textbf{xb7}} \textit{\textbf{b8}}

17...\textit{\textbf{d5}} 18.\textit{\textbf{b2}}

Equally valid is: 20...e6 21.\textit{\textbf{b3}} \textit{\textbf{d3}} 22.\textit{\textbf{h6}}
\textit{\textbf{c5}} 23.\textit{\textbf{c2}} f6=

21.\textit{\textbf{h6}} \textit{\textbf{c2}}

The position is equal.

13...\textit{\textbf{xf3}}

My original recommendation was 13...\textit{\textbf{c6}} 14.d5 \textit{\textbf{xf3}} 15.gxf3 \textit{\textbf{d4}}, but this was dealt a severe blow by the following improvement:

16.\textit{\textbf{h3}} f5 17.\textit{\textbf{f1}} Black has failed to equalize, and after the further 17...e6 18.\textit{\textbf{dxe6}} \textit{\textbf{xe6}} 19.\textit{\textbf{exf5}} gxf5 20.\textit{\textbf{d1}!} White's bishops were extremely strong in Sargissian – Li Chao, Wijk aan Zee 2011.
14.gxf3 e6
This solid continuation was Black's choice in the second of Sargissian's games.

15.a4
15.·b5 should be met by 15...a6 16.·a4 b5 17.·b3 a5! 18.a4 bx a4 19.·xa4 a6 20.·e2 ·ab8 21.·bd1 ·fd8 with equality.

15.·c7 also allows Black to solve his opening problems: 15...·c6 16.d5 exd5 17.·xd5 ·b4 18.d6 ·e5 19.·xb7 ·c2† 20.·d2 ·xe3 21.·xe3 ·xd6 The endgame is equal.

15...·d6 16.d5 exd5 17.·xd5 ·b4 18.·xb7?
White tries to complicate the game with the help of an exchange sacrifice, having presumably judged that lines such as 18.·d1 ·xd5 19.·xd5 ·fd8 would pose Black no problems whatsoever.

18...·d3† 19.·e2 ·xc1† 20.·xc1
In the game Black now found a convincing way to neutralize his opponent's initiative.

20...·ab8 21.·b1

21...·bd8! 22.·xa7 ·d4
After exchanging the dark-squared bishops Black will easily be able to fight against the passed a-pawn.

23.·xd4 ·xd4 24.·e3 ·a4 25.·d5 ·a3† 26.·f4 ·a7 27.·g3
Neither side can make progress and so a draw was agreed in Sargissian – Navara, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

B2) 11.·xd2

This can be considered the main line of the present chapter, at least in terms of popularity.

11...0–0
From here it is worth considering B21)
12.d5, B22) 12.·c7, B23) 12.·b5 and B24)
12.·d3.

It is worth mentioning that the most popular move of all has been 12.·d3, after which 12...·c6 transposes to variation C2 of Chapter 10.

B21) 12.d5

This move has never been popular, with good reason as the d5-pawn is a clear target for counterplay.

12...e6 13.·c4 exd5 14.·xd5
14.exd5 seems risky: 14...·d7 15.·e2 ·d8 16.·hd1 ·b6 17.·xb6 After swapping his dark-squared bishop for a knight, it is clear that White is not fighting for the advantage. 17...·xb6 18.·e1
Germany 2001, and now after 18...\texttt{e}5N 19.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{d}6$\texttt{H}$ Black's bishop pair offers him a slightly better game.

14...\texttt{c}6
This is the most principled continuation, although 14...\texttt{d}7 15.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{b}6 16.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{e}6 also seems to be playable.

15.\texttt{f}3
It would be much too optimistic for White to grab a pawn with his king misplaced in the centre: 15.\texttt{x}c6? \texttt{b}xc6 16.\texttt{x}c6 \texttt{b}7 Black easily generates a strong initiative, for instance: 17.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{a}6! 18.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{f}d8$\texttt{H}$ 19.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{ab}8 With ...\texttt{b}2 coming next, White is in serious trouble.

16.\texttt{b}3?$\texttt{N}$
I decided to check this move in order to see if White was justified in playing for a win. In the one practical encounter from this position White settled for a repetition: 16.\texttt{c}5 \texttt{h}6$\texttt{H}$ 17.\texttt{e}3 $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ Agdestein - Tisdall, Espoo 1989.

16...\texttt{d}7
This is my recommended solution, which is connected to the following idea:

17.\texttt{c}7 \texttt{ad}8$\texttt{H}$ 18.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{a}6! 19.\texttt{x}d8 \texttt{x}d8 20.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{c}6$\texttt{H}$ 21.\texttt{c}1
Black has full compensation for the exchange, and he can choose to force a draw should he wish it:

21...\texttt{xe}4 22.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{d}3 23.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{h}6$\texttt{H}$ 24.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{g}7$\texttt{H}$
The game ends in perpetual check.

B22) 12.\texttt{c}7

It looks strange to lunge forwards with the rook while White's three kingside pieces remain on their original squares; nevertheless this continuation is quite interesting.

12...\texttt{c}6
I was slightly less happy with the alternative 12...\texttt{d}8 13.\texttt{b}5.
13.\textit{d}5 \textit{e}d8 14.\textit{d}d3 \textit{d}e5 15.\textit{x}xe7
Black's pawn sacrifice is justified by his lead in development and the vulnerability of the rook on e7. Nevertheless he must still play accurately.

15...\textit{d}d7!N
This is my improvement over 15...\textit{d}d7 16.\textit{f}f3 \textit{f}f8 as occurred in Dumitran – Karr, Paris 1998. At this point I was not completely happy with the position resulting from 17.\textit{x}xd7?!N \textit{xd}7 18.\textit{b}b1 \textit{b}6 19.\textit{e}e5 when White has interesting compensation for the exchange.

16.\textit{f}f3 \textit{xd}3
It is important to eliminate White's lightsquared bishop. Black could also have won the exchange by means of 16...\textit{x}xf3\dagger 17.\textit{x}xf3 \textit{f}f6, but after 18.\textit{x}xd7 \textit{xd}7 19.\textit{f}4 White has solid compensation, due to his strong centre and bishop pair.

17.\textit{xd}3 \textit{f}f8 18.\textit{g}g5
18.\textit{x}xd7 \textit{xd}7 19.\textit{c}c1 can be met strongly by 19...\textit{f}5! when it is obvious that White will be the one fighting for a draw.

18...\textit{h}6 19.\textit{f}6 \textit{b}5\dagger 20.\textit{d}d4 \textit{e}d6!
It is important that Black takes the opportunity to activate one of his rooks.

21.\textit{c}5 \textit{xe}7 22.\textit{xe}7 \textit{a}6 23.\textit{b}b1 \textit{a}4\dagger 24.\textit{e}e3 \textit{a}5
I would evaluate the position as dynamically equal, but essentially it is just unclear.

B23) 12.\textit{b}5

This thematic continuation is quite popular in the present position. White tries to provoke ...\textit{a}6 in the hope of weakening his opponent's queenside.

12...\textit{d}d8
Black refuses to take the bait.

13.\textit{e}2
13.\textit{e}2 is absolutely harmless: 13...\textit{c}6! 14.\textit{d}5 \textit{d}d4\dagger 15.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 16.\textit{f}f3 \textit{g}g4 17.\textit{c}c7 From here Black's key idea is:
17...e5! Not for the first time, Black can exploit the rook's lack of escape squares on the seventh rank. 18.c2 (After 18.xb7 c8 19.xe5 xb7 White will have to fight for a draw.) 18...c8 Black's bishop pair gave him a slight edge in Crouch - Rowson, Oxford 2004.

15...d1 is not a bad move, but nor does it challenge Black in any serious way: 15...b8 16.e1 b2 17.xc6 b7 18.c7 xe4 19.f3 d5 20.xa7 xa2= The simplifications have resulted in equality, Grabowski – Coenen, Germany 2007.

15...f5! Black should not be afraid to incur a slight pawn weakening. The text move is the best way to pursue his counterplay.

14.xc6 bxc6 15.f3
This is the main line. Others moves are not dangerous.

15.xc6? is clearly inferior: 15...b7 16.e7 xe4 17.f3

16.exf5 I also analysed 16.xc6 fxe4 17.fxe4 b7 18.c7 (18.e6? does not work: 18...f7 19.d5 xd5/) 18...xe4 19.xe7 xg2 and only Black can be better.

16.xf5 17.e1
17.xc6 can be met by 17...ab8 18.e3 b8 19.xc8† x8† 20.b3 xe6† 21.b2
\( \text{\textit{xa2}} \) and once again Black is pressing for the advantage.

17...\textit{ac8} 18.\textit{e1} \textit{d5} 19.\textit{d2} \textit{e5} =
Black has no problems.

B24) 12.\textit{d3}

Nowadays this is generally considered the most challenging of White’s options on the twelfth move, but we will see that Black is in good shape here too.

12...\textit{c6} 13.\textit{e2} \textit{d8} 14.\textit{e4}

The ability to defend the d4-pawn from the fourth rank constitutes one of the advantages of 8.\textit{e1} over 8.\textit{b1}.

14...\textit{e6}?

I found and analysed this remarkable idea in the summer of 2010, but since then it has been tested twice in practice.

15.\textit{a4}

This was White’s choice in the second game. The first saw instead:

15.\textit{d5} \textit{e5} 16.\textit{e7}

Alternatively after 16.\textit{b4} \textit{c8} 17.\textit{e1} \textit{e6}
Black commences strong counterplay against White’s centre.

16...\textit{xd3}N

Black preferred 16...\textit{d7} and eventually drew in Solomon – Kislik, Budapest 2010, but it seems to me that White was too hasty in grabbing the b-pawn with 17.\textit{xb7}. Instead the superior 17.\textit{b1!N} \textit{b6} 18.\textit{a6} would have been quite unpleasant for Black.
I found the stronger text move in my initial analysis before the aforementioned game.

17.\( \text{d}x\text{d}3 \) f5 18.f3

Alternatively after 18.\( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 19.\( \text{xb}7 \) e5!

20.\( \text{xe}2 \) fxe4\( ^{\dagger} \) Black is fine.

18...\( \text{xd}5! \)

This move is rather surprising, but such ideas are always possible when the white king settles on a square such as d3.

19.\( \text{exd}5 \) \( \text{xd}5^{\dagger} \)

The next few moves are more or less forced:

20.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 21.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{a}5 \)

22.\( \text{b}3 \)

Other moves are even less impressive:

22.a4 \( \text{x}c3 \) 23.\( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{d}8^{\dagger} \)

22.\( \text{c}7 \) \( \text{x}a2^{\dagger} \) 23.\( \text{d}1 \) b5 Black's queenside pawns are dangerous.

22...\( \text{x}a2^{\dagger} \) 23.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{d}8^{\dagger} \) 24.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{c}8^{\dagger} \)

Material is currently about equal, and Black has kept a nice initiative.

15...\( \text{d}7 \) 16.\( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{e}5! \)

It turns out that the rook is not entirely safe on a4 either, and Black can exploit this by threatening the bishop on d3.

17.\( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{c}6^{?} \)

This tacit draw offer seems to be the soundest continuation. It is important for Black to trade the opponent's light-squared bishop for the knight, rather than his own bishop. The point can be illustrated by the following line: 17...e6

18.\( \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{xd}7 \) 19.\( \text{ab}4 \) b6 20.f4 \( \text{c}6 \) 21.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 22.\( \text{c}2 \) White keeps a slight edge.

18.f3

White cannot prevent the exchange of his light-squared bishop, as 18.\( \text{a}3^{?} \) runs into 18...\( \text{xd}4^{?} \) winning a pawn.
Obviously White also has the option of 18...d3 e5 repeating the position.

18...a6 19.xc6
19.d3 can be met by 19...e5 followed by capturing the bishop on the next move.

19...xc6 20.a5 e6 21.c5
We have been following the game Melkumyan – P.H. Nielsen, Plovdiv 2010. At this point I like the following idea for Black:

![Chessboard Diagram]

21.f5!N
Yet again this move works well.

22.e5
This looks like the best attempt to keep the black bishops out of the action.

22...f8 23.c2 e7
Black has absolutely no problems and in the long term his bishop pair might become a serious factor.

Conclusion

Both 8.b1 and 8.c1 lead to broadly the same type of queenless middlegame after the standard sequence of 8...a5 9.d2 cxd4 10.cxd4 xd2†, although of course the slight change in the rook’s positioning will lead to some nuances. The analysis presented here indicates that Black has sufficient resources to hold the balance in all variations. Typically he will rely on the traditional Grünfeld methods of undermining the enemy centre. Particularly noteworthy is the ...f7-f5 thrust, which proved to be of key value in several lines.
Variation Index

1.d4 üf6 2.c4 g6 3.üc3 d5 4.cxd5 üxd5 5.e4 üxc3 6.bxc3 üg7 7.üe3 c5 8.üf3

8...üa5

A) 9.üd2 109
B) 9.üd2 0–0 10.üe2 üg4 11.0–0 üd8
   B1) 12.d5 110
   B2) 12.üb1 111
   B3) 12.üg5 113
C) 9.üd2 üc6 113
   C1) 10.üb1 a6 11.üc1 üg4 12.d5 üd8
       C11) 13.üh4 116
       C12) 13.üd3 117
       C13) 13.üe2 118
   C2) 10.üc1 cxd4 11.cxd4 üxd2† 12.üxd2 0–0
       C21) 13.üb5 122
       C22) 13.d5 üd8
           C221) 14.üc2 124
           C222) 14.üe1 üa5 125
               C2221) 15.üf4 127
               C2222) 15.üd2 128
               C2223) 15.üg5 129
1.d4 ¤f6 2.c4 g6 3.d3 d5 4.cxd5 ¤xd5 5.e4 ¤xc3 6.bxc3 ¤g7 7.¤c3 c5 8.¤f3
This is a major line, which is often reached via the move order 7.¤f3 c5 8.¤e3.

8...¤a5
Once again we begin in the same way as in the previous chapter. White can choose between A) 9.¤d2, B) 9.¤d2 and C) 9.¤d2.

A) 9.¤d2

This should not pose many problems.

9...¤xd4 10.cxd4 ¤c6 11.d5 ¤d4 12.¤c1
There is also 12.¤b1 ¤d7 13.¤d3 as played in Sek – Namark, corr. 1988, and now the easiest solution for Black would have been:

13...¤c3!N 14.¤xd4 ¤xd4 15.¤e2 0–0 16.0–0 ¤g4! 17.¤xg4 ¤xd2 The position is absolutely equal, for instance: 18.¤e2 ¤xe2 19.¤xe2 b6=

The present position was reached in Kuligowski – Adorjan, New York 1981. Here I found an interesting idea:

12...¤d7?!N
Threatening ...¤a4.

13.¤e4
In the event of 13.¤d3 ¤a4 14.¤g4 Black already has a draw in his pocket with 14...¤d7, when White has nothing better then retreating to d1. If he tries to play for more with 15.¤g3?! then 15...¤a3! is unpleasant.

13...¤b5 14.¤a4
14.¤b3 is not an improvement, and after 14...0–0 15.¤d3 ¤c3 16.¤c5 b5 17.0–0 ¤fc8 Black already has the more comfortable position.

14...¤c7
If Black wishes to play for a win then he can play 14...¤d8?! with a complex game.

15.¤c4
White has nothing better.
15...\textit{a}a5=
Repeating the position from two moves ago.

B) 9.\textit{d}d2

Retreating the bishop looks odd, but White hopes to show that the enemy queen is misplaced.

9...0–0 10.\textit{e}e2 \textit{g}g4
This is the main line, and the move I like most.

11.0–0 \textit{d}d8

Here we will consider three main options for White: B1) 12.d5, B2) 12.\textit{b}b1 and B3)

12.\textit{g}g5.

12.a4
This has been used by a few good players, but it allows Black to mount an immediate central attack.

12...\textit{x}xf3 13.\textit{x}xf3 cxd4 14.cxd4 \textit{b}b6

15.d5
Objectively White should probably have preferred 15.\textit{b}b1N \textit{xd}4 16.\textit{e}e3 \textit{xd}1 17.\textit{fx}d1 \textit{xd}1+ 18.\textit{xd}1 \textit{b}6, when his lead in development bishop pair should enable him to regain his pawn to reach an equal endgame.

15...\textit{x}xa1 16.\textit{xa}1 \textit{d}d7 17.e5 \textit{ac}8†
The position is complicated but it is hard to believe that White has full compensation for the exchange, Polak – Timoscenko, Austria 2007.

B1) 12.d5
This pawn sacrifice is thematic in some other lines of the Grünfeld, but in this particular case it is unpromising.

12...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}\texttt{c}3} 13.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}\texttt{c}3}

Krasenkow mentions the following line in \textit{ChessBase Magazine} 89:

13.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{b}}\texttt{b}1} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}2} 14.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}2} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}\texttt{e}2} 15.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{f}}\texttt{x}e2}

Here I suggest the improvement:

15...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{d}}\texttt{d}7}!

Krasenkow only gives 15...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{c}}\texttt{c}7} 16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{c}}\texttt{c}4} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{d}}\texttt{d}7}, after which 17.\textit{f}4 leaves White with definite compensation for the pawn.

16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}\texttt{b}7}

Certainly White cannot play 16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{e}}\texttt{e}5}? in view of the simple 16...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}\texttt{e}5}.

16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{c}}\texttt{c}4} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{a}}\texttt{a}6} also leaves White with questionable compensation.

16...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{a}}\texttt{x}a2}

Black's chances are higher, as his extra pawn counts for more than White's space advantage in the centre.

13...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{w}}\texttt{c}3} 14.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{e}}\texttt{c}1}

From here Black should play:

14...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{a}}\texttt{5N}}

In the stem game Black decided to return the pawn for no apparent reason: 14...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{f}}\texttt{f}6}?! 15.\textit{\texttt{x}c}3 16.\textit{\texttt{x}f}3?! Maslik – Timoschenko, Slovakia 2009.

15.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{e}}\texttt{e}5} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}\texttt{e}2} 16.\textit{\texttt{x}e}2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{d}}\texttt{d}7}

17.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}7}

This seems to be best. For instance, if the knight retreats with 17.\textit{\texttt{c}c}4 then 17...\textit{\texttt{a}a}6! is annoying for White.

The alternative 17.\textit{\texttt{f}4} runs into 17...\textit{\texttt{x}e}5! 18.\textit{\texttt{f}x}e5 \textit{\texttt{a}a}7 19.\textit{\texttt{c}c}3 \textit{\texttt{x}e}5 20.\textit{\texttt{x}f}7+ \textit{\texttt{h}h}8\texttt{=} when White has no compensation.

17...\textit{\texttt{x}d}7 18.\textit{\texttt{f}4} \textit{\texttt{c}c}7

White certainly has some positional compensation, but I doubt that it is really enough for the sacrificed pawn.

B2) 12.\textit{\texttt{b}1}
Played in the spirit of the 8...b1 variation (see Chapters 13-16).

12...cxd4 13.cxd4 wxa2
Taking the pawn is the most principled and strongest response.

14.d5
White has the option of repeating the position with 14.a1 wb2 15.b1, as avoiding the repetition would only lead to trouble for Black. But we will assume that our opponents will want to try and achieve something with the white pieces.

14...d7!
Just as in several other variations of the Grünfeld, Black takes a pawn but then returns it in order to activate his pieces. The text move is the one I like most, although there is a serious alternative in 14...b6 when 15.g5 c6 16.c1 led to a highly unclear position in Degtyaryov – Pellen, e-mail 2009.

15.b7 c5 16.b4
If 16.e7 f6 17.e4 18.c4 wb2 19.c1 wc3 White should be careful.

16.a5!
Emphasizing one of Black's biggest trumps, the passed a-pawn, supported by the a8-rook, plus a bishop controlling the promotion square.

17.c4 db3 18.g5
Attacking the c7-pawn is one of White's typical resources in this kind of position.

18.xf3 19.xf3

19.f6!
This is the right way to neutralize the attack against c7.

20.e2?
This is not sufficiently active. Black also has no problems after 20.xf6 exf6, when White's central pawns are somewhat immobilized.

White's best continuation would have been 20.f4N after which 20...d2! 21.a4 xfx3+ 22.gxf3 wb2 promises Black adequate play.

20...wa3 21.e3
Also after 21.xf6 exf6 22.d3 a4 Black has the better game.

21.a4 22.db3 wb4
Black's strong a-pawn gave him the better chances in Roiz – Avrukh, Natanya (rapid) 2009.
This nice idea practically forces a queen exchange, thus resulting in a pleasant queenless position for Black.

It is important to be precise with the move order. In the event of the preliminary central exchange 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 followed by 14...Wa6, White has the additional option of 15.Wf3! after which 15...f6?? allows 16.Wb3† winning on the spot.

17.Wxa7!!
White’s position was already inferior, but this pawn trade only worsens his situation, as Black obtains a dangerous passed pawn.

17...Wxc3 18.Wab1 Wh7
Black was clearly better in Korchnoi – Smirin, Biel 2002.
Having dealt with two relatively minor options, we come to the move which is White's clear first choice in the position.

9...\text{c6}  
9...\text{cxd4} 10.\text{cxd4} \text{xd2+} 11.\text{cxd2} is possible, but as a general rule I prefer not to allow White to recapture on \text{d2} with the knight. Objectively Black's position is not so bad; it is just my personal preference.

After the text move we reach an important crossroads where White normally chooses between the two rook moves: C1) 10.\text{b1} and C2) 10.\text{c1}.

C1) 10.\text{b1} 

10...\text{a6}  
There is an interesting queen sacrifice in the form of 10...0-0? 11.\text{b5} \text{cxd4} 12.\text{xa5} \text{dxe3} 13.\text{xe3} \text{xa5}, but I consider the text move to be sounder.

Before moving on, it is worth comparing the recommendation given in line C2 later in the chapter: 10...\text{xd4} 11.\text{dd4} \text{xd2+} 12.\text{xd2} In this position the placement of the rook on \text{b1} instead of \text{c1} favours White. The point is revealed after 12...0-0 13.\text{d5} \text{d8} and now after 14.\text{d3!} the rook on \text{b1} guards the \text{b4}-square against an invasion from the black knight, which improves his chances in some lines.

11.\text{c1}  
White hopes that the extra move ...a7-a6 will prove detrimental for Black. Other moves fail to pose any real problems, for example:

11.\text{c4} e6!  
Black has several good options, but this is my favourite.
12.\text{d3}  
Admitting the failure of the previous move, but after 12.\text{c1} b5 13.\text{e2} \text{cxd4} 14.\text{xd4} \text{xd2+} 15.\text{d2} \text{b7} Black has a pleasant version of a traditional Grünfeld endgame.
12...b5  
There is nothing wrong with 12...0-0N.
13.h4  
This position occurred in Carrettoni - D'Amato, e-mail 2002. At this point Black should have played:

13...0-0N  
Black has little to fear on the kingside, as he can simplify with ...\text{cxd4} at any moment.
14.\text{e5} \text{d8} 15.\text{e4} \text{b7}  
Black has no problems and I regard his position as slightly preferable.

11.\text{e2}  
This is also pretty harmless.
11...0-0 12.\text{b3}
Another idea is 12.0-0 cxd4 13.\(\texttt{Q}\)xd4 \(\texttt{Q}\)xd4 14.\(\texttt{R}\)xd4 \(\texttt{Q}\)xd4 15.\(\texttt{B}\)xd4. This position was reached in Kozma – Mullner, Hungary 2001. Here I recommend:

\[15... \texttt{Q}d8!N\]  
(So far Black has always chosen 15...\(\texttt{B}\)xa2, but after 16.\(\texttt{B}\)c4 followed by \(\texttt{R}\)b6 White's compensation is quite real.) 16.\(\texttt{B}\)b6 \(\texttt{B}\)xb6 17.\(\texttt{R}\)xb6 \(\texttt{Q}\)d2 18.\(\texttt{B}\)c4 \(\texttt{Q}\)c2! Black has a risk-free advantage, and White will have to fight hard for a draw.

12...b5 13.\(\texttt{B}\)h6 cxd4 14.\(\texttt{R}\)xg7 \(\texttt{R}\)xg7 15.cxd4  
In the event of 15.\(\texttt{B}\)xd4 \(\texttt{B}\)b7\(\texttt{N}\), White has no compensation for his damaged queenside structure.

The present position was reached in Frajka – Banszegi, Slovakia 2009, and here I suggest:

\[15... \texttt{B}g4!N\]  
With the possible continuation:

16.d5 \(\texttt{Q}d8\) 17.\(\texttt{B}\)c3\(\texttt{t}\) \(\texttt{R}\)xc3\(\texttt{t}\) 18.\(\texttt{R}\)xc3 \(\texttt{B}\)xf3 19.\(\texttt{B}\)xf3 \(\texttt{B}\)d4\(\texttt{t}\)  
Black has an excellent game.

\[11... \texttt{B}g4\]

Compared with line C2, exchanging queens is less desirable here:

11...cxd4?! 12.cxd4 \(\texttt{R}\)xd2\(\texttt{t}\) 13.\(\texttt{B}\)xd2  
The problem is that the inclusion of ...a7-a6 weakens the b6-square, which could prove to be of great significance in certain variations.

13...0-0  
I will take this as the main line, in order to highlight the difference compared with line C2.

The usual continuation is 13...f5 but I was not happy with Black's position here either. I found the following game particularly impressive: 14.e5 \(\texttt{Q}e6\) 15.\(\texttt{B}\)c4 \(\texttt{R}\)xc4 16.\(\texttt{R}\)xc4 0-0 17.\(\texttt{B}\)c2 \(\texttt{R}\)ad8 18.\(\texttt{B}\)b1 \(\texttt{B}\)d5 19.a4 \(\texttt{R}\)fd8 20.g3 h6 21.h4 \(\texttt{B}\)a5 22.\(\texttt{R}\)c7 \(\texttt{R}\)d5 23.\(\texttt{R}\)c5 \(\texttt{R}\)d5 24.\(\texttt{R}\)xd5 \(\texttt{R}\)xd5 25.\(\texttt{R}\)b6 \(\texttt{B}\)f7 26.\(\texttt{B}\)d2 \(\texttt{B}\)f8 27.\(\texttt{R}\)c3 e6
28.\text{\textit{e1}}! White went on to win convincingly in Giri - Sutovsky, Wijk aan Zee 2010.
14.d5\text{\textit{d8}} 15.\text{\textit{e1}}
The immediate 15.\text{\textit{b6}} is premature due to 15...\text{\textit{h6}}\text{\textdagger}.

15...\text{\textit{b4}}
Finally the difference is revealed! Black is unable to continue in the same vein as in line C2, as 15...\text{\textit{a5}}?? loses to 16.\text{\textit{b6}}.
Now in Bener - Ramon Pita, Novi Sad (ol) 1990, White missed a strong continuation:
16.\text{\textit{d2}}\text{\textdagger}N
Winning a pawn by force.
16...\text{\textit{a5}} 17.a3\text{\textit{a6}} 18.\text{\textit{xa5}}
Black is obviously struggling.

12.d5\text{\textit{d8}}
This interesting move is the latest trend, which seems to be solving all Black's problems in this line. We will analyse C11) 13.\text{\textit{h4}}, C12) 13.\text{\textit{d3}} and C13) 13.\text{\textit{e2}}.

13.\text{\textit{h6}} was suggested as interesting by Krasenkow in \textit{ChessBase Magazine} 106, but according to my analysis Black has nothing to fear: 13...\text{\textit{xh6}} 14.\text{\textit{wh6}}\text{\textit{xf3}} 15.\text{\textit{gxf3}}\text{\textit{d4}} 16.\text{\textit{g2}}\text{\textit{e6}}! 17.\text{\textit{d2}}\text{\textit{b5}} 18.0-0 0-0\text{\textdagger}.

C11) 13.\text{\textit{h4}}

This move has some logic, but it is rather slow.

13...0-0 14.h3\text{\textit{c8}} 15.\text{\textit{e2}}\text{\textit{e6}} 16.0-0 \text{\textit{exd5}}
17.\text{\textit{exd5}}

17...\text{\textit{c4}}!
Preventing the advance c3-c4 is as always a key component of Black’s strategy.

18.\(\text{Exd1}\)
18.\(\text{Exc4}\) can be met by 18...\(\text{Wa4!}\) when Black is better.

18...\(\text{De5!}\) 19.\(\text{Dd3!}\) 20.\(\text{Dxd3}\) \(\text{Dxd5}\)
21.\(\text{Dd4}\) \(\text{cx d3}\) 22.\(\text{Dxd3}\) \(\text{ah6?!}\)

[Diagram]

13.\(\text{Dd3}\)

13...\(\text{0-0!}\)
It transpires that there is no need for Black to move his knight.

14.\(\text{0-0}\)
The point of the previous move is revealed after 14.\(\text{Dxc6?!}\) \(\text{xf3}\) 15.\(\text{gxf3}\) \(\text{c4}\) 16.\(\text{Dd4}\) \(\text{bxc6!}\) 17.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{c5}\) with better chances for Black.

14...\(\text{xf3 N}\)
This new idea was mentioned by Krasenkow, although he considered it dubious. I have a different opinion.

14...\(\text{f5}\) has been played twice, but I discovered an unpleasant retort: 15.\(\text{g5}\) \(\text{fxe4}\) 16.\(\text{xe4!}\)
(This is clearly stronger than 16.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{e5}\) when Black was fine in Khenkin – Dominguez Perez, Havana 2009.) 16...\(\text{Dh5}\) 17.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{Dc8}\) 18.\(\text{Dxe2}\)! Black’s position looks somewhat suspicious to me.

15.\(\text{gxf3}\) \(\text{e6}\)

16.\(\text{c4?!}\)
This may be the most challenging option. The alternative is:

16.\(\text{Dxc6}\)
This was mentioned by Krasenkow.

16...\(\text{c5}\) 17.\(\text{cxb7}\)
17.\(\text{Dxb2}\) might lead to a forced draw:
17...\(\text{Dxd3}\) 18.\(\text{cxb7}\) (18.\(\text{xb7}\) transposes to the line 17.\(\text{cxb7}\) \(\text{Dxd3}\) 18.\(\text{Dxb2}\).) 18...\(\text{Dh5}\) 19.\(\text{c7}\) \(\text{ae5}\) 20.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{g4}\) 21.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{xf3†}\=\)
The Polish grandmaster evaluated the present position as favourable for White, but according to my analysis Black is okay.
The b-pawn does not decide the game, and the exposed position of White's king gives Black enough counterplay, for instance:

19...\textit{a}7 \textit{g}5\# 20.\textit{h}1 \textit{e}5 21.\textit{xb}8 \textit{xb}8 22.\textit{g}1 \textit{h}5 23.\textit{f}4 \textit{f}3\# 24.\textit{g}2 \textit{d}1\# 25.\textit{xd}1 \textit{xd}1\# 26.\textit{g}1 \textit{f}3\#

The game ends in perpetual check.

16...\textit{b}4!

In the event of 16...\textit{fxd}2 17.\textit{xd}2 \textit{d}4 18.\textit{g}2 Black is under some pressure, especially as the move ...\textit{a}7-\textit{a}6 has compromised his queenside.

17.\textit{b}1

I also examined 17.\textit{a}3 \textit{xa}3 18.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xd}3 19.\textit{xb}4 \textit{xf}3 20.\textit{xf}8 \textit{g}4\# with a perpetual.

17...\textit{c}8 18.\textit{b}3

White can win a pawn with 18.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 19.\textit{xb}4, but after 19...\textit{d}4 20.\textit{fd}1 \textit{f}6\# Black's control over the dark squares gives him excellent compensation.

13...0-0 14.0-0

In one game White tried:

14.\textit{b}2 \textit{xf}3 15.\textit{xf}3 \textit{d}4

16.\textit{d}1

I also checked 16.\textit{g}4 and found a remarkable idea for Black: 16...\textit{b}5 17.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}5! 18.\textit{xf}5 \textit{a}4! 19.\textit{f}3 \textit{xf}5 20.0-0 \textit{xf}3!
21...gxf3 \( \mathcal{B} \)xd5\( ^\uparrow \) Black has great compensation for the exchange.

16...\( \mathcal{D} \)b5 17...\( \mathcal{D} \)d2

This position occurred in Ehlvest – Rytshagov, Tallinn 1998. Here Black should have played the simple and natural move:

17...e6!N
With some advantage for Black.

14...\( \mathcal{D} \)xf3

An important moment. The text move has only occurred in one game so far, but I believe it to be an improvement over the alternative: 14...e6

After this natural move I found the following idea is rather unpleasant:

15...\( \mathcal{G} \)g5!
Black is doing fine after 15...\( \mathcal{F} \)d1 exd5 16.exd5 \( \mathcal{F} \)fe8, as seen in a number of games.

15...f6

One of the main points behind White’s idea can be seen in the following remarkable line: 15...\( \mathcal{D} \)d7 16...\( \mathcal{F} \)f4! \( \mathcal{D} \)xf3 17.dxc6! \( \mathcal{F} \)xe2 18.cxd7 f6 (18...\( \mathcal{D} \)xf1 19...\( \mathcal{D} \)d1 f6 20...\( \mathcal{F} \)d6\( ^\uparrow \))

19...\( \mathcal{D} \)d6\( ^\uparrow \) fxg5 20...\( \mathcal{F} \)xe6\( ^\uparrow \) \( \mathcal{D} \)f7 21.e5! Black is in trouble.

16...\( \mathcal{F} \)f4

16...exd5
If Black is to have any chance of making 14...e6 viable then he needs an improvement somewhere. One idea is 16...b5!N 17...h3 \( \mathcal{D} \)xf3 18...\( \mathcal{D} \)xf3 0e5?! with a playable position, although I would still prefer to avoid this whole line altogether.

17.exd5 g5 18...g3 \( \mathcal{G} \)e6 19.c4 \( \mathcal{D} \)xd2 20...\( \mathcal{D} \)xd2 \( \mathcal{F} \)f7 21...b3 \( \mathcal{D} \)d4 22...\( \mathcal{D} \)xd4 \( \mathcal{D} \)xd4 23...c7 \( \mathcal{D} \)d7 24.d6
Black faces serious problems in the endgame, Standaert – Nogga, e-mail 2009.
Naturally Black should not defer his central counterplay.

16.\textsubscript{\texttt{B}}\textsubscript{d}1 \texttt{Exd}5 17.\texttt{Exd}5 \texttt{Qe}5 18.\texttt{d}6
18. \texttt{Qe}2 \texttt{c}4! gives Black a good game.

The present position occurred in Ding Liren – Li Chao, Olongapo City 2010. At this point Black could have easily solved his problems with:

18...\texttt{c}4!\textsubscript{N} 19.\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\textsubscript{d}5 \texttt{\texttt{Q}}\textsubscript{xd}5 20.\texttt{Exd}5 \texttt{Qxf}3\texttt{t}
21.\texttt{gxf}3 \texttt{\texttt{Ed}7=}

Black is absolutely fine in this endgame.

C2) 10.\textsubscript{\texttt{B}}\textsubscript{c}1

This has been White’s most popular choice. There are some similarities with line C1, except that here White has chosen not to provoke ...\texttt{a}7-\texttt{a}6.

10...\texttt{cxd}4

This is my personal preference, although it is important to mention that Black has an equally valid alternative:

10...\texttt{Qg}4?! Just as in line C1. The position of the black pawn on \texttt{a}7 instead of \texttt{a}6 does not significantly alter the evaluation.

11.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{\texttt{Ed}8}

Compared with the position from line C1, White only really has one way to try and exploit the absence of the move ...\texttt{a}7-\texttt{a}6.
12.\texttt{b2!}

Against other moves, Black should respond exactly as indicated in lines C11, C12 and C13. There could be a few sub-variations in which the position of the a-pawn provides an additional possibility for one side or the other, but I am not aware of any lines in which where the evaluation will be altered dramatically.

Now the following sequence is more or less forced:

12.\texttt{xf3} 13.\texttt{gxf3} \texttt{d4} 14.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{cxd4} 15.\texttt{b5t}

This is the point of White's idea, but it brings him no advantage.

15.\texttt{xb5} 16.\texttt{b5} \texttt{f8} 17.\texttt{cxd4} \texttt{d4} 18.\texttt{c7}

From here Black only needs to find one good idea to ensure equality:

18.\texttt{e5!} 19.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{b8=}

A draw was soon agreed in Yusupov – Anand, Wijk aan Zee 1994.

To summarize, if the reader wishes to reduce his study time by employing the ...\texttt{g4} line against both C1) 10.\texttt{b1} \texttt{a6} 11.\texttt{c1} and C2) 10.\texttt{c1}, then he should feel absolutely comfortable in doing so. However, I would like to make it clear that I did not produce the following detailed analysis of the 10...\texttt{cxd4} variation merely to amuse myself! It is my opinion that the queenless middlegame positions lead to richer play with greater potential for Black to take over the initiative, although of course the game should remain balanced if both sides play accurately.

Obviously this is just my own point of view, and other players may see things differently. Therefore I invite the reader to check the remainder of the chapter and make up his own mind.

11.\texttt{cxd4} \texttt{xd}2t 12.\texttt{xd2} 0–0

Now White's main options are C21) 13.\texttt{b5} and C22) 13.\texttt{d5}.

Alternatives are almost never played. Here is a brief example:

13.\texttt{d3} \texttt{d8} 14.\texttt{c4} 14.\texttt{d5?!} is worse: 14...\texttt{b4} 15.\texttt{c5} \texttt{xd3} 16.\texttt{xd3} Now in the game Sakaev – Ruck, Panormo 2002, Black missed the powerful 16...\texttt{f5!}, after which 17.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xe4}t 18.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{f5}t 19.\texttt{f4} \texttt{xd5} reaches a position in which Black's bishop pair gives him a clear advantage.

14...\texttt{f5!}

This typical undermining move works nicely.

15.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xf5} 16.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{gxf5} 17.\texttt{e2} \texttt{d5}!

Emphasizing Black's control over the light squares.

18.\texttt{b1} \texttt{ad8}

Black was at least equal in Damljanovic – Antic, Subotica 2000.
This has been quite a popular choice, but Black has a well-established solution.

13...\textsf{f5}! 14.\textsf{exf5}

White lacks reliable alternatives, for instance:
14.\textsf{d5?} fxe4!

Black soon takes over the initiative.

15.\textsf{dxc6}

15.\textsf{\textit{g5}} occurred in Plachetka – Smejkal, Trnava 1980. At this point Black should have played the natural 15...\textsf{\textit{d4!}}N when best play continues as follows: 16.\textsf{\textit{xd4}} \textsf{\textit{xd4}} 17.\textsf{\textit{xe4}} \textsf{\textit{f5}} 18.\textsf{\textit{f3}} \textsf{\textit{d8}} 19.\textsf{\textit{c4}} \textsf{\textit{g7}} Black has a positional advantage and virtually no risk.

15...\textsf{\textit{xf3}} 16.\textsf{\textit{gxf3}} bxc6 17.\textsf{\textit{xc6}}

Material is equal, but it is obvious that Black has the superior position.

17...\textsf{\textit{b7}} 18.\textsf{\textit{c7}} \textsf{\textit{ad8}}† 19.\textsf{\textit{c2}} \textsf{\textit{xf3}}

Black was better and went on to win in Ligterink – Smejkal, Amsterdam 1980.

14...\textsf{\textit{xf5}}

15.\textsf{\textit{xc6}}

I once had a somewhat unpleasant experience on the white side of this variation: 15.\textsf{\textit{e2}} \textsf{\textit{e6}}!

16.\textsf{\textit{c4}} \textsf{\textit{xc4}}† 17.\textsf{\textit{xc4}} \textsf{\textit{ad8}} 18.\textsf{\textit{b1}} \textsf{\textit{d7}} 19.\textsf{\textit{b5}} \textsf{\textit{fd8}} Black had a very comfortable position and I soon got into trouble, although I eventually managed to save a difficult endgame in Avrukh – Van Wely, Ohrid 2001.

15...\textsf{\textit{bxc6}} 16.\textsf{\textit{xc6}}
After this move Black gains full compensation for the sacrificed pawn, as demonstrated in several games.

White has also tried:
17.\texttt{a1 b2+t 18.\texttt{c1}}
There is little for Black to fear, especially after the following suggestion:

18...\texttt{h3!N}
Black is doing quite okay after 18...\texttt{e4}, but it is hard to refrain from the more eye-catching continuation.

19.\texttt{h4}
Inferior is 19.\texttt{g5?! xg2 20.c7 xf6+}.

19...\texttt{g4 20.h3 e2+t 21.f1 xe3 22.hxg4 xxd4 23.d1 e4 24.f3 b6}
The position is roughly equal.

This is White's only chance to play for a win. 21.c3 c8+ leads once again to a repetition.

21.\texttt{a5?}
This allows Black to regain the sacrificed pawn, but the alternative of 22.d1 e5! looks risky for White.

22...\texttt{g2 23.c1}
We have been following the game Pasierb – Chovanec, corr. 2005. Now the simplest continuation would have been:
The endgame is equal.

C22) 13.d5

This is the critical continuation.

13...\(\&d8\)

From here White's main options are C221) 14.\(\&c2\) and C222) 14.\(\&e1\).

14.\(\&d3\)? \(\&b4\) transposes to the line 13.\(\&d3\) \(\&d8\) 14.\(\&d5\)? \(\&b4\) as analysed on page 121.

14.\(\&c4\) is also unimpressive: 14...\(\&a5\) 15.\(\&hd1\) (There is no time for 15.\(\&d3\)? as after 15...\(\&e6\)! White is in trouble.) 15...\(\&xc4\) 16.\(\&xc4\) \(f5\) 17.\(\&e1\) \(\&xe4\) 18.\(\&xe4\) \(\&c3\)? 19.\(\&f1\) \(\&f6\)

Hoi - Helmers, Esbjerg 1982

C221) 14.\(\&c2\)

Curiously, this has been an especially popular move in correspondence games.

14...\(\&a5\) 15.\(\&g5\)

Absolutely harmless is:

15.\(\&d2\)? \&d7 16.\(\&b1\) \&e6 17.\(\&c4\) \&b6!

This strong idea is made possible by the placement of the king on \(b1\), which would be in dire trouble in the event of an exchange on \(a5\).

18.\(\&g5\)

Now in the game Heinig - Gauglitz, Fuerstenwalde 1981, Black could have executed a strong exchange sacrifice:

18...\(\&xd5\)!N 19.\(\&xd8\) \(\&xd8\) 20.\(\&xa5\)

After 20.\(\&d2\) \(\&e6\) Black is clearly better.

20...\(\&xa5\) 21.\(\&c7\) \(\&xe4\) 22.\(\&c4\) \(\&e5\) 23.\(\&xa7\)

White can probably still hold this position, but Black clearly has the initiative.

15...\(\&f8\) 16.\(\&f4\)

16.\(\&d3\) \(b6\) 17.\(\&d2\) \(f6\) 18.\(\&e3\) was played in Mathe - Swahnberg, e-mail 2006.

Black should now have played the obvious move:

18...\(\&f5\)!N The following continuation looks logical: 19.\(\&hd1\) \(\&xe4\) 20.\(\&xe4\) \(\&b7\)? 21.\(\&d4\)

\(\&d6\) 22.\(\&f3\) \(\&xd4\) 23.\(\&xd4\) \(\&b7\) Black has equalized.
practically forces his opponent to accept the pawn sacrifice.

19.\texttt{Exc8}

White does best to insert this exchange, as the immediate 19.\texttt{Exb5} \texttt{Exb8} 20.\texttt{Exb8} \texttt{Exb8} sees Black win two pieces for a rook.

19...\texttt{Exc8} 20.\texttt{Exb5} \texttt{Ec4} 21.\texttt{Exc4} \texttt{Exc4}

From this position the following sequence is more or less forced:

18...b5?!

This is an interesting way to develop counterplay. Black intends to play ...\texttt{Ec4} and
14...\textit{D}a5

We have reached the last major branching point of the chapter. White has tested a wide variety of continuations, the most important being C2221) 15.f4, C2222) 15.d2 and C2223) 15.g5.

15.b5!!

White fails to anticipate his opponent’s counterplay.

15...f5! 16.d2 b6

White’s pawn centre is on the brink of collapse.

17.axb5 axb5 18.e5 b7 19.c6

This was Kamble – Ganguly, New Delhi 2006. Now Black’s strongest continuation would have been:

16...\textit{D}d7!N

After this move Black soon takes over the initiative, for instance:

17.b5 \textit{D}d6 18.f4 \textit{B}b6 19.d3 exd5 20.exd5 \textit{g}g4

The opening of the centre is clearly in Black’s favour, bearing in mind that White has already forfeited the right to castle.

Finally, let’s check one more minor continuation:

15.d2 \textit{D}d7 16.d3 e6 17.e2 exd5 18.exd5

This position was reached in Chachere – Chow, Illinois 1988, and one subsequent game. At this point Black could have exploited the vulnerability of the d5-pawn with:
18...\textit{e}e8!N

The game continuation of 18...\textit{a}a4 is not bad for Black, but the text move has one major advantage.

19.\textit{e}e4 \textit{f}5 20.\textit{f}f3 \textit{f}f7!

This is it! The d-pawn will perish, and White faces an uphill battle to draw.

This is it! The d-pawn will perish, and White faces an uphill battle to draw.

\textbf{C2221) 15.\textit{f}f4}

\textbf{15.\textit{d}d7 16.\textit{d}d3 \textit{f}5!}

A clear improvement over 16...\textit{d}c8, as played in a few other games.

17.\textit{d}d2

White has also tried:

17.\textit{c}c7 \textit{e}ac8! 18.\textit{e}5

At first sight this seems very tempting, but in fact it leaves the d5-pawn vulnerable, as demonstrated in the following game:

18...\textit{e}e8! 19.\textit{e}e2 \textit{x}d5 20.\textit{x}xa5 \textit{x}c1 21.\textit{x}xc1 \textit{x}xa5 22.\textit{c}c8 \textit{f}f8t

White has some compensation for the missing pawn, but overall Black's chances are higher and he eventually prevailed in Akobian - Negi, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

17...\textit{f}xe4 18.\textit{h}xe4 \textit{e}ac8 19.\textit{f}e2 \textit{h}b5t 20.\textit{h}e3

The position looks like it should be roughly equal, but with the help of a nice idea Black managed to pose some problems for his opponent.

20...\textit{b}2! 21.\textit{e}c7 \textit{a}a3! 22.\textit{f}f3 \textit{x}c7 23.\textit{x}xc7 \textit{e}8t 24.\textit{f}g3 \textit{b}6t

White's position was a bit unpleasant in Karpeta - Plebanczyk, e-mail 2008.
Black has no reason to fear the doubling of his queenside pawns, as his bishop pair and the open b-file would be far more relevant factors.

White's bishop manoeuvre is rather time-consuming and thus fails to cause Black problems. Nevertheless the following alternatives are even worse:

16...\textit{b}5?!\textit{f}5! 17.\textit{bxa5} bxa5 18.e5 \textit{b}8\textit{f} 19.\textit{c}c4 \textit{h}6 20.e\textit{d}1 \textit{b}4 was clearly better for Black in Bazant – Yandemirov, Prague 1990.

White makes a third consecutive bishop move; at least he is being consistent. The alternative is:

16.\textit{c}7?! e6 17.\textit{xa5} bxa5 18.\textit{c}4 \textit{b}8\textit{f} 19.e5 \textit{h}6 20.e\textit{d}1 \textit{b}4 was clearly better for Black in Bazant – Yandemirov, Prague 1990.


White makes a third consecutive bishop move; at least he is being consistent. The alternative is:

17.\textit{d}6

This untested move was mentioned by Krasenkow in \textit{ChessBase Magazine} 89.

17...\textit{b}7 18.\textit{c}7

Here I found an improvement:

18...\textit{xe4}!

Krasenkow gave 18...\textit{dc8} which is also interesting, but it seems to me that Black can follow the more critical path of capturing the central pawn.

19.\textit{g}5

From here I analysed the following continuation:

19...\textit{d}6 20.e\textit{d}2 d5 21.exf7 \textit{dc8} 22.a6 \textit{xc7} 23.dxc7 fxe7 24.e8=\textit{f} e\textit{xc8} 25.e\textit{c} 26.a6 \textit{xg2} 27.e1 \textit{d}5\textit{f} 18...\textit{d}7 18.d6

Black has two pawns for the exchange and can play for a win without risk.

18...\textit{a}6!

It turns out that White is unable to maintain his outposts in the heart of the enemy position. The threat is ...\textit{b}7 followed by ...\textit{c}6.
19.\texttt{d3} \texttt{b7} 20.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{xc7} 21.\texttt{dxc7} \texttt{f8} 

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\t\node at (0,0) {
\begin{picture}(80,80)
\t\definecolor{light-gray}{gray}{0.5}
\t\definecolor{white}{gray}{1}
\t\definecolor{black}{gray}{0}
\t\fill[light-gray] (0,0) rectangle (10,10);
\t\fill[white] (0,0) rectangle (10,10);
\t\fill[black] (0,0) rectangle (10,10);
\t\draw (0,0) grid (10,10);
\t\draw (0,0) -- (10,10);
\t\draw (0,10) -- (10,0);
\t\fill[white] (1,1) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[black] (2,2) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[white] (3,3) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[black] (4,4) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[white] (5,5) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[black] (6,6) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[white] (7,7) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[black] (8,8) circle (0.5);
\end{picture}
};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

22.\texttt{f6?!}

This just loses a pawn.

The best chance was 22.\texttt{x}f8 \texttt{x}f8 23.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xc8} 24.\texttt{c1} \texttt{e7} 25.\texttt{e3} when Black cannot capture the c7-pawn easily due to \texttt{g5} ideas. Nevertheless Black certainly has the better chances after 25...\texttt{f6}, as noted by Krasenkow.

22...\texttt{d6}?

White lost a pawn without obtaining the slightest compensation in Cyborowski – Krasenkow, Warsaw 2002.

C2223) 15.\texttt{g5}

15...\texttt{d7} 16.\texttt{d3}

It is well established that taking the e7-pawn leads nowhere for White: 16.\texttt{x}e7?! \texttt{xe8} 17.\texttt{d6} \texttt{c6} 18.\texttt{b5} \texttt{f8} Black easily regains his pawn. 19.\texttt{x}f8 \texttt{xe4}t 20.\texttt{d2} This position occurred in Saucey – Atakisi, Antalya 2004, and now the most accurate continuation would have been:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\t\node at (0,0) {
\begin{picture}(80,80)
\t\definecolor{light-gray}{gray}{0.5}
\t\definecolor{white}{gray}{1}
\t\definecolor{black}{gray}{0}
\t\fill[light-gray] (0,0) rectangle (10,10);
\t\fill[white] (0,0) rectangle (10,10);
\t\fill[black] (0,0) rectangle (10,10);
\t\draw (0,0) grid (10,10);
\t\draw (0,0) -- (10,10);
\t\draw (0,10) -- (10,0);
\t\fill[white] (1,1) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[black] (2,2) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[white] (3,3) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[black] (4,4) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[white] (5,5) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[black] (6,6) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[white] (7,7) circle (0.5);
\t\fill[black] (8,8) circle (0.5);
\end{picture}
};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20...\texttt{x}f8N 21.\texttt{he1} \texttt{f4}! With a slightly better endgame for Black.

16...\texttt{f5}!

My decision to recommend the entire line beginning with 10...\texttt{xd4} was dependent upon this move working well for Black.

The more popular 16...\texttt{dc8} 17.\texttt{e2} e6 is playable, but in my opinion Black is fighting for a draw here, whereas after the text move
the position is just as dangerous for White as it is for Black.

17...e5
This central advance is White's most popular and principled response. Here are a few other possibilities:

17...c7 has not been tested, and indeed after 17...fxe4 18.xe4 c8 it is only Black who can be better, as he is about to exchange his opponent's most active piece.

Much more interesting is:
17...e7?! e8 18.d6 fxe4 19.xe4 c6
Worse is 19...f8?! 20.f5 c7 when 21.c7! suddenly proves effective.
After the text move I found an important improvement for White.

20.g5!N
The only game here continued 20.xc6?! cxc6 21.d1 e7 22.dxe7 cxe7 when Black was already better in Truhart - Kherubim, Internet 2004.

20.h6?
This is the most ambitious move, although there are plenty of other ideas.
One of White's ideas is revealed in the following line: 20...xe4 21.xe4 c6
22.xc6! bxc6 23.d2= The strong d6-pawn gives White fine compensation. Nevertheless Black has two reliable alternatives:

20...h6 21.c5 xg5 22.xg5 xe4
23.xa5 xg2 24.Eg1 c6 25.d2 f7=
Despite the strong d6-pawn, I think Black should be able to hold this endgame with ease.
The other playable line is: 20.f8 21.f8 c8 22.f3 h6 23.c5 hxg5 24.xa5 ad8
The position is close to a draw.

21.xg6 hxg5 22.xe8 e8 23.f3 f7
In this unbalanced position the chances are approximately equal.

Finally, White's most popular alternative to the main line has been:
17.d2 dc8
Black can also consider 17...fxe4 18.xe4 (18.xe4? runs into 18...f5 when the d5-pawn is in trouble.) 18.c8 with a playable position, as demonstrated in a few games.

18.e6!
Increasing the pressure against the enemy centre.
Chapter 10 – 8. \( \text{d}f3 \)

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

The strange 19. \( \text{h}4 \) is a clear mistake, and after 19...exd5 20.exd5 \( \text{e}8 \) White lost his central pawn in Markos – Sutovsky, Bled 2002.

I also checked the untested 19.exf5N gxf5 20.d6, but this fails to bring White any benefit due to 20...\( \text{e}5 \) 21.\( \text{e}7 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 22.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}4 \) 23.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{x}e7 \) 24.\( \text{b}x4 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 25.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) when Black is better.

19...fxe4

The untested 19...exd5N 20.exd5 \( \text{e}8 \) also deserves consideration.

20.\( \text{x}e4 \) \( \text{b}5 \)

The simplifications resulted in an equal position in Ftacnik – Sutovsky, Kaskady 2002.

White has also tried:

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

But Black has a strong reply:

19...exd6 20.exd6

20...\( \text{e}8 \)!

This gives White serious problems with the d6-pawn.

21.\( \text{f}4 \)

Another game saw 21.\( \text{e}7 \) \( \text{x}e7 \) 22.\( \text{x}e7 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 23.\( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 24.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{f}7 \) and White was unable to hang onto the e7-pawn in Schranz – Pasko, e-mail 2001.

21.\( \text{d}8 \) 22.\( \text{e}1 \)

This position was reached in Ki. Georgiev – Krasenkow, Rethymnon 2003. At this point Black’s most accurate continuation would have been:

217...\( \text{e}8 \) 18.d6 \( \text{d}c8 \) 19.\( \text{x}e7 \)

18.\( \text{e}8 \)!

White will have serious problems dealing with the attack on the d6-pawn.
A similar idea is:
19.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{exd6} \) 20.\( \text{exd6} \) \( \text{xf8} \)

Once again the same response works well.

21.\( \text{Exc8} \) \( \text{Exc8} \) 22.\( \text{d1}! \)

Compared with the previous line, the white king is not blocking the d-file, thus enabling him to maintain the balance.
22.\( \text{fxd6} \) 23.\( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{b5} \) 24.\( \text{d3} \)

The position was equal in Kalinski – Dvoirys, USSR 1982.

19...\( \text{h6}! \)

This intermediate move is an important detail, as it is essential to cover the g5-square before the rook exchange.

20.\( \text{c3} \)

20.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xc1} \) is the same of course.

20...\( \text{xc1} \) 21.\( \text{xc1} \) \( \text{c8} \)

Black has another solid route to an equal position: 21...\( \text{c6} \) 22.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{f7} \) 23.\( \text{e6} \) \( \text{e8} \)
24.\( \text{a3} \) \( \text{c8} \) 25.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 26.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{f6} \)=


22.\( \text{e2} \)

22.\( \text{c3} \) does not change the assessment:
22...\( \text{c4} \) 23.\( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 24.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \)
25.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{f7} \) = Black regains the pawn to reach full equality, Piot – Spielmann, Rosny sous Bois 2002.

22...\( \text{c6} \) 23.\( \text{c4} \)

Another idea is 23.\( \text{c4} \) †, after which the players agreed a draw in Banet – Hi. Krueger, e-mail 2003. The continuation would have been 23...\( \text{f7} \) 24.\( \text{e6} \) \( \text{e8} \) followed by ...\( \text{xe7} \), when the position remains complex but roughly level.

23...\( \text{xe7} \)

Equally playable is 23...\( \text{xe5} \) 24.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 25.\( \text{xa7} \) (25.\( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{f7} \) †) when a draw was agreed in Karpeta – Krzyzanowski, corr. 2008. Black’s next move would surely have been 25...\( \text{c7} \), regaining the pawn with full equality.

24.\( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{d5}! \)

This active move ensures Black of a good position.
We have been following the game Zhou Jianchao - Ni Hua, Hyderabad 2005. Black chose to play for a win but the game was eventually drawn. In any case, from a theoretical perspective, the soundest continuation is:

28...\( \text{Re}4 \)N

Forcing a repetition.

Conclusion

We have seen that the set-up involving 7.\( \text{Re}3 \) c5 8.\( \text{Rf}3 \) can lead to rich positions offering plenty of interesting possibilities for both players. Following the standard response of 8...\( \text{Wf}5 \), both A) 9.\( \text{Rd}2 \) and B) 9.\( \text{Rd}2 \) are pretty harmless, although the latter has developed a fair-sized body of theory. The really important line is C) 9.\( \text{Rd}2 \) \( \text{vc}6 \), when the game might veer in one of two main directions.

In the event of C1) 10.\( \text{Rb}1 \) a6 11.\( \text{Rc}1 \), Black should avoid exchanges with 11...\( \text{Rg}4 \) 12.d5 \( \text{Ed}8 \), when the latest games and analysis suggest that he is doing fine.

After the more popular C2) 10.\( \text{Rc}1 \) there is nothing wrong with 10...\( \text{Rg}4 \), with similar play to the aforementioned line, but my personal preference is 10...\( \text{cx}d4 \) 11.\( \text{cx}d4 \) \( \text{Wxd2} \) 12.\( \text{Rxd2} \) 0–0, reaching a queenless position which has undergone thorough analysis and practical testing. So far Black's position has proven resilient enough to withstand whatever the opponent might throw at him, while also providing enough dynamic resources to fight for the initiative.
Variation Index

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♘xd5 5. e4 ♘xc3 6. bxc3 ♘g7 7. ♘e3 c5 8. ♖d2

A) 10. ♘b5 ♗d7
   A1) 11. ♘b1
   A2) 11. ♘c2
B) 10. ♘d1 0–0
   B1) 11. ♘c2
   B2) 11. d5
   B3) 11. ♘f3

note to 9...♗c6

A1) note to 13. ♘xc6!?N

B3) note to 13. 0–0

15...♗ab8N

16...f5!N

15...a6N
Chapter 11 – 8...d2

1.d4 Ʌf6 2.c4 g6 3.Ʌc3 d5 4.cxd5 Ʌxd5 5.e4 Ʌxc3 6.bxc3 Ʌg7 7.Ʌe3 c5 8.Ʌd2

Here we see another slightly different way for White to arrange his pieces. The queen takes the sting out of any ...Ʌa5 ideas, and sets up the possibility of Ʌh6 later on. I recommend the following line for Black:

8...cxd4 9.cxd4 Ʌc6

Immediately attacking the d4-pawn. White’s two main responses are A) 10.Ʌb5 and B) 10.Ʌd1.

A few games continued:
10.Ʌf3 Ʌg4 11.Ʌb5
11.Ʌd1 0–0 12.Ʌe2 transposes directly to variation B3, which occurs via the move order 10.Ʌd1 0–0 11.Ʌf3 Ʌg4 12.Ʌe2.
11.Ʌxf3 12.gxf3 0–0 13.Ʌxc6 bxc6 14.Ʌc1 14.0–0 runs into 14...c5 15.Ʌad1 cxd4 16.Ʌxd4 Ʌxd4 17.Ʌxd4 Ʌa5 with equality, Karpov – Ponomariov, San Sebastian 2009.
14...Ʌd7 15.0–0
This position was reached in H. Andersen – Tschann, Germany 2004. Here the best solution for Black is:

15.Ʌab8N
For example:
16.Ʌc5
After 16.Ʌfd1 Ʌb5 17.Ʌf4 a5 the evaluation is similar.
16...Ʌh3 17.Ʌe2 Ʌb4!
Black is doing fine.

A) 10.Ʌb5
10...d7

Now we reach a further division between A1) 11.b1 and A2) 11.e2.

A1) 11.b1 0-0 12.e2

White has also tried a different knight move:

12.f3

Graf – Krasenkow, Berlin 2003. Here I like the natural yet untested move:

12.g4?N 13.d5

I also examined 13.xc6 bxc6 14.e5 xe5 15.dxe5 b8 when the position is equal.

13...xf3 14.gxf3 le5 15.e2

Here the important move is

15...c8!

We have reached a position examined in variation B2 of Chapter 13, beginning with the move order 7.f3 c5 8.b1 0-0 9.e3.

I also checked a new idea for White:

12.xc6N xc6

13.d5 a4 14.e2

14.xb7?? loses on the spot to 14...c8!.

White would like to castle and play d4. If he had time to carry out this plan then he would have some chances for an edge, but Black can throw a spanner in the works:

14...c8!

Black takes advantage of his lead in development.

15.xb7 c2 16.d3 c8 17.xa7 xa2 18.0–0 c2!

Black regains the sacrificed pawn to reach the more comfortable side of equality.

12...a6

13.xc6?N

This untested move appears logical, so I decided to analyse it as the main line.
13...d3
This has been played in a couple of games, but it is not really dangerous.

13...b5 14.0-0
Another game saw 14.h4 a5 15.xa5 dxe5 16.d2 fc8 17.bcl e6 and a draw was agreed in Vyzmanavin – Huzman, Vilnius 1995.

14...a5 15.xa5 dxe5 16.d5
This position occurred in Hillarp Persson – Kaufman, Hampstead 1998. At this point Black's best continuation would have been:

16...f5!N 17.f3 fxe4 18.xe4 xc5!
Black has no problems and even has the more promising position.

13...xc6 14.d5 b5 15.d4
This is the only reasonable try, since 15.0-0 runs into 15...e6! with a good game for Black.

15...xd4! 16.xd4 c7!
This is the simplest solution to Black's problems.

17.xb5 axb5
Black's pawn weaknesses are balanced by his lead in development.

18.0-0
18.xb5 might lead to a forced draw: 18...xa2 (18...a4? is also possible) 19.xa2 c1† 20.e2 xh1 21.xb7 xg2 22.xe7 g4† 23.f1 d1=+

18...a4
Black has enough activity to maintain the balance, for instance:

19.d3 e5 20.xb5 xe4 21.xe4 xe4 22.xb7 a8
Black regains his pawn to reach a drawish endgame.

A2) 11.e2

16...f5!N 17.f3 fxe4 18.xe4 xcl† 19.xf1 xxc8
Black has no problems and even has the more promising position.

11...a6 12.d3
Alternatively, 12.xc6 xc6 13.f3 0-0 14.0-0 b5 15.fd1 was played in Lehtivaara
– Rytko, Finland 1996. From here the best way for Black to organize his position would have been: 15...\(\text{c4}\)N 16.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{c8}\) 17.d5 b5 18.\(\text{d}4\) e6! With a comfortable position.

12...0-0 13.\(\text{b}1\)

13.\(\text{b}1\) b5 reaches the note to White's 13th move in line A1 above.

13...\(\text{c}8\) 14.0-0 \(\text{a}5\) 15.\(\text{x}a5\) \(\text{x}a5\) 16.d5

This is the only challenging idea at White's disposal.

16...b5 17.\(\text{b}6\)

17.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{x}d4\) 18.\(\text{x}d4\) was seen in Pascua Vilches – Villamanan Alonso, Valladolid 2000, and now I found an easy solution for Black:

18...e6!N 19.dxe6 \(\text{x}e6\) 20.\(\text{x}e6\) fxe6 Black has the slightly better endgame.

17...\(\text{b}7\)

There is nothing wrong with 17...\(\text{c}4\) 18.\(\text{xc}4\) bxc4, but the text move keeps Black's position more fluid.

18.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{h}6!\) 19.\(\text{c}d1\) \(\text{d}6\) 20.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{c}4\)N

Black slowly took over the initiative Wang Yaoyao – Alterman, Beijing 1995.

B) 10.\(\text{d}1\)

We have seen that developing of the bishop on b5 is pretty harmless, so it is not surprising that this flexible rook move is the main line.

10...0-0

Now White's main options are B1) 11.\(\text{e}2\), B2) 11.d5 and B3) 11.\(\text{f}3\).
Less important is:
11.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{d}7
The position of White's bishop invites a quick ...\texttt{c}8.

12.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{c}8 13.\texttt{0}-0
Also after 13.\texttt{c}1 e6 14.0-0 \texttt{a}5 15.\texttt{x}a5 \texttt{xa}5 16.\texttt{d}3 b5 Black has no problems.

13...\texttt{a}5
13...\texttt{a}5?N is not bad either.

14.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{c}4 15.\texttt{x}c4 \texttt{xc}4 16.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{b}5
17.\texttt{fd}1 \texttt{d}7 18.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{xc}4 19.\texttt{c}3 b5\
Black had the more comfortable game in Alavi - Ghollasi Moud, Mashhad 2010.

\textbf{B1) 11.\texttt{e}2}

White wants to put his knight on \texttt{f}3 without allowing the pinning ...\texttt{g}4, but the idea carries a drawback.

11...\texttt{e}5!
Black takes immediate advantage of the vulnerability of the d4-square.

12.\texttt{d}5
12.\texttt{xe}5 is absolutely harmless, and after 12...\texttt{xd}2\texttt{t} 13.\texttt{xd}2 \texttt{xe}5 14.\texttt{c}4 as occurred in Eperjesi - Dobos, Budapest 1993, Black could have simply continued 14...\texttt{e}8N 15.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{e}6\texttt{t} with the more pleasant game.

12...\texttt{d}4 13.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{xe}2 14.\texttt{xe}2
If White had time to castle then he would have the makings of a positional advantage thanks to his passed pawn, but it is Black's turn to move.

14...\texttt{a}5\texttt{t}! 15.\texttt{d}2
One of the main points of Black's idea is that 15.\texttt{d}2 runs into 15...\texttt{a}4\! when the weakness of the e4-pawn causes problems for White.

15...\texttt{a}4\!
This important move was employed in Gelfand - Svidler, Ohrid 2009. Previously Black had played 15...\texttt{x}a2, but I suspect that Boris was ready for this, and indeed after 16.0-0 White has rich compensation.
After the text move the players agreed a draw, but perhaps Black should have played on. The following continuation looks logical:

16.0-0 b6 17.£fe1 £a6 18.£e3 £ac8
The initiative is with Black.

B2) 11.d5

11...£a5!
A strong move. Instead after 11...£e5 12.£d4 White has good chances for an advantage.

12.£xa5
This is the only move to have been tested so far, but the following alternative should also be considered:
12.£c1N £xd2†

13.£xd2 looks strange, and after 13...£a5 the prospect of a timely ...£e6 or ...£f5 gives Black excellent chances.

13...£d4 14.£e2
14...£f5 15.£xd4 £xd4 merely transposes.
14...£b4 is pointless, as Black can exploit his superior development follows: 14...£d7 15.£xe7 £ac8! 16.£b1 £f8 17.d6 £f8 Black has the better chances.

12...£xa5 13.£d2
Alternatively 13.£b5 a6 14.£d3 was played in Lim Chuing Hoong – Vu Dinh Hung, Kuala Lumpur 2001, and now with the help of some energetic play Black could have obtained an excellent game: 14...£f5!N 15.f3 £b5 16.£e2 £xe4 17.fxe4 £e6† White's position is unpleasant.

13...£b6
Black need not fear an exchange on a5, as the loss of White's important bishop would outweigh the slight weakening of Black's queenside pawns.

14.\(\text{d}3\)

14.\(\text{b}4\) can be met strongly by 14...f5! 15.\(\text{d}3\) fxe4 16.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{b}7\) 17.\(\text{f}3\) Arreaga Orozco – Soederberg, e-mail 2003. Now after the simple improvement:

16...dxe4!

White must have either overlooked or underestimated this intermediate move.

17.\(\text{b}4\) exf3 18.gxf3 \(\text{e}6\) 19.\(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{xf}3\) 20.a4 a6 21.\(\text{c}6\) \(\text{c}8\)

With a pawn for the exchange, a sounder structure and a lead in development, Black was clearly on top in Dumitrache – Vokarev, Bucharest 1998.

B3) 11.\(\text{f}3\)

17...\(\text{f}6\)N Black has the more pleasant position.

14...e6

14...\(\text{g}4\) 15.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{ac}8=\) is also reasonable.

15.\(\text{b}5\) exd5 16.\(\text{xa}5\)?

White commits an error. The correct 16.exd5N \(\text{ed}8\) would have maintained the balance.

11...\(\text{g}4\) 12.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{wa}5\) 13.0–0

A playable though less popular alternative is 13.\(\text{xa}5\) \(\text{xa}5\) 14.0–0 \(\text{ac}8\) 15.d5 (15.\(\text{c}1\)
transposes to the main line below.) Arpa Pardo – Ferreruela Romero, Aragon 2005. Now I like the following idea:

```
15...a6 N 16.\textit{c}1 b5 17.h3 \textit{xf}3 18.\textit{xf}3 \textit{c}4 19.\textit{g}5 \textit{f}6! = Black easily solves his problems.
```

13...\textit{ac}8 14.\textit{xa}5

Another direction is:

```
14.h3 \textit{xf}3 15.\textit{xf}3 \textit{xd}2 16.\textit{xd}2 \textit{a}5!
```

The simple plan of bringing the knight to c4 offers Black good counterplay.

```
15...\textit{xa}5 15.\textit{cl}
```

This concrete approach to the position is justified by the fact that both recaptures imply certain drawbacks for White. The alternative is less inspiring: 15...\textit{dc}6 16.d5 \textit{xf}3 17.\textit{xf}3 \textit{d}4 18.\textit{g}4 \textit{f}5 19.\textit{xf}5 gx\textit{f}5 20.\textit{h}5 Khashper – Khairullin, corr. 2002. Black’s position is solid and reliable enough, although I am not sure if he can claim to have fully equalized as White’s bishop pair might yet become an important factor.

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16.\textit{xf}3
```

The alternative is:

```
16.gxf3 \textit{dc}6
```

most accurate continuation for Black would have been:

```
18...\textit{fd}8 N 19.d5 \textit{f}8 20.\textit{g}4 \textit{c}5 21.\textit{cl} b6
```

With easy equality.
17.\textit{d5}\hspace{1cm}
White cannot protect the d4-pawn with 17.\textit{\textit{d}fd1?}, as 17...\textit{\textit{x}xd4!} wins a pawn.

In the event of 17.\textit{\textit{E}cd1} Black can consider returning with 17...\textit{\textit{Q}a5?} for instance 18.\textit{d5 a6} 19.\textit{\textit{E}c1} \textit{b5=} and Black is fine.

17...\textit{\textit{Q}d4} 18.\textit{\textit{E}xd4 \textit{Q}xd4}
Black is marginally better although of course White should be able to hold the position, Danner – Gustafsson, Budapest 2001.

16...\textit{\textit{Q}c4} 17.\textit{\textit{e}5}\hspace{1cm}
White cannot avoid giving up his dark-squared bishop, so he concentrates on activating the other one.

17...\textit{\textit{Q}xe3} 18.\textit{\textit{fxe3} \textit{Q}xh6}\hspace{1cm}
Another game continued: 18...\textit{b6} 19.\textit{\textit{Q}b7! \textit{E}xcl} 20.\textit{\textit{E}xcl} \textit{e6} 21.\textit{\textit{Q}f2! \textit{f}6} 22.\textit{\textit{E}xf6 \textit{Q}xf6} 23.\textit{\textit{Q}e2 \textit{E}e8} 24.\textit{\textit{Q}a6!} Black’s passive play left him in an unpleasant position, Epishin – Rytshagov, Paernu 1996.

19.\textit{\textit{Q}f2} \textit{b5}\hspace{1cm}
This was Ivanchuk – Svidler, Nice (blindfold) 2010. Black was able to hold this position without too much trouble, but still I prefer the game continuation, which aims for an improved version of the same type of endgame.

18.\textit{\textit{Q}b7}\hspace{1cm}
Keeping the dark-squared bishop does not promise White much: 18.\textit{\textit{Q}f4} \textit{e6} 19.\textit{\textit{E}fd1 \textit{E}fd8=}

18...\textit{\textit{Q}b8} 19.\textit{\textit{Q}d5 \textit{Q}xe3}\hspace{1cm}
I definitely prefer this to the risky 19...\textit{\textit{E}fc8?!} 20.e6 \textit{\textit{b}6} 21.\textit{\textit{Exf7+ \textit{Q}f8} as played in Hartwich – Michna, Internet 2001.

20.\textit{\textit{E}xe3} \textit{e6} 21.\textit{\textit{Q}c6}\hspace{1cm}
21.\textit{\textit{Q}e4} can be met by 21...\textit{\textit{E}fc8} when there is no \textit{\textit{Q}b7}.

21...\textit{h6} 22.\textit{\textit{Q}f2} \textit{b4} 23.\textit{\textit{Q}a4} \textit{\textit{E}fc8=}\hspace{1cm}

\textbf{Conclusion}

8.\textit{\textit{W}d2} is a reasonable-looking move, but it is a little on the slow side, and so the immediate attack on the centre with 8...\textit{\textit{c}xd4} 9.\textit{\textit{c}xd4} \textit{\textit{Q}c6} makes a good deal of sense. Variation A with 10.\textit{\textit{Q}b5} \textit{\textit{Q}d7} is playable for White, but he can hardly hope to achieve any advantage following the early exchange of his light-squared bishop for the enemy knight. Line B with 10.\textit{\textit{E}d1} seems more principled, although here too Black’s position seems to be perfectly in order. After 10...0–0 the critical line is B3) 11.\textit{\textit{Q}f3}, but my analysis shows that Black currently has no problems here, with the main line leading to an equal endgame.
7.\textit{\text{\textcircled{f3}}}

Various 8th Moves

Variation Index

1.\textit{d4 e5 2.c4 g6 3.d\textcircled{c3} d5 4.cxd5 \textcircled{dx}d5 5.e4 \textcircled{dx}c3 6.bxc3 \textcircled{g}g7 7.d\textit{f3}}

7...c5

A) 8.d\textit{c4} 145
B) 8.d\textit{e2} \textcircled{c}c6 146
   B1) 9.d\textit{e3} 146
   B2) 9.d5 148
C) 8.h\textit{3 0–0} 150
   C1) 9.d\textit{e3} 151
   C2) 9.d\textit{c4} 152
   C3) 9.d\textit{e2} 153
D) 8.b\textit{b5+ \textcircled{c}c6} 9.0–0 cxd4 10.cxd4 0–0 11.d\textit{e3 \textcircled{g}g4} 12.x\textit{c6 bxc6} 13.c\textit{c1 a5} 155
   D1) 14.x\textit{xc6} 157
   D2) 14.d\textit{e2} 158
   D3) 14.d\textit{d2} 160

B1) after 16.b\textit{b5} 16...\textit{x}xf3N

C2) after 21.a\textit{a4} 21...d\textit{d3}N

D2) after 21.e\textit{e1} 21...\textit{b}b2!N
1.d4 ∆f6 2.c4 g6 3.∆c3 d5 4.cxd5
The same position is frequently reached
via the alternative move order of 4.∆f3 ∆g7
5.cxd5 ∆xd5 6.e4 ∆xc3 7.bxc3.

4...∆xd5 5.e4 ∆xc3 6.bxc3 ∆g7 7.∆f3

7...c5
From this position by far the most important
move is 8.∆b1, which will receive full coverage
in Chapters 13-16. In the present chapter we
will deal with A) 8.∆c4, B) 8.∆e2, C) 8.h3
and D) 8.∆b5.

The most significant deviation is actually
8.∆e3, but this has already been covered in
Chapter 10 via the move order of 7.∆e3 c5
8.∆f3.

A) 8.∆c4

The combination of ∆f3 and ∆c4 tends not
to work well against the Grünfeld.

8...0-0
After bringing his king to safety Black will
be ready to hit the enemy centre with ...∆c6
and ...∆g4. Note that the immediate 8...∆g4?
should be avoided due to 9.∆xf7†, which
would be embarrassing.

9.0-0
This seems to be the logical continuation,
although it allows Black to develop decent
counterplay, so perhaps White should consider
9.h3 transposing to line C2.

The alternatives are nothing special; 9.∆b1?!
reaches line A of the next chapter, while 9.∆e3
∆c6 10.0-0 (10.h3 transposes to line C2)
10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ∆g4 is just a different
route to the position reached in the present
variation.

9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ∆c6 11.∆e3 ∆g4

12.∆d5
Worse is 12.e5?! ∆xf3 13.∆xf3 (Another
game continued: 13.gxf3 e6 14.f4 ∆c7 15.∆f3
∆c8 16.∆a1 ∆d7 17.∆f1 ∆d8† Khlebovich
– Uzhva, Smolensk 2001.) 13...∆xd4 14.∆xb7
∆xe5 15.∆ad1 ∆c8† Buczinski – De Melo,
White's bishop pair gives him some chances to hold, but he certainly does not have full compensation for the missing pawn.

12...\textit{xf3} 13.gxf3 \textit{wd7}

13...\textit{xd4}!!N 14.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 15.\textit{xd4} e6 also leads to roughly equal play.

14.\textit{b1}

This position was reached in Tsyvarev – Kuzneszov, Volgograd 1996. At this point my preferred continuation would be:

14...e6N 15.\textit{xc6} \textit{xc6} 16.\textit{b3} b6

With a balanced position.

This allows Black to strike at the centre immediately.

8...\textit{c6}

White's main responses are B1) 9.\textit{e3} and B2) 9.d5.

9.\textit{b1} leads to simplifications: 9...\textit{cxd4} 10.\textit{cxd4} \textit{xd4} 11.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 12.\textit{b5}†

12...\textit{d7}! (Black should not become too greedy with 12...\textit{f8}?! as 13.\textit{e2} is quite dangerous for him.) 13.\textit{xd7}† \textit{xd7} 14.\textit{xd7}† \textit{xd7} 15.\textit{xb7}† \textit{e6} 16.\textit{a3} \textit{f6} 17.\textit{e2} \textit{he8}


B1) 9.\textit{e3}

9...\textit{g4}
White will not be able to hold his centre together without making some kind of concession.

10.e5

With this move White gives up the d5-square and loses his flexibility in the centre, but there was no other reasonable way to defend the d4-pawn.

10.d5? is too optimistic, as shown by the following game: 10...exf3 11.gxf3 a6c3† 12.f1 axa1 13.xa1 cd4 14.bd5† b8 15.xd4 cxd4 16.xd4

10...cxd4 11.cxd4 a5†

Black has every reason to fight for the advantage. 13.xd2 a6xe2 14.a6xe2 d8 gives Black a pleasant endgame, and after 15.b3 d5 16.aac1 0–0 17.hd1 fd8 the players agreed a draw in Kornik – Bozic, Otocec 2009.

10.bd2 a6xe2 13.wxe2


10.axb1!! a6xf3 11.gxf3 cxd4 12.cxd4 xxd4!

Black has every reason to fight for the advantage. 13.xb7 0–0 14.0–0 Gezaljan – Svidler, Leningrad 1990. At this point Black could have maintained an edge by means of:

13...wxc3! Now White loses his central pawn, although he can probably scrape together enough compensation to equalize. 14.0–0 xdx4 15.xdx4 wdx4 16.b3 a4 17.aac1
17...0–0 (17...a5!N 18.e6 f5 deserves attention.) 18.c7 e6 19.cxb7 axb8 20.fxb1
xB7e8 21.xb7 Ec8 Black was doing fine in Istratescu – Gupta, Differdange 2008.

12...c7 13.xc1 d8!
After this move it seems that Black already
has the better chances.

14.a4 d7 15.e3 0–0 16.b5
This position occurred in Tishin – Zinchenko,
Alushta 2006. At this point the natural and
strong continuation would have been:

16.h4N 17.gxh4 w.b3 18.wxc6 bxc6
19.f6? is also interesting.

20.e4

B2) 9.d5

This sacrificial continuation is more
challenging, but Black should be fine after
correct play.

9...xc3† 10.d2 xa1
This move provides a sharp reminder of why
the 8.b1 variation is so much more popular
than the present one!

11.xa1 d4 12.xd4 cxd4 13.xd4 0–0
White certainly has some compensation for the exchange, but objectively the most he should be able to hope for is equality.

14.0-0
White can win back the exchange:
14...h6
However, this move squanders his initiative and is not really in the spirit of his earlier play.
14...a5† 15.g1 f6 16.xf8 xf8
Material is equal but Black has the more comfortable game.
17.f3
17.g4 d7 18.e5 was played in Lerner – Malaniuk, Yalta 1982, and now the accurate 18...a4!N 19.xa4 xa4† would have led to a better endgame for Black.
17...d7 18.f2

18...c8!
This looks like the best chance for an advantage.
In the event of 18...xa2 19.a1 c2 20.a1! White should be able to hold a draw.
It is worth mentioning that 20.xa7? would be a mistake, as after 20...xa7 21.xa7 b5 22.e3 c4 the b-pawn is dangerous and White faces a difficult defence.
19.b1 c2 20.b2 xb2 21.xb2 c5† 22.g3 b5
Black retained a pleasant edge in Hernandez Onna – Sisniega, Matanzas 1992, due to the possibility of creating a strong passed pawn on the queenside.

14...b6
Now White must decide where to retreat his queen.

15.a1
White has also tried: 15.c3 f6 16.h6 h7 White has no serious attacking ideas and Black slowly consolidates. 17.e3 d8 18.f4 d7 19.b1 b6 20.e5 fxe5 21.fxe5 e6 Black had the upper hand and eventually prevailed in Mohr – Lputian, Altensteig 1989.

15.d7
This is the only move to have been tested. It works out fine for Black, but still I found
a serious alternative: 15...d8\!N Preventing White from regaining the exchange so easily.

16.d3 (The active 16.h6 f6 17.e5! h4\! only worsens White's position.) 16...d7 17.b1 c7 White keeps a degree of compensation, but I do not believe he has full value for the exchange.

16.b1
16.h6 f6 17.b1 c7 transposes.

16...c7 17.h6 f6

18.c1
In the following game White fell into an inferior position relatively quickly: 18.xf8 xf8 19.d4 b5 20.e3 c8 21.f4 c2 22.d1 c3 23.d2 b4\! Pein – Rowson, Birmingham 2000.

18.a5 19.xf8 xf8 20.f1 c8 21.xc8+ xc8 22.e5
It looks like Black is under a bit of pressure, but with the help of an accurate manoeuvre he can completely neutralize his opponent's initiative.

22...b6! 23.d6 c5! 24.xe7+ xe7 25.exf6+ f7=
Black will quickly regain his pawn to reach an equal endgame, Szabo – Lahdenmaeki, e-mail 2009.

C) 8.h3

This continuation experienced a brief spurt of popularity after Kramnik employed it against Kasparov in the 2000 Wijk aan Zee
tournament, but nowadays it is hardly ever seen at the top level.

8...0-0

White must decide which bishop to develop, and on which square. His main choices are C1) 9...e3, C2) 9...c4 and C3) 9...e2.

C1) 9...e3

![Chess diagram]

9...c6 10.d2

10...a5 11.d1

White has to cover the d4-pawn, otherwise he quickly falls into a worse position, for instance:

11...c4?! cxd4 12.cxd4 xd2† 13.xd2 d8

14.d5 was played as far back as the game Vidmar – Alekhine, Nottingham 1936, as well as a few subsequent encounters. So far no one has replied with the straightforward 14...e6 15.xc6 bxc6 16.acl e5 when Black is clearly better.

14...a5 15.e2

![Chess diagram]

15...e6

It is obvious that the white king is seriously misplaced on c3.

16.hcl d8† 17.b2 c4† 18.xx4 xx4

Black obtained a pleasant edge in Seidler – Stefan, Slovakia 2002.

11...b6!

White’s eighth move ensured that the g4-square would not be available for Black’s pieces, but fortunately the bishop has another attractive post on b7.
12.\textit{\texttt{e}2}  
Another game continued 12.\textit{\texttt{c}4} \textit{\texttt{b}7}  
13.\textit{0–0} \textit{\texttt{c}xd4} 14.\textit{\texttt{c}xd4} \textit{\texttt{w}xd2} 15.\textit{\texttt{x}xd2} \textit{\texttt{c}ac8}  
16.\textit{\texttt{d}3} \textit{\texttt{f}d8} 17.\textit{\texttt{b}1} Bouwmeester – Peelen, Netherlands 2000. Here the most logical continuation would have been:

\begin{center}
\texttt{\texttt{a}bl} 5!N Intending \ldots \textit{\texttt{c}c4}, with better chances for Black.
\end{center}

12.\textit{\texttt{b}7} 13.\textit{0–0} \textit{\texttt{c}xd4} 14.\textit{\texttt{c}xd4} \textit{\texttt{w}xd2}  
15.\textit{\texttt{x}xd2}  
This position was reached in Koch – Gerland, Germany 1994, and here I would suggest:

\begin{center}
17...\textit{\texttt{a}a}5!N Intending \ldots \textit{\texttt{c}c4}, with better chances for Black.
\end{center}

12...\textit{\texttt{b}7} 13.\textit{0–0} \textit{\texttt{c}xd4} 14.\textit{\texttt{c}xd4} \textit{\texttt{w}xd2}  
15.\textit{\texttt{x}xd2}  
This position was reached in Koch – Gerland, Germany 1994, and here I would suggest:

\begin{center}
15...\textit{\texttt{a}a}5N 16.d5 \textit{\texttt{f}c8}  
Black is at least equal.
\end{center}

\texttt{\texttt{C}2) 9.\textit{\texttt{c}c}4}
The alternative 13...\textit{Ed}8 leads to highly complex play: 14.d5 \textit{Da}5 15.e2 This was Ahlander – Eriksson, Malmo 2000, and now Black should have accepted the challenge: 15...\textit{Exa}2N 16.0-0 \textit{Ed}7 With a double-edged position.

\textbf{14.\textbf{b}4!} \textit{Exf}3 \textbf{15.e}2!

Black’s queen is trapped on a3, but it turns out that he has enough resources.


15...\textit{d}4+

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\matrix [draw, anchor=west, column sep=1ex, row sep=1ex, nodes={minimum size=25mm}]
{ a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
 1 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 2 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 3 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 4 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 5 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 6 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 7 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 8 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

16.f1!?

White can force a draw by means of 16.e1 \textit{f}3 17.e2, but the text move must be critical.

16...\textit{e}6!

The key counter-blow.

17.\textit{xa}3 \textit{xc}4+ 18.g1 \textit{Ed}8

A remarkable position has arisen. Black has only two minor pieces and a pawn for the queen, but his tremendously active pieces combined with the vulnerability of the white king give him sufficient compensation.

19.\textit{h}2 \textit{e}5+

19...\textit{Ed}7 is also possible.

20.g3 \textit{e}2 21.a4

This position occurred in Adler – Strobel, Germany 1978. At this point a clear path to equality would have been:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\matrix [draw, anchor=west, column sep=1ex, row sep=1ex, nodes={minimum size=25mm}]
{ a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
 1 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 2 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 3 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 4 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 5 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 6 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 7 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 8 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

21...\textit{d}3!N 22.\textit{xb}7

Also after 22.\textit{xe}7 \textit{e}8 23.\textit{c}5 b5 24.a3 \textit{f}3 25.g2 \textit{xe}4 Black is not worse.

22...\textit{xe}4 23.\textit{xc}7 \textit{f}3+ 24.g2 \textit{d}4+=

The game ends in perpetual check.

\textit{C3) 9.e2}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\matrix [draw, anchor=west, column sep=1ex, row sep=1ex, nodes={minimum size=25mm}]
{ a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
 1 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 2 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 3 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 4 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 5 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 6 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 7 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
 8 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

This is the main continuation.
9...c6 10.e3 cxd4 11.cxd4 f5!
This is the move I like the most, although
11...a5† 12.d2 a3 13.d5 e5 should also
be okay for Black.

12.exf5
Other options are not dangerous for Black
either.

12.c4† h8 13.e5 (In the event of 13.0–0
Black can safely capture the pawn with
13...f4 14.d2 x4 15.c3 e6! 16.xe6
e6 17.b3 b6! although White should be
able to hold.) 13...f4 14.c1 This position was
At this point Black missed a nice idea:

14.b5!N 15.b3 a5 16.0–0 b7† Black's
control over the light squares gives him the
better chances.

12.b3† h8 From here two moves have
been tried:

13.d1?!
This is not at all promising.
13...fxe4 14.g5?!
14.e5 was a better try, but in any case
White is already fighting to equalize.
14...xd4

15.c4
15.f7† xf7 16.xf7 e6 17.a4 a5† 18.d2 a4 is winning for Black.
15.xd4 a5† 16.f1 xg5 is also clearly
favourable for him.

13.exf5 a5†!
An important idea – Black wants to recapture
the f5-pawn with his queen.
14.d2 xf5
15.\textit{e}3

A natural alternative is 15.0–0\textit{e}6
16.\textit{xb}7 \textit{d}5 17.\textit{c}c1 \textit{xd}4 18.\textit{xd}4
\textit{xd}4 19.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xf}2\dagger 20.\textit{h}2 \textit{f}7 21.\textit{g}5
\textit{gx}5 22.\textit{gx}5 \textit{d}4 with full equality.

15\ldots \textit{e}6 16.0–0 \textit{ad}8 17.\textit{ic}3 \textit{d}5=

Black had no problems in Mikanovic—
Turov, Quebec 2001.

12\ldots \textit{wa}5\dagger!

Once again Black exploits the uncastled king
to activate his queen.

13.\textit{d}2

Another game continued: 13.\textit{wd}2 \textit{xd}2\dagger
14.\textit{xd}2 \textit{xf}5 White's king is clearly
misplaced. 15.\textit{c}4\dagger \textit{h}8 16.\textit{hd}1 This was
Grachev—Belov, Vladimir 2002, and here for
some reason Black rejected the simple tactical
blow:

16\ldots \textit{xe}3!N Perhaps he was afraid of 17.\textit{g}5,
but after 17\ldots \textit{xg}2 18.\textit{f}7\dagger \textit{xf}7 19.\textit{xf}7
\textit{xd}4 Black is clearly better.

13.\textit{xf}5 14.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}6 15.0–0 \textit{d}5

The bishop is superbly placed here.

D) 8.\textit{b}5\dagger

Black's position was slightly preferable in
Fedukovic—Rada, e-mail 2006.

8\ldots \textit{e}6

This is considered to be a safe route to
equality.

9.0–0 \textit{c}d4
As an alternative I can recommend:
9...0-0 10.\textit{\texttt{Be3}} \textit{\texttt{Ba5}}?!
Instead 10...\textit{\texttt{Bg4}} or 10...\textit{\texttt{Cxd4}} would lead to our main line.

11.\textit{\texttt{Bxa4}} \textit{\texttt{Bxa4}} 12.\textit{\texttt{Bxa4}} \textit{\texttt{Cxd4}} 13.\textit{\texttt{Cxd4}}

13...f5!
As we have already seen in many lines, this move is a key resource for Black after the queens are exchanged.

14.exf5 \textit{\texttt{Bxf5}} 15.\textit{\texttt{Bc1}} \textit{\texttt{Be6}}!
This accurate move equalizes on the spot.

16.\textit{\texttt{Bxc6}} bxc6 17.\textit{\texttt{Bc2}} \textit{\texttt{Bd5}} 18.\textit{\texttt{Be5}} \textit{\texttt{Bxe5}}
19.\textit{\texttt{Bxe5}} \textit{\texttt{Bf8}} 20.\textit{\texttt{Bf3}} \textit{\texttt{Bf7}}=
Black managed to grind out a win from this drawish endgame in Komarov - Sutovsky, Israel 2010. Interestingly, a year later Emil went on to win a similar endgame against Shi Porat in the Israeli league.

10.\textit{\texttt{Cxd4}} 0-0

11.\textit{\texttt{Bxe3}}
White has also tried:
11.\textit{\texttt{Bxc6}} bxc6 12.\textit{\texttt{Bxa3}}
12.\textit{\texttt{Bxe3}} allows 12...\textit{\texttt{C5}} when Black has an easy game.
12...\textit{\texttt{Bg4}} 13.\textit{\texttt{Bc5}}
Most games have continued with 13...\textit{\texttt{Be8}}, but Black has an easier way to solve all his problems.

13.\textit{\texttt{Bxf3}} 14.\textit{\texttt{Bxf3}}

14...\textit{\texttt{Bxd4}}! 15.\textit{\texttt{Bxd4}} \textit{\texttt{Bxc5}} 16.\textit{\texttt{Bxd8}} \textit{\texttt{Bxf8}}
The queen sacrifice works nicely for Black, who risks virtually nothing.

17.\textit{\texttt{Bc3}} \textit{\texttt{a6}} 18.\textit{\texttt{a4}}
White's problem is that 18.\textit{\texttt{Bxc6}} allows the enemy rooks to penetrate to the second rank: 18...\textit{\texttt{Bac8}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Bb7}} \textit{\texttt{Bc7}}! 20.\textit{\texttt{Ba6}} \textit{\texttt{Bd2}}=
The f2-pawn is a target.

18...\textit{\texttt{Bd6}}
It transpires that it is White who should be more careful.
Chapter 12 – Various 8th Moves

19...a5 20...b3 20.d8
Objectively White should still be okay here, but in the game Timman – Kasparov, Kopavogur (rapid) 2000, he eventually succumbed.

11...g4 12...xc6 bxc6 13...c1
Otherwise ...c5 was coming.

13...a5
This time the idea of giving up the queen does not work so well: 13...xf3? 14...xf3 20.d4 15...f1 c5 16...c5 17...xd8 18...b8 19...d3 Kramnik – Kasparov, Moscow 1998. Black was unable to hold this position, and indeed the absence of the c-pawn makes a big difference to the evaluation compared with the aforementioned Timman – Kasparov game, which took place two years after his defeat to Kramnik.

We have reached the final branching point of the chapter, where White can choose between D1) 14...xc6, D2) 14...e2 and D3) 14...d2.

D1) 14...xc6

15...a1
But this is hardly a serious try for an advantage.

15...xa1 16...xa1 a5?

16...d8 is also fine.

17.h3 18...c7 19.g5!!
White should have preferred 19...e5 19.dxe5 a4 with equality.

19...f6 20...d2 a4 21...b4
This was Hawksworth – Knott, London 1980, and now the most accurate way to secure an edge would have been:

21...f7N
Intending ...e8 to liberate the d8-rook.

15...a5!
This is certainly the most active and interesting approach, although Black is probably doing okay after the slightly passive
15...\(\text{e}6\) 16.h3 \(\text{d}6\) 17.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{xf}3\) 18.\(\text{xf}3\) a5 19.e5 \(\text{d}7\) as seen in I. Sokolov – Leko, Sarajevo 1999, plus a few other games.

16.\(\text{xe}7\) a4

17.\(\text{b}7\)?!

This has been played in two games, but it might have led to trouble for White.

According to my analysis 17.h3N is best. Play continues 17...\(\text{xf}3\) 18.\(\text{xf}3\) a3 19.e5 \(\text{b}3\) 20.\(\text{b}7\) \(\text{a}4\) 21.\(\text{a}1\) \(\text{ab}8\)! when Black's strong passed pawn offers him full value for being a pawn down.

17...a3 18.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{b}8\) 19.\(\text{a}1\) \(\text{b}2\) 20.\(\text{h}3\)

This position occurred in Lugovoi – Svidler, St Petersburg 1995, and now Black missed a strong idea:

20...\(\text{e}6\)!N

Followed by ...a2, when White will have a hard time dealing with the mighty passed pawn.

D2) 14.\(\text{e}2\)

Connecting rooks while defending the a-pawn.

14...\(\text{fd}8\) 15.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{a}3\)

This is the best square for Black's queen.

16.\(\text{c}4\)

The following attempt is even less convincing:

16.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{e}2\) 17.\(\text{dxe}5\)

17.\(\text{d}5\) cxd5 18.exd5 was played in Sasikiran – Sutovsky, Pune 2004.
The present position can be better only for Black, and indeed I found that after 18...\( \mathcal{E}c8 \) 19.\( \mathcal{C}c4 \) \( \mathcal{E}d7! \) 20.d6 \( \mathcal{E}xc5 \) 21.\( \mathcal{A}xc5 \) \( \mathcal{E}a4?! \) White should be very careful.

17...\( \mathcal{E}xa2! \)

This is the key point behind Black's previous move. White is already a bit worse, and in the following game he failed to hold the position:

18.\( \mathcal{D}e1?! \) \( \mathcal{E}xd1 \) 19.\( \mathcal{E}xd1 \) a5 20.\( \mathcal{E}xc6 \) a4 21.\( \mathcal{D}h3 \) \( \mathcal{E}xf3 \) 22.\( \mathcal{G}xf3 \) \( \mathcal{E}xe5? \)

The a-pawn decided the issue in Ligterink – Smejkal, Ter Apel 1987.

16...\( \mathcal{E}e6! \) 17.d5

Exchanging the weak c6-pawn is not ideal for White, but after 17.\( \mathcal{D}c1 \) \( \mathcal{E}xa2 \) 18.\( \mathcal{E}xc6 \) a5 Black was also fine in Pranjic – Debevec, e-mail 2006.

19.\( \mathcal{A}d1 \)

19.\( \mathcal{D}d4!N \) \( \mathcal{D}d3 \) 20.\( \mathcal{E}c1 \) is the only way for White to maintain the balance.

19...\( \mathcal{E}ac8! \)

Now Black has better chances, for instance:

20.\( h3 \) h6 21.\( \mathcal{D}e1 \)

We have been following the game F. Portisch – Groszpeter, Zalakaros 2000. Black already has a pleasant position, and at this point his most accurate continuation would have been:

21...\( \mathcal{E}b2!N \)

Preventing \( \mathcal{D}c2 \). A possible continuation is:
22.\texttt{Exc8} Exc8 23.\texttt{wa6} Exc3!
Black maintains his advantage, relying on the fact that 24.\texttt{Wa7}? loses to 24...\texttt{We2}.

\textbf{D3) 14.}\texttt{Wd2}

This has been the most popular choice, although Black has little to fear in the ensuing queenless position.

14...\texttt{Wxd2} 15.\texttt{Wxd2} \texttt{Wfd8} 16.\texttt{Ob3}
16.e5 fails to pose Black any problems after 16...\texttt{ae6} 17.\texttt{Exc6} \texttt{Wxa2} 18.\texttt{Ba1} \texttt{Wd5} 19.\texttt{Ea6} \texttt{Ed7} with equality, Skembris – Stohl, Vrnjacka Banja 1989.

16...\texttt{a5}!
According to the latest theory this move enables Black to solve all his problems.

21...\texttt{Ed2}!
This forces a draw on the spot.
22.\texttt{Ef2}
Otherwise the planned ...\texttt{Eb8-b2} would be dangerous for White.
22...\texttt{Ed1} \texttt{E1d2+} 23.\texttt{Ef1}=
Due to the impending threefold repetition the players soon agreed a draw in Ftcnik –
Chapter 12 – Various 8th Moves

Krasenkow, Jakarta 1996, as well as a few subsequent games.

17...a4 18.\(c5\)
Here Black can choose between a safe road to dry equality and a more combative path which ultimately still results in a balanced position.

18...\(x d4\)!?
This is the more enterprising path. Objectively it does not lead to an advantage for Black, but it keeps the game alive.

The no-nonsense route to equality is 18...\(e2\) 19.\(e1\) \(x d4\)! 20.\(e2\) \(x c5\) 21.\(g3\) \(x e3\) 22.\(x e3\) \(d2\) 23.a3 \(b8\) and a draw was soon agreed in Razuvaev – Tseshkovsky, Minsk 1979, as well as a few more recent high-level games.

19.\(x d4\) \(x d4\) 20.\(f3\) \(d7\) 21.\(c7\) \(e8\)!?
There is nothing wrong with 21...\(d8\), but Black is determined to break the equilibrium.

22.\(x e7\)

22...\(b8\)!?
Black continues to play for the win. Instead 22...\(d2\) would force a repetition after 23.\(f2\) \(d1\)↑ 24.\(f1\) \(d2\).

23.\(c1\) \(d2\) 24.a3 \(a2\) 25.\(c3\) \(b5\)
Black's activity fully compensates for his small material deficit, and his uncompromising play eventually earned him a full point in the game Akobian – Ni Hua, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have analysed four alternatives to the main line of 8.\(b1\) (coverage of which begins shortly in the next chapter). All of them are decent, but none presents a serious threat to a well-prepared opponent. Both A) 8.\(c4\) and B) 8.\(e2\) allow a quick attack in the centre with an early ...\(c6\) and possibly ...\(g4\), giving Black adequate counterplay. With C) 8.\(h3\) White prevents the latter idea, but spends a valuable tempo in doing so. Finally we checked D) 8.\(b5\)↑ \(c6\), which normally leads to positions in which Black's bishop pair gives him a full share of the chances.
Various 9th Moves

Variation Index

1. d4 əf6 2. c4 g6 3. əc3 d5 4. cxd5 əxd5 5. e4 əxc3 6. bxc3 əg7 7. əf3 c5 8. əb1

8...0–0

A) 9. əc4?! 163
B) 9. əe3 əc6
   B1) 10. əc2 164
   B2) 10. əd2 166
C) 9. əd2 167

A) after 15. gxf3

B1) after 15.0–0

B2) note to 15.0–0

15... əad8N

15... əd7!

16... əfc8N
1. d4 2. c4 g6 3. e3 d5 4. cxd5 exd5 5. e4 cxd3 6. bxc3 g7 7. f3 c5 8. b1

The 8. b1 system is one of the most dangerous at White’s disposal. The rook steps onto an open file while vacating its vulnerable position on the long diagonal.

8...0–0

From this position White’s most important option by far is 9. e2, which will be covered in the next three chapters. Before then we will consider the somewhat offbeat continuations of A) 9. c4?!, B) 9. e3 and C) 9. d2.

A) 9. c4?!

I have already mentioned that the moves f3 and c4 tend not to combine well. That is especially true in the present position, as White has spent a tempo on the move b1 which is of limited value here.

9...c6 10. e3 g4 11. d5

White already has to resort to this artificial-looking move just to keep his centre together. Instead after 11.0–0 cxd4 12. cxd4 d4 13. b7 e3 14. fxe3 a5 15. b4 dxc4 16. xc4 wb6 White was already struggling in Koops – Dragojlovic, Cesenatico 2004.

11...cxd4 12. cxd4 a5† 13. d2 xf3

14. xa5 xxa5 15. gxf3

This was Yamamoto – Rain, Brazil 1995, and here the correct plan would have been:

15...ad8N 16. e2 d7

Intending ...d8 and ...e6 when the d4-pawn will come under heavy fire.

B) 9. e3

This is not a bad move, although it does nothing to facilitate the important task of castling. White also forgoes the option of c1-g5 which can be useful in some positions.

9...c6

Now the main options are B1) 10. e2 and B2) 10. d2.
10. \( \text{b}5 \)
This has been tried a few times.

10... \( \text{g}4 \) 11. \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{bxc}6 \) 12.0-0 \( \text{xd}4 \) 13.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
I prefer not to rush with ...\( \text{xf}3 \).

14. \( \text{d}2 \)
This seems like the best try in an uninspiring position for White.

14.\( \text{h}3 \) 15.\( \text{x}f3 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 16.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{d}4 \)
17.\( \text{b}7 \) \( \text{e}5 \) White was struggling to demonstrate compensation in D. Rosner - Garcia Rojas, e-mail 2001.

14.\( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{x}f3 \) 15.\( \text{gx}f3 \) \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{d} \)
White was already obliged to sacrifice the d4-pawn.

14...\( \text{xf}3 \) 15.\( \text{gx}f3 \) \( \text{ad}8 \) 16.\( \text{fd}1 \) \( \text{h}3 \) 17.\( \text{e}2 \)
Black has the initiative.

**B1) 10.\( \text{e}2 \)**

14. \( \text{hc}1 \)
14.\( \text{c}3! \) \( \text{g}4 \) 15.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{ac}8! \) leaves White in an even more difficult situation, for instance 16.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{x}f3 \) 17.\( \text{x}f3 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) and Black was clearly better in Maly - Yandemirov, Tula 2001.

14...\( \text{xd}4 \) 15.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 16.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{d}4 \)
This position has been reached in a number of games. White has reasonable chances to fight for a draw, but I do not see much point in conducting a detailed investigation of this endgame, as it is obvious that Black has won the opening battle and runs virtually no risk of losing.

12.\( \text{xa}2 \)
Compared with the main line of the 8.\( \text{b}1 \) variation, Black has gained the extra move ...\( \text{c}6 \).
Chapter 13 – Various 9th Moves

13.d5?!  
This seems like the most principled idea, but the position does not justify it.

Objectively speaking, White’s best continuation is 13...c1xd4 14.cxd4 xd4 15.c4 which more or less forces a repetition: 15...a4 16.b5

13...e5 14.e5xe5 e5 15.0-0

13...e5 14.e5xe5 15.0-0

15.d7!  
Just as in many other lines of the Grünfeld, Black should not cling to his extra pawn. By returning it he can dramatically increase the activity of his pieces.

16.xb7

White should regain the pawn while he has the chance.

The slower 16.d3 was played in Stotika – Yandemirov, St Petersburg 2001, and here Black should have taken the time to consolidate with 16...b6N 17.b4 c6 when White’s compensation is questionable.

16.a4 17.e1 b8

We have been following the game J. B. Gonzalez – M. G. Sanchez, corr. 2009. Black is fully mobilized and his passed a-pawn is an important asset. Overall his chances are somewhat higher, although White should still be able to hold the position.
This seems like a more consistent follow-up to the previous move, although Black still has nothing to fear.

10...cxd4 11.cxd4 \(g_4\)

This is the most principled continuation, although 11...wa5 should be good enough to equalize.

12.d5 \(x\)xf3 13.gxf3 \(\mathcal{e}5\) 14.\(\mathcal{e}2\)

If White had time to castle and push his central pawns then he would stand better, but Black's counterplay arrives just in time.

14...\(c8!\)

The queen is heading for h3, while incidentally preparing a knight jump to c4 in case it is needed.

15.0–0

This leads to forced a draw, but it is doubtful that White has anything better.

The risky 15.\(d4\) \(h3\) 16.\(b3\) occurred in Rajkovic – Laketic, Kragujevac 2009. Here Black should have played:

16...\(f4!\) 17.\(f4\) (17.\(f4?\) \(g2\) 18.\(f1\) \(c4\)–+) 17...\(g2\) 18.\(f1\) \(g5!\) 19.\(d2\) \(b6\) White is under serious pressure due to the awkward position of his king.

Another game continued: 15.\(d1\) \(c4\) 16.\(c4\) \(xc4\) 17.\(e2\) \(c3\) 18.\(f1\) \(b6\) 19.\(g2\)

19...\(f5!\) 20.\(b1\) \(e5\) Black had promising counterplay in Rashkovsky – Ghinda, Lvov 1981.
15...\textit{h}3

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board_15.png}
\end{center}

16.\textit{d}1

16.\textit{d}4 \textit{h}6 17.\textit{e}3 is merely a different move repetition, Lacko – Marttala, Stockholm 1983.

16...\textit{xf}3\textdagger 17.\textit{xf}3 \textit{e}5 18.\textit{e}1 \textit{xf}2\textdagger 19.\textit{h}1 \textit{g}3\textdagger=


\section*{C) 9.\textit{d}2}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board_16.png}
\end{center}

I was surprised to find more than 150 games with this move in my database. It is hard to believe that such a move can seriously trouble Black.

9...\textit{g}4 10.\textit{d}5

This has been White’s usual choice, but we will check some other moves as well.

10.\textit{e}2 cxd4 11.cxd4 \textit{xf}3 12.\textit{xf}3 \textit{xd}4 13.\textit{xb}7 \textit{c}6 14.0–0 was seen in Pallnstorfer – Takac, Scharnstein 1999. Now Black has a simple improvement:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board_17.png}
\end{center}

14...\textit{c}8 15.\textit{b}3 \textit{d}8\textdagger Black has a risk-free edge, thanks to the passivity of White’s light-square bishop.

10.\textit{xb}7 \textit{xf}3 11.gxf3 cxd4 12.cxd4 occurred in Kotlyar – E. Klein, New York 1993, and a few other games. Black is not obliged to capture on d4 immediately, and I found a strong novelty:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board_18.png}
\end{center}

12...\textit{c}6\textsuperscript{!}N 13.d5 \textit{d}4 White is in trouble as he cannot defend the f3-pawn with the natural 14.\textit{g}2? in view of the elegant 14...\textit{c}8!
15...\text{\textit{xf}}7 \text{\textit{x}}f3+ 16.\text{\textit{xf}}3 \text{\textit{c}}3 \text{ winning the}
queen.

10...\text{\textit{a}}5 11.\text{\textit{b}}3
Here I like the following idea very much:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 \\
\hline
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

11...\text{\textit{xf}}3 12.\text{\textit{g}}x\text{\textit{f}}3 \text{ c}4!
This excellent positional pawn sacrifice increases Black's influence on the dark squares.

13.\text{\textit{a}}3
13.\text{\textit{x}}c4 \text{ e}8 14.\text{\textit{c}}e2 \text{\textit{d}}7 gives Black
superb compensation, for instance:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 \\
\hline
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

15.0–0 \text{\textit{c}}7 16.\text{\textit{d}}3 \text{\textit{c}}5 17.\text{\textit{a}}3 \text{\textit{e}}5+ White's
extra pawn has no real influence, and Black's
domination of the dark squares offers him fine
prospects.

13...\text{\textit{c}}7
White's rook is misplaced on a3, and it will
take some time for it to find a meaningful role
in the game.

14.\text{\textit{a}}4
I also checked 14.h4 \text{\textit{d}}7 15.h5 b5 16.\text{\textit{c}}e2
a5 17.\text{\textit{g}}5 b4 18.\text{\textit{xb}}4 axb4 when Black's
queenside pawns are a dangerous force.

14...b5 15.\text{\textit{b}}4 \text{ a}5
15...a6 intending ...\text{\textit{d}}7-c5 also looks nice
for Black.

16.\text{\textit{c}}2??
White's opening has not been a success, and
with this move things go from bad to worse.

16...\text{\textit{a}}6–+
White suffered a fatal loss of material in

\textbf{Conclusion}

From the tabiya which occurs after 8.\text{\textit{b}}1
0–0, the three deviations examined in this
chapter only account for around five percent
of all games. This is hardly surprising, as they
all suffer from a drawback of some kind. A)
9.\text{\textit{c}}4?! is just a weak move, after which White
immediately has to struggle for equality. B)
9.\text{\textit{e}}3 is not so bad, but if White wants to
put his bishop on e3 then he does not yet
need his rook on b1, and would be better off
going for the system analysed in Chapter 10.
Finally the quirky C) 9.\text{\textit{d}}2 has been tested
by some strong players, but we saw that logical
development in conjunction with the strong
pawn sacrifice 12...c4! should offer Black a
fine game.
Chapter 14

8. a\b1

11. a\d2

Variation Index

1. d4 \f6 2. c4 g6 3. \c3 d5 4. cxd5 \xd5 5. e4 \xc3 6. bxc3 \g7 7. \f3 c5

8. a\b1 0–0 9. \e2 cxd4 10. \xd4 \a5† 11. \d2

11... \xd2† 12. a\d2 b6

A) 13. \d3

B) 13. \e3

C) 13. d5

D) 13. \c1 \b7
   D1) 14. \d3
   D2) 14. d5

E) 13. 0–0 \b7
   E1) 14. \d3
   E2) 14. d5

---

B) after 16. \h1

D1) after 20. \xf5

E2) note to 16. \e3
1.d4  d6 2.c4  g6 3.  c3  d5 4.exd5  xd5 5.e4  xc3 6.bxc3  g7 7.  f3  c5 8.  b1 0–0 9.  e2

This is overwhelmingly the most important of White’s options on the ninth move.

9...  xd4

Black has tried a variety of alternatives, the two most significant being the solid 9...b6 and the bold 9...c6??, both of which I have used successfully in my own games. However, I have decided to recommend the text move – which incidentally happens to be the main line – based on some important recent developments in some of the critical variations. Though I have not yet had a chance to use this line in my own games, I believe it to be the most promising line at Black’s disposal at the present time.

10.  xd4  a5†

By targeting the a2-pawn, Black highlights one of the drawbacks of the 8.  b1 variation. From here, the critical continuation is the pawn sacrifice 11.  d2  xa2, which will be covered in Chapters 15 and 16. Before that, we need to consider the alternative:

11.  d2

This is less critical than the main line, and it has seldom been seen at grandmaster level in recent years. Nevertheless it is not a bad move; it was popular during the mid-1980s and was once used by Karpov against Kasparov in their 1987 Seville match.
Also interesting is the untested 13...g4?!N 14.d5 e6 when a possible continuation is 15.c4 d7 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.xe6 fxe6 with equality.

14.e3
White has nothing better:

14.0-0?! was played in Kiriakov - Kalod, Olomouc 1999, and here Black could have safely eaten the pawn with 14...xd4N as White will not get much compensation.

The odd-looking 14.ic4 was seen in Mrkvicka - Steffelmaier, e-mail 1989, and here the best way of dealing with the threat of d5 would have been 14...b7N, when Black is at least equal.

14...c6 15.d5 e6 16.b5 a5 17.g5 f6 18.d2?
White should have opted for 18.f4N exd5 19.c7 dxe4 20.xd8 exf3 21.0-0 e6 with a balanced position.

18...exd5 19.xa5

20.d2 bxa5 21.c6 a6 22.xa8 xa8
Despite being the exchange down, Black was clearly better in Novikov - Lputian, Kharkov 1985.

B) 13.e3 e6!

Before developing his bishop Black prevents d4-d5.

14.d3
14.e1?! looks strange, and after 14...b7 15.d3 c6 16.b5 c8 White was already struggling in Maloberti - Migliorini, e-mail 2001.

Also after 14.0-0 b7 15.d3 c6 16.e5 c7 Black was fine in Jezek - Ebeling, corr. 1994.

14...b7 15.e2 c6 16.hc1
Now the following idea looks logical:

16...f6
Alternatively after 16...f6 17.e4 a draw was agreed in Dao Thien Hai - Sasikiran, Esfahan 2005, and indeed the position is balanced.

17.e4 f5!
This thematic move enables Black to fight for the advantage, for instance:
18.e5 h6 19...bc1...ac8 20.h4...af8
Black has the more promising position.

C) 13.d5

13...da6!
In response to White's last move the knight wastes no time moving to within touching distance of the outpost on c5. Depending on how White responds, the knight may even find a home on b4.

14...e3
Another option is:
14...b5...b7 15.0–0...c5 16...fe1 e6!
It makes sense to undermine White's centre while also getting rid of the potentially weak e7-pawn.

17...c4
This position was reached in Cebalo – C. Wagner, Paris 1988, and one subsequent game. On both occasions Black exchanged on d5, but I prefer not to open the e-file for the enemy rook at this stage. Instead I propose:
17...ac8N 18...bc1 h6!
It is useful to take control over the g5-square. Black intends to play ...fd8 next, when White will be virtually forced to capture on e6, after which either recapture will offer Black a promising game.

14...f5!
Not for the first time we see this idea working nicely for Black after the queen trade.

15...c4
White has also tried: 15.e5 f4 16...d4...f5
Black has a good game and in the following encounter White's position went downhill very quickly: 17...c1?!...b4 18...c4...d3† 19...d2?...xc1 20...xc1...fc8 21.d6†...f8
Black was winning in Hertneck – Kasparov, Munich 1994.

15...h8 16.e5

16...f4!
Grabbing important space.
17.\textbf{d2}

Perhaps White should have preferred 17.\textbf{d}4N although after 17...\textbf{b}7 (17...\textbf{f}5?! is also interesting) Black still gets strong pressure against the enemy centre: 18.0-0 \textbf{f}8 19.\textbf{f}8 \textbf{c}7 Here White's only decent idea is 20.\textbf{b}3 \textbf{d}x5 21.\textbf{g}5 \textbf{h}6 22.\textbf{e}6 \textbf{g}5 when he has sufficient compensation to maintain the balance, but not to fight for the advantage.

17...\textbf{c}5 18.\textbf{b}4

18.0-0 runs into 18...\textbf{g}4 19.\textbf{f}e1 \textbf{x}f3 20.\textbf{g}x\textbf{f}3 \textbf{f}5 when White has to fight for equality.

18...\textbf{g}4 19.\textbf{e}6 \textbf{ac}8 20.0-0

We have been following the game Baba - Kaabi, e-mail 2007. At this point I would recommend:

20...\textbf{x}f3N 21.\textbf{x}f3 \textbf{e}5\textbf{f}

The most logical outcome is a draw, but Black has a risk-free position and so he can prolong the fight for a while longer.

\textbf{D) 13.\textbf{e}c1}

13...\textbf{b}7

Now White can choose between \textbf{D1}) 14.\textbf{d}3 and \textbf{D2}) 14.\textbf{d}5.

\textbf{D1}) 14.\textbf{d}3

Now the right response is:

14...\textbf{d}8 15.\textbf{e}c7

15.\textbf{e}3?! is too slow: 15...\textbf{c}6 16.\textbf{d}5 \textbf{b}4!

17.\textbf{b}1 \textbf{a}6 Black already has the initiative,
and after the further 18.\textit{d}4 e6! 19.a3 \textit{d}3 20.\textit{x}d3 \textit{x}d3 21.\textit{c}6 \textit{d}7 he had a serious advantage in Petursson - Conquest, Hastings 1986.

\textbf{18.\textit{d}4 e6!}

With this important move Black prevents \textit{d}4-\textit{d}5 and prepares to challenge the \textit{e}4-pawn with ...\textit{f}6 or ...\textit{f}5.

\textbf{19.\textit{h}3?!}

Strangely enough this is a significant inaccuracy. White should have preferred 19.\textit{c}1N \textit{x}c1 20.\textit{x}c1 \textit{f}6 with an equal position.

\textbf{19...\textit{f}5!}

Suddenly White faces unpleasant problems.

\textbf{20.\textit{e}5}

This position occurred in Gaprindashvili - Roesch, Baden-Baden 1990. In the game Black recaptured with the wrong pawn; the correct choice was:

\textbf{19...\textit{x}d7!}

The rook trade leaves White with virtually no chance of obtaining the advantage.

\textbf{20.\textit{x}d7 \textit{x}d7}

Followed by ...\textit{e}5 with a pleasant positional advantage.

\textbf{D2) 14.\textit{d}5}
14...\textit{a}6!  
Just as in line C above, this knight move proves an effective counter to the d5-advance.

15.g5  
After the soft 15.e3 \textit{e}c8 16.0-0 \textit{b}4 Black already has chances to take over the initiative, which is exactly what happened in the following encounter: 17.a3 \textit{c}2 18.d2 \textit{b}2 19.b1 \textit{a}xa3f Black was simply a pawn up in Kiriakov - Vorobiov, Moscow 1996.

15...\textit{f}c8!  
An important nuance; Black refuses to waste time defending the e7-pawn, and immediately strives for counterplay.

16.0-0  
In the event of 16.xc8f xc8 17.xe7, as occurred in Tschann - E. Schulze, Germany 1995, Black should obviously play:

17...\textit{c}5!N The game might continue 18.a3 \textit{c}5 19.xc5 bxc5 20.d1 \textit{a}2 when Black has the upper hand.

16...\textit{f}8  
Black has emerged from the opening with a comfortable position and can think about striving for the advantage.

17.d2  
17.e5? is a mistake as White's central pawns become unstable: 17...h6 18.h4 g5 19.g3 Now in Pavlovic - Mikhalchishin, Trnava 1988, Black should have improved his knight by means of:

19...\textit{c}5N 20.d6 \textit{e}4! 21.dxe7f \textit{e}xe7 White is worse and will have to fight hard for a draw.

17...\textit{c}5 18.\textit{f}e1
18...\texttt{a}4!
Heading for the attractive c3-square.

19.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{h}6 20.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{xc}3 21.\texttt{xc}3 \texttt{dxc}3 22.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{e}6 23.\texttt{dxe}6 \texttt{fxe}6 24.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{Ed}8

At this point the players agreed a draw in Noble – Ainutdinov, e-mail 2006, but it seems to me that Black is slightly better and could easily have played on without much risk.

E) 13.0–0

13...\texttt{b}7

Once again White can choose between E1) 14.\texttt{d}3 and E2) 14.\texttt{d}5.

E1) 14.\texttt{d}3

14...\texttt{e}6

Again we see this thematic move which is intended to prevent d4-d5.

15.\texttt{f}c1

I doubt that White has anything better.

15.\texttt{a}4 is not dangerous for Black, since after the simple 15...\texttt{c}6 16.\texttt{d}5 exd5 17.exd5, as played in Lion – Belov, Internet 2004, he can reply with:

17...\texttt{d}4N 18.\texttt{x}d4 \texttt{xd}4\texttt{f} White's d-pawn is a significant weakness.

15.\texttt{fd}1 \texttt{c}6 16.\texttt{e}3 (16.\texttt{d}5 exd5 17.exd5 \texttt{e}5 18.\texttt{exe}5 \texttt{exe}5 was equal in Brotherton – Crisci, e-mail 2008.) 16...\texttt{fd}8 17.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{Ed}7 18.\texttt{b}5 \texttt{a}6 19.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xc}6 Black had no problems in Nylen – Moberg, Sweden 2007.
In this position Black prematurely accepted a draw in Beaumont – Gormally, Newport 1997, when in fact he has a strong continuation available:

18...\texttt{e}5!\texttt{N} 19.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{xd}4 20.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{d}e6!\texttt{t}

White has some problems, as his minor pieces are unstable.

\textbf{E2) 14.d5}

This can be considered the main line of the present chapter.

14...\texttt{a}6

This is my first choice, although 14...\texttt{c}8 15.\texttt{fc}1 \texttt{d}7 is a reasonable alternative.

15.\texttt{xa}6

In some games White has preferred:

15.\texttt{fe}1 \texttt{xe}2 16.\texttt{xe}2

I believe the most accurate move is:

16...\texttt{c}8!

16...\texttt{a}6 has been much more popular, but I prefer the rook move which enables Black to defend the \texttt{e}7-pawn in a convenient way.

17.\texttt{g}5

17.\texttt{b}4 can be met by: 17...\texttt{c}7 18.e5 \texttt{a}6 19.d6 \texttt{d}7 20.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{xd}6 21.\texttt{xd}6 (After 21.exd6? \texttt{c}5 White's d-pawn is too weak.) 21...\texttt{e}8 With a balanced position.
17...\texttt{\textsf{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}}8!
This is only possible thanks to Black's previous move.
18.\texttt{\textsf{\texttt{e}}}5 \texttt{h}6 19.\texttt{\textsf{f}}4
This position occurred in Koch - Bakalarz, Germany 1992. At this point Black should have reacted with:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{scope}
\draw[fill=white] (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\end{scope}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

19...\texttt{\textsf{\texttt{c}}}4\texttt{N} 20.\texttt{\textsf{g}}3 \texttt{a}6
I prefer Black's position, due to his active pieces and compact pawn structure.

15...\texttt{\textsf{a}}6\texttt{a}6

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{scope}
\draw[fill=white] (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\end{scope}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

16.\texttt{\textsf{e}}3
In the event of 16.\texttt{\textsf{g}}5, as played in Falkenhagen - Hustert, corr. 1987, Black's simplest reply is 16...\texttt{\textsf{f}}6 17.\texttt{\textsf{e}}3 \texttt{f}5 transposing to the main line below.

Another possibility is:
16.\texttt{\textsf{c}}1 \texttt{f}5!
Once again we see this thematic idea in a queenless position. It works especially well after the exchange of light-squared bishops.
17.\texttt{\textsf{c}}4 \texttt{fxe}4 18.\texttt{\textsf{xe}}4 \texttt{\textsf{f}}6?!
Black avoids 18...\texttt{\textsf{f}}5 19.\texttt{\textsf{xe}}7 \texttt{\texttt{xd}}5 20.\texttt{\textsf{g}}3 which looks rather drawish.
19.\texttt{\textsf{g}}5 \texttt{a}5

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{scope}
\draw[fill=white] (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\end{scope}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20.\texttt{\textsf{xf}}6?
This exchange sacrifice is not completely sound. 20.\texttt{\textsf{ee}}1\texttt{N} was the lesser evil, although White is fighting for equality.
20...\texttt{\textsf{e}}4 21.\texttt{\textsf{xe}}7
This position was reached in Danner - Schigan, Austria 1996, and here Black should have played:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{scope}
\draw[fill=white] (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\end{scope}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

21...\texttt{\textsf{f}}5\texttt{N} 22.\texttt{\textsf{ee}}1 \texttt{a}3 23.\texttt{d}6 \texttt{\texttt{d}}5\texttt{f} White is in trouble.
16...f5!
This move should come as no surprise by now!

17.e5 f4 18.c1
White needs to keep the d-file clear for defending his d5-pawn.

18...a6d8 19.b1 d6 20.d6 exd6 21.exd6
White achieves nothing with 21.a3 e6 22.bxe6 fxe6 23.h4 d7 24.b1 c5 25.bxf8 dxf8 26.h2 g6 when Black has slightly the more comfortable side of equality, Kiriakov – Belov, Ramenskoe 2006.

21...e6!
Strangely this accurate move has only been played once so far.

In most games Black preferred 21...e5 but after the unpleasant 22.g4! Black will have to fight for the draw.

22.b2
I also examined 22.b4 d7 23.e4 c5 24.bxf4 d8 when Black picks up the d6-pawn to reach comfortable equality.

22...c5
I believe this is slightly more accurate than the game continuation of 22...f5 23.xg7 b7 24.d2 e5 25.e1 f6 26.h4 d7 27.h2 h5 28.b3, when Black surprisingly failed to hold this roughly balanced position in Ernst – Nijboer, Dieren 2002.

23.xg7 b7 24.b4
24...\textit{f5}!
This is the thematic way to activate the rook.

25.d4
25.bd4 can be met by 25...d7 when White has no way to improve his position.

25...f6 26.b5 d7 27.f7

The position is equal.

\textbf{Conclusion}

After the standard sequence of 9.e2 cxd4 10.cxd4 a5† there is no doubt that 11.d2 (coverage of which begins in the next chapter) is White's most challenging continuation, but our present subject of 11.d2 is certainly not a move which should be underestimated. After 11...xd2† 12.xd2 b6 Black should be able to generate sufficient play against the enemy pawn centre, using a number of thematic ideas which have featured throughout this and other chapters. Depending on the specific features of the position, Black's ideas will include:

\begin{itemize}
    \item a) Playing an early ...e6 in order to inhibit the advance of the enemy d-pawn, followed by moves such as ...d8 and ...c6 to attack it.
    \item b) If White plays an early d4-d5, then the a6-square becomes an excellent location for Black's knight. It can go there either immediately or, in the case of variation E2, after a preliminary bishop exchange on a6.
    \item c) Finally, the undermining move ...f5 is an important theme in this and many other Grünfeld positions in which the queens have been exchanged.
\end{itemize}
8. \textit{\textbf{\textit{b1}}}

11. \textit{\textbf{\textit{d2}}} \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textit{wxa2}}} – Introduction and other 13th Moves}

\textbf{Variation Index}

1. d4 \textit{f6} 2. c4 \textit{g6} 3. \textit{\textit{c3}} \textit{d5} 4. \textit{cxd5} \textit{\textit{cxd5}} 5. e4 \textit{\textit{xc3}} 6. bxc3 \textit{\textit{g7}} 7. \textit{\textit{f3}} \textit{c5}

8. \textit{\textbf{\textit{b1}}} 0–0 9. \textit{\textit{\textit{e2}}} \textit{cxd4} 10. \textit{cxd4} \textit{wa5}† 11. \textit{\textit{d2}}

11... \textit{\textbf{\textit{wxa2}}} 12.0–0 \textit{\textit{g4}}

A) 13. \textit{\textit{\textit{xb7}}} \textit{\textit{xf3}} 14. \textit{\textit{xf3}} \textit{\textit{xd4}}

A1) 15. e5

A2) 15. \textit{\textit{b4}}

B) 13. \textit{\textit{e3}} \textit{\textit{c6}}

B1) 14. \textit{\textit{xb7}} \textit{\textit{aab8}}

B11) 15. \textit{\textit{xb8}} \textit{\textit{xb8}}

B12) 15. \textit{\textit{c7}}

B2) 14. d5 \textit{\textit{a5}}

B21) 15. \textit{\textit{c5}}

B22) 15. \textit{\textit{g5}}

\begin{itemize}
  \item A) note to 14... \textit{\textit{xd4}}
  \item B21) note to 16.e5
  \item B22) after 25. \textit{\textit{d3}}
\end{itemize}
1.d4 ��f6 2.c4 ��g6 3.��c3 ��d5 4.cxd5 ��xd5 5.e4 ��xc3 6.bxc3 ��g7 7.��f3 ��c5 8.��b1 0–0 9.��e2 ��xd4 10.��xd4 ��a5+t 11.��d2

11...��xa2

Black bags a pawn, while also making his now passed a-pawn into a serious long-term asset. On the other hand his queen manoeuvre has taken up valuable time, and White enjoys a healthy lead in development and a mobile pawn centre as compensation.

As I explained at the start of the previous chapter, I have never employed this system with Black in my own games, although I have faced it successfully from White's side. I decided to recommend it because it is the reason why the entire 8.��b1 system has been virtually abandoned at the top level, ever since a particularly important discovery which can be found in line B22 of the present chapter.

12.0–0

12.��c1 is not a serious alternative, as after 12...��g4 (if Black wishes to play for a win then 12...��c6 keeps the game going) White has nothing better than 13.��c4 ��a4 14.��b5 ��a2 15.��c4 repeating the position, as has occurred in a few games.

12...��g4

Black has tried numerous alternatives, but this logical developing move is widely regarded as the most reliable option. White's most frequent reply has been 13.��g5, which has developed a large body of theory and will therefore receive dedicated coverage in Chapter 16. The present chapter will focus primarily on the important alternatives of A) 13.��xb7 and B) 13.��e3. The second is especially important as it was the weapon of choice of many top players before a new discovery altered the evaluation. Before exploring these moves in detail, let's first check a few rare sidelines.

13.��b4 ��c6 14.��c5 ��b6 15.��a1 ��e6 16.d5 was Livecchi – Terreni, Palermo 2000:

And now after 16...��f6+N Black wins material.
Chapter 15 - 11.d2 wxa2 - Introduction and other 13th Moves

13.e1 w6 14.Qg5 Qxe2 15.Qxe2 Qd7
16.Qc3 This was Bernabe Duran - Olivera Gutierrez, Oviedo 2000. Now instead of taking the d-pawn immediately, Black should have preferred 16...Qc6N with the better chances.

13.Qc3 Qxf3 (13...Qc8 is also fine) 14.gxf3 (If 14.Qxf3 Qc6 Black has strong pressure in the centre.) 14...Qc8 15.e1 w6 16.d5 Qd6
17.Qxg7 wxc7

This was Panush - Vorontsov, Serpukhov 2003, and now after the accurate 19...Qxc7 20.wxa7 wxb2! Black has the better chances.

13.d5

This is the only sideline of any real significance.

13...Qa6!

This simple and strong idea should give Black a good game.

14.Qxb7 Qc5

White captures a pawn, but Black can immediately do the same thing in return:

13.Qxf3 14.Qxf3 Qxd4

A well-prepared Grünfeld player should have a relatively easy life from here. White’s two main options are A1) 15.e5 and A2) 15.Qb4.

15.Qg5?!
This has seldom been seen, and looks rather risky for White.

15...e5 16.\texttt{Cc}1 \texttt{Da}6

It will not be easy for White to obtain compensation for the pawn.

17.\texttt{Cc}7?

A better try was 17.\texttt{Ff}6N \texttt{Ee}6 18.\texttt{Gg}5 \texttt{Cc}6

19.\texttt{Dd}7 \texttt{Cc}5 20.\texttt{Dd}5 when White has good chances to hold.

The present position was reached in Matthiesen – Antonsen, Silkeborg 2009. At this point Black should have played:

17...\texttt{Ff}b8!N

Exchanging the opponent’s best piece.

18.\texttt{Xb}8+ \texttt{Xb}8+

Black retains a healthy extra pawn.

\textbf{A1) 15.e5}

15...\texttt{Da}6

Theory and practice have demonstrated that Black should have no problems here.

16.\texttt{Xe}7

Other moves also fail to threaten Black:

After: 16.\texttt{Gg}5 \texttt{Ee}d\texttt{d}8 17.\texttt{Cc}b1 \texttt{Wx}b1 18.\texttt{Xb}x\texttt{b}1

(the alternative 18.\texttt{Xf}xb1N \texttt{Cc}5 leads to equality after both 19.\texttt{Xe}7 \texttt{Xb}8= and 19.\texttt{Dd}7b4 \texttt{Ee}c8 20.\texttt{Xx}e7 \texttt{Cc}d3=) 18...\texttt{Xb}8 19.\texttt{Xx}e7 \texttt{Xb}1 20.\texttt{Xx}b1 \texttt{Ee}8 it was White who had to think about equalizing in Haroutjunian – Davtian, Yerevan 1996.

16.\texttt{Cc}3 \texttt{Xx}e3 17.\texttt{Xxe}3 \texttt{Ee}d\texttt{d}8 18.\texttt{Cc}1 \texttt{Xx}a1 19.\texttt{Xxa}1 \texttt{Cc}5 20.\texttt{Xxe}7 It is obvious that Black should have no problem holding this endgame; the clearest path seems to be 20...\texttt{Ff}e8 21.\texttt{Xxa}7 \texttt{Xxe}7 22.\texttt{Xxe}7 \texttt{Cc}8 23.\texttt{Ee}7 \texttt{Ee}8 24.\texttt{Dd}5 \texttt{Cc}7 when a draw was agreed in Kerkvliet – Rodriguez, e-mail 2000.

16.\texttt{Xad}8 17.\texttt{Cc}2

The alternatives are unimpressive, for instance:

17.\texttt{Cc}1 \texttt{Cc}5 18.\texttt{Cc}3 \texttt{Dd}3

There is also nothing wrong with the solid 18...\texttt{Cc}6.

19.\texttt{Cc}2
Chapter 15 - 11.\d2 \wxa2 - Introduction and other 13th Moves

18.\g5 \wxe2 19.\exe2 \exe7 20.\exe7 \c7
21.\xd8 \xd8

The endgame was level in Cech – Konopka, Czech Republic 2005.

A2) 15.\b4

15...\d8

In my opinion this is a much easier solution than 15...\c6.

16.\c1

The next two moves look pretty forced.

16...\a6 17.\exe7 \ac8

17...\c5

In one game Black played 17...\fe8, which also seems perfectly adequate.

18.\f4
This was White's choice in all five games in which this position appeared. A queen exchange gives White nothing: 18.\texttt{Wb1 \texttt{Wxb1} 19.\texttt{Fxb1 Wb8} 20.\texttt{Ed7 Cc5} 21.\texttt{Exd4 Wxe4} =}

18...\texttt{Cc5} 19.\texttt{Xxd8} 
19.\texttt{Wxc5 Xxc5} 20.\texttt{Wg4 Ec6} is absolutely equal, for instance 21.e5 \texttt{Ed2} 22.\texttt{Wh6 Ed8} and here White found nothing better than a repetition with 23.\texttt{Wf4 Ed2} 24.\texttt{Wh6} in Petzold – Krueger, corr. 2004.

19...\texttt{Xxb7} 20.\texttt{Af6} \texttt{Xxf6} 21.\texttt{Wxf6}

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\caption{Chess board with moves highlighted.}
\end{figure}
\end{center}

21...\texttt{We6} 
This is the most accurate route to equality.

22.\texttt{Wd4 Wb6} 23.\texttt{Xxb6 axb6}

The endgame was balanced in Ding – Negi, Subic Bay 2009.

B) 13.\texttt{Ce3}

Until a few years ago this was considered one of the most dangerous lines at White's disposal, and was the first choice of some leading experts, most notably Boris Gelfand. Later in the chapter we will see how a discovery in 2006 caused a re-evaluation of the entire variation.

13...\texttt{Cc6} 

From this position White has two options. 

B1) 14.\texttt{Xxb7} is harmless according to current theory, but there are a number of lines that need to be studied. The main line is B2) 14.\texttt{d5}.

14...\texttt{Eab8}

As said, present theory considers this line harmless for Black, but there are some lines that need to be studied and memorized.

B1) 14.\texttt{Xxb7}

Black should begin by challenging his opponent's active rook. White can choose between B11) 15.\texttt{Xxb8} and B12) 15.\texttt{Cc7}.

B11) 15.\texttt{Xxb8 Xxb8} 

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\caption{Chess board with moves highlighted.}
\end{figure}
\end{center}
16.h3

Obviously 16.d5 \( \text{Qe}5 \) cannot promise White much, for instance: 17.\( \text{Qd}2 \text{ xe}2 \) 18.\( \text{Wxe}2 \text{ a}5 \) (I also like 18...\( \text{Wxa}3 \text{N} \) 19.\( \text{f}4 \text{ Qd}3= \)) 19.\( \text{Cc}1 \) a4 Black has a nice position, though after 20.\( \text{Wxa}6 \) White's well-timed counterplay was enough to maintain the balance in N. White - Normando, e-mail 2006.

16...\( \text{fx}3 \) 17.\( \text{xf}3 \) e6!?

With this move Black anticipates the d5-push, which would otherwise have left him with a potentially weak pawn on e7.

I must stress that Black also has the option of 17...\( \text{Qxd}8 \) transposing directly to line B12 below, the only difference being in the move numbering. From a practical perspective this option may well be the better choice, as it enables the reader to learn one line instead of two. Nevertheless I decided to provide coverage of the text move in order to demonstrate some of the interesting developments which may occur, and I will leave it to the reader to decide which option he prefers.

Before moving on, it is worth pointing out that 17...\( \text{Qxd}4?? \) 18.\( \text{Qxd}4 \text{ Qd}8 \) does not work due to 19.\( \text{Wxa}1++ \).

Another option is:

18.e5 \( \text{Qe}7 \text{N} \)

This is my new idea, which seems like the most natural choice to me. The knight is heading for f5, from where it can eliminate White's dark-squared bishop.

In the only practical encounter Black opted for 18...\( \text{Qb}4 \) 19.\( \text{Wxa}1 \) a6, Drummond - Berkley, e-mail 2001. Black's position should be tenable, but his defensive task might be unpleasant.

19.\( \text{Wxa}1 \)

This is the only reasonable idea for White.

19...\( \text{Qxa}1 \)

In the event of 19...\( \text{b}2? \) 20.\( \text{Wxa}2 \text{ Qxa}2 \) 21.\( \text{Qb}1! \) Black experiences definite problems.

20.\( \text{Qxa}1 \) \( \text{Qf}5 \)

In return for the sacrificed pawn, Black ensures a transition to an opposite-coloured bishop endgame which should be easy to hold.

21.\( \text{Wxa}7 \)
21...h5!? 
It is hard to believe that White has any real winning chances after the primitive 21...\( \text{dxe} \) 22.fxe3 \( \text{h}6 \) 23.\( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{b}2 \). Nevertheless the text move seems slightly more accurate as it secures the future of Black's dark-squared bishop on the c1-h6 diagonal. Another obvious point is that any g4-advance will lead to a pawn exchange which will bring the game closer to a draw. Here is an illustrative line:
\[
22.\text{e}4 \text{e}3 23.\text{f}xe3 \text{b}3 24.\text{d}5 \text{e}5 25.\text{d}xe6 \text{f}xe6 26.\text{f}2 \text{g}5
\]
The position is equal.

18...\text{e}5 19.\text{g}5 
In the event of 19..dxe6N it is important to insert the minor piece exchange: 19...\( \text{xf}3 \)†! (In ChessBase Magazine 66 Ftacnik gave 19..f6x6?! 20.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{a}3 \) as equal, but in fact the position after 21.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{b}2 \) 22.\( \text{c}7 \)! is extremely unpleasant for Black.) 20.\( \text{xf}3 \) fxe6= Black has nothing to worry about, but this is still probably White's best option.

19...h6! 
Thanks to this accurate move Black will not have to worry about his back rank.

20.\text{e}7 \text{b}2 
Also 20...\( \text{xd}5 \) 21.\( \text{xd}5 \) \text{b}2 22.\( \text{e}4 \) \text{d}2 was sufficient to maintain the balance, as indicated by Ftacnik.

21.d6 
Less challenging is 21.dxe6?! \( \text{f}xe6 \)† when the passed a-pawn could cause a serious headache for White.

21...\text{d}2 22.\text{b}1 

22...\text{a}4! 
Black correctly assesses that his strong knight will restrain White's seemingly dangerous pawn, while it is not so clear how White should handle the a-pawn.

Black could have reached an easy draw by means of 22..\( \text{xb}1 \) 23.\( \text{xb}1 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 24.\( \text{b}8 \)† \( \text{h}7 \) 25.\( \text{b}7 \) \( \text{xd}6 \) 26.\( \text{xd}6 \) \text{x}d6 as pointed out by Ftacnik.

23.\text{b}8†? 
A mistake in a difficult situation. The only way to maintain the balance was 23.\( \text{e}1 \)N after which Black has several satisfactory responses including 23...\( \text{d}4 \), 23...\( \text{a}2 \), 23...\( \text{d}4 \) and 23...\( \text{xf}3 \)† 24.\( \text{xd}3 \) \( \text{d}4 \). Each of these moves is fine, but none of them promises any more than an equal game after correct play.
23...\texttt{h7} 24.\texttt{\textit{c7} \textit{d4+}}

Black had the more dangerous passed pawn and the safer king in Wells - Rowson, London 1998.

\begin{center}
B12) 15.\textit{c7}
\end{center}

15...\texttt{\textit{f8} 16.\texttt{\textit{f6}$^\text{+}$ \textit{xc8}}

Compared with the previous variation, the position of the black rook on c8 instead of b8 leads to some differences, although the overall evaluation remains similar.

17.\texttt{h3}

One game continued: 17.\texttt{\textit{e1} \textit{\textit{f4} 18.h3}}

This was Schandorff - Akesson, Skaenning 1998. At this point there is no need for Black to trade his light-squared bishop, and instead he should prefer 18...\texttt{\textit{d7N} 19.\textit{wa1} \textit{a5} with a balanced game.

17...\texttt{xf3} 18.\texttt{\textit{xf3} \textit{d8!}}

This is a key move in this line, which forces White to advance his d-pawn. Compared with line B11 above, the slower 18...\texttt{e6} is less attractive when the black rook does not have a clear view of an open file.

19.d5 \texttt{\textit{e5} 20.\textit{c1}}

20.\texttt{\textit{g5} \textit{f6!}} This is often a strong positional idea, as the doubled pawns will not be weak.

21.\texttt{x\textit{f6} exf6} Thanks to the structural change, White's e-pawn finds itself restrained. 22.\texttt{\textit{d4} \textit{b8}} Black has no problems and he even gained the better chances after 23.\texttt{\textit{d1} \textit{b2} 24.\texttt{\textit{a4} \textit{a5}^+}} in Chernin - Stohl, Hungary 1998.

20...\texttt{\textit{c4} 21.\texttt{\textit{g5} \textit{e8} 22.\textit{e1}}

22...\texttt{e6}

Black can also consider the more double-edged 22...\texttt{a5?! as in Hedlund - Cipolli, corr. 2002.}

23.\texttt{\textit{e2} \textit{b3} 24.\texttt{dxe6 \textit{xe6} 25.\textit{c2} \textit{d6}}}

26.\texttt{\textit{c6}}

26...\texttt{h5! 27.\textit{e3}}
Black had no problems and the players agreed a draw in Khalifman – Stohl, Germany 1997.

B2) 14.d5

14...\(\text{d}a5\)

We have reached a serious tabiya, from which a considerable number of games have been contested between high-level grandmasters. White’s two main options are B21) 15.\(\text{c}5\) and B22) 15.\(\text{g}5\).

15.\(\text{b}4\) has occurred in a few games. The logical 15...\(\text{b}6\) 16.e5 was played in Bolduc – Barbeau, Montreal 2006, and now Black has a simple solution:

16.e5

Another idea is the thematic rook lift:

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

This not only threatens \(\text{a}4\) but also prepares e4-e5, hitting the g4-bishop along the fourth rank.

16...\(\text{f}c8\) 17.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{b}3\) 18.\(\text{x}a5\)

20.\(\text{x}a8\) \(\text{x}a8\) Black’s chances are better as his connected queenside pawns might tell in the long term.
18...\texttt{\textbf{W}}xd1
Black can even try 18...\texttt{\textbf{W}}c3!?N 19.\texttt{\textbf{W}}xa7 \texttt{\textbf{W}}xc5 20.\texttt{\textbf{R}}xb7 \texttt{\textbf{B}}a2 when he should hold easily.
19.\texttt{\textbf{R}}xd1 b6 20.\texttt{\textbf{B}}xe7 \texttt{\textbf{B}}xe7 21.\texttt{\textbf{R}}a2
21...a5 22.\texttt{\textbf{B}}b1
This position occurred in Tanggaard - Cu. Hansen, corr. 1998, and here I like the following active idea:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\t\node at (0,0) {
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

22...a4!N
White's best response is:
23.\texttt{\textbf{B}}b5 \texttt{\textbf{W}}xf3 24.gxf3 a3 25.\texttt{\textbf{B}}c6
After 25.e5 \texttt{\textbf{B}}c3! 26.f4 \texttt{\textbf{B}}c5 Black is out of danger.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\t\node at (0,0) {
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

25...\texttt{\textbf{B}}xc6! 26.dxc6 \texttt{\textbf{B}}c5
The c6-pawn will soon perish, so Black is absolutely safe.

16...\texttt{\textbf{R}}xe5 17.\texttt{\textbf{B}}b4

17.h3 \texttt{\textbf{R}}xf3 18.\texttt{\textbf{R}}xf3 \texttt{\textbf{B}}ae8 19.\texttt{\textbf{B}}e1 was seen in Rodriguez – Mueller, e-mail 2002. Here I propose the natural improvement 19...\texttt{\textbf{Q}}c4N 20.\texttt{\textbf{R}}xb7 \texttt{\textbf{D}}d6 21.\texttt{\textbf{R}}xa7 \texttt{\textbf{D}}d2 with full equality.

17...\texttt{\textbf{R}}xf3 18.\texttt{\textbf{R}}xf3
From this position Peter Leko demonstrated a clear path to equality in two different games.

18...\texttt{\textbf{B}}ae8! 19.\texttt{\textbf{R}}xa7 b5
Defending against \texttt{\textbf{B}}a4.

20.\texttt{\textbf{B}}e2
The first encounter continued 20.\texttt{\textbf{R}}xb5 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}c4 21.\texttt{\textbf{B}}e2 \texttt{\textbf{W}}xa7 22.\texttt{\textbf{R}}xc4 \texttt{\textbf{B}}c8 when the position was marginally more pleasant for Black, although White held it easily enough in Krasenkow – Leko, Madrid 1998.
20...\textit{W}xe2 21.\textit{W}xe2 \textit{D}c4
White's 'improvement' has brought him very little.

22.\textit{A}c5 \textit{D}d6 23.\textit{A}xb5 \textit{B}b8 24.\textit{A}c6 \textit{B}xb4
25.\textit{A}xb4 \textit{B}b8
The position is equal and the players soon agreed a draw in Van Wely – Leko, Tilburg 1998.

B22) 15.\textit{A}g5

For a time this was considered one of the most challenging lines of the entire 8.\textit{A}b1 system, but according to current theory it has been rendered harmless by the following idea:

15...b6!
This is Black's latest word in this line, and one of the key factors in my decision to recommend the scheme beginning with 9...cxd4.

The main move used to be 15...\textit{W}a3, after which 16.\textit{W}e1 reaches an extremely complex position from which I once won a nice game with the white pieces: 16...b6 17.e5 \textit{B}ad8 18.d6 exd6 19.\textit{D}xd8 \textit{B}xd8 20.\textit{D}g5! \textit{D}f5 21.\textit{D}c1+ Avrukh – Ruck, Gothenburg 2005. Later Black managed to find some improvements, nevertheless the text move has taken over as his clear first choice.

16.\textit{W}xe7 \textit{B}fe8 17.d6 \textit{D}c6 18.\textit{A}b5
White's latest attempt here was:
18.\textit{D}c1 \textit{W}xe2 19.\textit{W}xc6 \textit{B}ec8! 20.\textit{D}d5 \textit{D}e6

21.\textit{D}b7
In the event of 21.\textit{D}d1 \textit{W}xd1 22.\textit{D}fxd1 Black can block his opponent's passed pawn with 22...\textit{D}d7! followed by advancing his own queenside pawns. This type of position might easily become dangerous for White.
21...\textit{B}cb8 22.\textit{D}c6 \textit{B}c8 23.\textit{D}a4?
White should have settled for a repetition with 23.\textit{D}b7.
23...\textit{D}c2! 24.\textit{D}xc2 \textit{D}xc2 25.e5 \textit{D}d7
The white position is still not so bad, but over the next few moves he goes further astray.
26.\textit{D}e1?! \textit{D}c4 27.f4 b5 28.\textit{D}b2 a5±
Bacrot – Svidler, Marseille 2010.
18...\[\text{Dxe7!}\]

This sacrifice is the key idea which justifies Black's 15th move. It has been played twice against Boris Gelfand, the world's leading expert on the white side of these positions. In order to demonstrate the validity of Black's concept, I need only mention that Boris scored just half a point from these two games, and has since abandoned 8.E!:b1 entirely.

19.h3

The first game continued: 19...\text{Exe8} 20.dxe7

20...\text{Wxa3!} (Necessary prophylaxis, since 20...\text{Exe7?!} runs into the unpleasant 21.W:d8\text{f} 22.a1.) 21.h3 \text{xf3} 22.W:xf3 \text{xf3} 23.gxf3 \text{Ee7=} The players soon agreed a draw in Gelfand – Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2006. Black is in no danger as he can restrain his opponent's pawns with a subsequent ...\text{e5 and, if necessary, ...g5.}

19...\text{xf3} 20.W:xf3

This was Gelfand's attempted improvement. Once again Black must give up the exchange, but we will see that his compensation is entirely adequate.

20...\text{e6} 21.W:xe8 \text{Exe8} 22.dxe7 \text{Ee7}

Black's powerful bishop and connected passed pawns give him a full share of the chances.

23.W:fe1 \text{d4} 24.W:bd1 \text{e5} 25.W:d3

25...\text{Ec7?!}

25...a5 led to an eventual victory for Black in Gelfand – Shirov, Odessa 2007, but I consider the immediate rook activation to be a slight improvement.

26.W:ed1 \text{Ec4} 27.W:e2 b5

Black's chances are not worse in this double-edged position.

Conclusion

The variation beginning with the moves 11.W:d2 \text{xa2} 12.0-0 is one of the richest battlegrounds in all of chess theory, and can lead to fantastically complex play. Several different lines have jumped in and out of fashion over the years, as players on both sides struggled to navigate the complications. In the year 2011 the scheme beginning with 12...\text{g4} has become established as the clear front-runner, in connection with the line B22) 15.W:g5 b6! leading to a promising exchange sacrifice for Black. At the time of writing this plan has defied all of White's attempts to fight for an advantage, and is responsible for the widespread decline of the 8.Eb1 system.
Variation Index

1. d4 ćf6 2. c4 g6 3. ćc3 d5 4. cxd5 ćxd5 5. e4 ćxc3 6. bxc3 ćg7 7. ćf3 ćc6 8. ćb1 0–0 9. će2 cxd4 10. cxd4 ća5† 11. ćd2 ćxa2 12. 0–0 ćg4 13. ćg5

A) 14. ćxe7
B) 14. ćh4
C) 14. će3 ćc6
   C1) 15. ćxb7
   C2) 15. d5

A) after 16. ćc5

C1) note to 17...ćd7

C1) after 26. ćd1

16...ćxc5N

22...ćxf3†N

26...će2N†
Chapter 16 – 13.\(g5\)

1.\(d4\) \(\text{dxf6}\) 2.\(c4\) \(g6\) 3.\(\text{c3}\) \(d5\) 4.\(\text{cxd5}\) \(\text{exd5}\) 5.\(e4\) \(\text{exf3}\) 6.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{dxc3}\) 7.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{c5}\) 8.\(\text{b1}\) 0-0

10.\(\text{a5}\) 11.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{a4}\) 12.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{d4}\) 13.\(\text{g5}\)

This natural move has been White's most popular choice.

13.\(\text{h6}\)

We have reached our first crossroads, where White can choose between A) 14.\(\text{exe7}\), B) 14.\(\text{h4}\) and C) 14.\(\text{e3}\). The first is harmless but the other two demand careful study.

A) 14.\(\text{exe7}\)

This was once used by Kramnik but it should not trouble Black.

14.\(\text{e8}\) 15.\(\text{xb7}\)

15.\(\text{d7?!}\)

I rather like this rare move, although the more common 15...\(\text{c6}\) is also quite reliable, as shown in the game Kramnik – Kasparov, Novgorod 1994.

16.\(\text{c5}\)

Another encounter continued 16.\(\text{b4}\) \(\text{exe4}\)

17.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{xf3}\) 18.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{exe4}\) 19.\(\text{c1}\) \(\text{e5}\) when Black was a pawn up for very little, Hultin – Ernst, Gausdal 1991.

The present position was reached in Tolkmitt – Schwenck, corr. 1997. Here I like the following simple idea:

16...\(\text{xc5}\) 17.\(\text{dxc5}\) \(\text{ead8}\)

From here I have only found one reasonable response for White.

18.\(\text{e7?!}\)

Obviously after 18.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{exe4}\) 19.\(\text{xb3}\) \(\text{exe4}\) White will have to fight for a draw.

18...\(\text{xd1}\) 19.\(\text{exe8}\) \(\text{eh7}\) 20.\(\text{xd1}\)

White has a slight material advantage, but after the next accurate move it becomes clear that Black is at least equal.

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

Black will soon capture the c-pawn and will shortly thereafter start advancing his a-pawn.
Analysis and tournament practice have established this as the right direction.

14...g5!

This has only occurred in a few games, but it came under the spotlight when Anand used it against Kramnik in 2009.

For a long time 17...f5 was considered Black's main continuation, but to me it seems rather shaky due to the following line: 18...e5! fxe4 19...exf3 20...c4! a3 21...e1 Shulman – Votava, Pardubice 1999. Although Black drew

18...c7

White's hopes are mainly connected with this move, although the following alternative is not bad:

18.d6

I analysed this idea myself, before discovering that it had been played in a correspondence game.

18...xf3 19...xf3

Dubious is 19.gxf3?! d4 20...d3 e5! when White will lose his d-pawn.

19...a6 20...b1 e5

21.d1

21.d7 xg3 22.hxg3 e5 23...d1 c6 24...xa7 xxd7 reaches the same position.
Chapter 16 – 13.\( \texttt{g5} \)

21...\( \texttt{xg3} \) 22.\( \texttt{hxg3} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 23.\( \texttt{d7} \) \( \texttt{c6} \) 24.\( \texttt{xa7} \) \( \texttt{xd7} \)

White's last chance to cause problems is:

25.\( \texttt{xd7} \) \( \texttt{xd7} \) 26.\( \texttt{e5} \)

But Black has an easy solution.

26 ... \( \texttt{b6} \)= 27.\( \texttt{xb6} \) \( \texttt{xb6} \) 28.\( \texttt{h5} \)

A draw was agreed in Zeihser – Aleksandrov, corr. 2010.

20.\( \texttt{dxc6} \)!

The queen sacrifice is interesting, but Black manages to keep everything under control.

It is important to point out the line 20.\( \texttt{d6N} \) \( \texttt{a6} \)! 21.\( \texttt{b1} \) \( \texttt{d4} \) when Black is doing fine, with ...\( \texttt{e5} \) coming next.

20.\( \texttt{b1} \)!

This was White's choice in the most recent game to reach the position.

20 ... \( \texttt{xb1} \) 21.\( \texttt{fxb1} \)

18...\( \texttt{xf3} \)!

This was Anand's new approach, which has rehabilitated the 17...\( \texttt{e6} \) line for Black. Previously 18...\( \texttt{exd5} \) had been seen, but after 19.\( \texttt{xd8} \) \( \texttt{xd8} \) 20.\( \texttt{exd5} \) \( \texttt{xd5} \) 21.\( \texttt{f1} \)! Black was suffering in Lechtynski – Mankeyev, Olomouc 2007.

19.\( \texttt{xf3} \) \( \texttt{e7} \)

21.\( \texttt{c8} \)!

In the game Black blundered with

21 ... \( \texttt{exd5?} \) 22.\( \texttt{g4} \) f5 23.\( \texttt{xf5} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) 24.\( \texttt{xd5} \) \( \texttt{xf5} \) 25.\( \texttt{xc6} \) \( \texttt{e6} \) 26.\( \texttt{b8} \) \( \texttt{h7} \) 27.\( \texttt{d6} \)!

and White won easily, Gareev – Bykhovsky, Berkeley 2011.

22.\( \texttt{g3} \)

22.\( \texttt{d6} \) \( \texttt{e5} \)
Black has no problems in the endgame.

20...\texttt{Exd1} 21.\texttt{Exd1}

21...\texttt{Ec2} 22.\texttt{Ed6} g4!

This important resource diverts the bishop away from the h1-a8 diagonal.

23.\texttt{Exg4} \texttt{Wxc6} 24.\texttt{Ec7} \texttt{Wb6}

25.\texttt{Ed7}!

Without this White would simply be worse.

25...\texttt{Ed8}

This was certainly the safest practical decision. In the event of 25...\texttt{Ec8} 26.?h5 the position is dangerous for both sides, although ultimately it should still be balanced.

26.\texttt{Ec7} \texttt{Exd7} 27.\texttt{Exb6} \texttt{Exd1}↓ 28.\texttt{Exd1} \texttt{axb6} 29.\texttt{Ef1}

A draw was agreed in Kramnik – Anand, Moscow 2009.

C) 14.\texttt{Ec3}

The position is the same as in variation B of the previous chapter, except that Black's pawn is on h6 instead of h7, which could potentially benefit either player. The pawn move may have loosened the black kingside, but on the other hand White does not have the use of the g5-square for his pieces.

14...\texttt{Ec6}

Once again White can choose between C1) 15.\texttt{Exb7} and C2) 15.\texttt{d5}.

C1) 15.\texttt{Exb7}

Here we should play by analogy with line B1 of the previous chapter.

15...\texttt{Wxb8} 16.\texttt{Exb8}

The alternative is 16.\texttt{Ec7} \texttt{Wc8} 17.\texttt{Exc8}↓ \texttt{Exc8} 18.h3 \texttt{Exf3} 19.\texttt{Exf3} transposing to the note to Black's 17th move below.
16...\texttt{b8} 17.\texttt{h3}

17.d5 \texttt{e5} 18.\texttt{h3} is unimpressive, despite having yielded two victories for White from two games. Black should play 18...\texttt{x}f3 19.\texttt{x}f3 as in Bouma – Erkens, corr. 2004, and now after the simple 19...\texttt{a5}N White will have to worry about the strong pawn.

20...\texttt{a5}

After the inaccurate 20...\texttt{h7}?! 21.\texttt{c7} \texttt{d7} 22.\texttt{c8} \texttt{c4} 23.\texttt{e8}! White obtained a serious advantage in Gelfand – Kamsky, Dos Hermanas 1995.

However, Black could consider 21...\texttt{c4}??N with the possible continuation: 22.\texttt{x}h6 \texttt{hxh6} 23.\texttt{xe}h6 \texttt{d}d2 24.\texttt{e}d1 (24.\texttt{e}e1 should be met by 24...\texttt{x}b8 when Black has enough counterplay) 24...\texttt{x}f3† 25.\texttt{x}f3 \texttt{e}e2 26.\texttt{b}a1 \texttt{x}f3 27.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{xe}3 28.\texttt{xe}3 \texttt{d}d7 29.\texttt{a}a6 \texttt{f}5 30.\texttt{x}g6† \texttt{f}f7 31.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{d}d5 32.\texttt{e}e5 The endgame is an easy draw.

21.\texttt{c7} \texttt{e}e8 22.\texttt{f}4

This position was reached in Arun Prasad – Negi, Nagpur 2008, and here I found an improvement:

22...\texttt{x}f3†N 23.\texttt{gx}f3 \texttt{b}b3 24.\texttt{g}g2 \texttt{a}4 25.\texttt{d}d7 \texttt{a}8 26.\texttt{xe}7 \texttt{a}3 27.\texttt{d}6

After 27.\texttt{e}e5 \texttt{a}2 28.\texttt{x}g7 \texttt{x}g7 29.\texttt{e}5† \texttt{g}g8\texttt{f} Black is at least not worse as his a-pawn is powerful.

27...\texttt{b}8

Black should make an easy draw here.

18.d5

The tame 18.\texttt{d}3?! was played in San Segundo – Azmaiparashvili, Madrid 1996. Here Black missed an opportunity to seize the initiative with 18...\texttt{a}5N, for instance 19.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{b}2 20.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{b}7† and Black’s position is more promising.
18...\textit{Qe5!}
A well-timed pawn sacrifice.

19.\textit{Bf4}
19.\textit{Qxe5 Qxe5} 20.f4
So far nobody has risked capturing the unimportant h6-pawn, and indeed after 20.\textit{Qxh6 a5=} Black's passed pawn starts to run very quickly.
20...\textit{g7} 21.e5
This looks tempting but it weakens the d5-pawn, and in the following game Black was able to make good use of this fact.

21...\textit{a4!} 22.\textit{Be1} \textit{b3!} 23.\textit{Qf3} \textit{Qxd5} 24.\textit{Qxd5} \textit{Qxd5} 25.\textit{Qxa7}
At this point the players agreed a draw in Haveland – Lohmann, e-mail 2002, but it would have been worth playing on a little longer for Black. I would suggest:

25...\textit{Bb3N}
Obviously White should draw from here, but from a practical point of view his position is mildly unpleasant.

19.\textit{b2}
This good positional move maintains control over the e5-square. Another idea is 19...\textit{Qxf3\textsuperscript{+}N} 20.\textit{Qxf3} \textit{Bb2} when Black should also be fine.

20.\textit{Bc1} \textit{g5} 21.\textit{Qxe5}
As Gelfand pointed out in \textit{ChessBase Magazine} 54, both 21.\textit{Qg3} \textit{Bc8} 22.\textit{Qxb2} \textit{Qxf3\textsuperscript{+}} 23.\textit{Qxf3} \textit{Qxb2} 24.\textit{Bb1} \textit{Bc1\textsuperscript{+}} 25.\textit{Qxc1} \textit{Qxc1}, and 21.\textit{Qxe5 Qxe5} 22.\textit{Qxb2} \textit{Bxb2} 23.\textit{Qxe5} \textit{Bxe2} 24.f3 f5 lead to roughly equal endgames.

21...\textit{Qxe5} 22.\textit{Qxe5} \textit{Qxe5} 23.\textit{Ba1} \textit{Bb2}
Up to this point both sides have played logically, but now White went slightly astray.

24.\textit{\textipa{f}xa7}?!  
Correct was 24.\textit{\textipa{h}5N} when the position remains equal.

24...\textit{\textipa{e}xe2} 25.\textit{\textipa{f}xd7} \textit{\textipa{e}xe4} 26.\textit{\textipa{d}d1}  
Gelfand – J. Polgar, Novgorod 1996. Here Black should have tried:

26...\textit{\textipa{e}e2N}?!  
White should of course be able to hold this position, but he will have to tread carefully for a few more moves.

\textbf{C2) 15.d5}

I do not like 15...\textit{\textipa{x}f3}? 16.\textit{\textipa{x}f3} \textit{\textipa{e}e5} since after 17.\textit{\textipa{x}xb7} e6 18.\textit{\textipa{e}e2}? Black is in trouble, for instance: 18...\textit{\textipa{f}f1} 19.\textit{\textipa{f}e3} exd5 20.exd5 a5 21.d6 I found five examples of this position in my database, but even without any further investigation it is clear that White's d-pawn is extremely dangerous and Black will need a miracle to escape.

16.\textit{\textipa{e}c5} \textit{b6}!  
On this occasion Black should avoid the path of line B21 of the previous chapter, as the position of the pawn on h6 instead of h7 proves to be a liability: 16...\textit{\textipa{f}f6}?! 17.\textit{\textipa{e}e5} 18.\textit{\textipa{b}4} \textit{\textipa{x}f3} 19.\textit{\textipa{x}f3} \textit{\textipa{a}e8} Here White has ideas such as 20.\textit{\textipa{a}e3}!, threatening \textit{\textipa{a}a4} while targeting the h6-pawn. Black is under some pressure.

17.\textit{\textipa{e}e7}  
We have almost transposed to line B22 of the previous chapter, except for the inclusion of the move \ldots h7-h6 which actually benefits Black in this instance.

17...\textit{\textipa{f}e8} 18.\textit{\textipa{d}6} \textit{\textipa{e}e6} 19.\textit{\textipa{b}5} \textit{\textipa{e}e7}  
White has tried a couple of ideas here:
20...a3!
Once again Black's most accurate move is:

Just as in the note to White's 19th move in line B22 of the previous chapter. I would like to draw your attention to one additional possibility afforded to Black by the extra move ...h7-h6.

22.h3 e6!
There is nothing wrong with 22...xf3 as played in the Gelfand–Van Wely game (with the pawn on h7), but the idea of keeping the bishop pair also seems attractive. Here is one illustrative example:

23.d4 xe7 24.xe6 xe6 25.e1 a6!
With this important move Black slowly starts to advance his queenside pawns.

26.xc1 b5 27.ed2 e8
The position is dynamically balanced, Alferov–Bobel, e-mail 2008.

20...xf3 21.xf3 e8!??
There is nothing wrong with 21...e6 as recommended in the position with the pawn on h7, but once again the pawn on h6 gives Black an additional possibility.

22.dxe7 e6 23.e8=xf8 24.xe8 e8

We have reached the end of our investigation into the fascinating 8..b1 system. 13.g5 has been White's main line in terms of popularity, but the resolute 13...h6 has proven a reliable counter, against which White has tested three replies. A) 14.xe7 is not really a serious move and after my recommended solution Black can soon fight for the advantage. B) 14.h4 is more challenging, but unless White can find a serious improvement over the Kramnik–Anand game from 2009, he will have no chance of an advantage here. Finally C) 14.e3 is a good move which closely resembles line B of the previous chapter. Overall Black should be doing fine here, although he should study both sets of positions thoroughly in order to appreciate the pluses and minuses of the extra ...h7-h6 move.
Various 9th and 10th Moves

Variation Index

1. d4 .df6 2. c4  g6 3.  c3  d5 4. cxd5  xxd5 5. e4  xc3 6. bxc3  g7 7.  c4

7...c5 8.  d2  c6

A) 9. d5
B) 9. e3 0–0
   B1) 10. h4
   B2) 10. b1
   B3) 10. c1  cxd4 11. cxd4  a5†!
      B31) 12. d2
      B32) 12. d2
      B33) 12. f1  a3!
         B331) 13. b3
         B332) 13. d2
         B333) 13. c3

B31) after 14. b1

B32) after 14. b3

B333) note to 15. f3
1.d4  d6 2.c4  g6 3.c3  d5 4.cxd5  exd5  
5.e4  c5 6.h3  g7 7.c4  e5

8.e2

White has a couple of other ways to defend his d-pawn:

8.f3 transposes to line A of Chapter 12.

8.e3 is a slightly inaccurate move order, since 8...c6 9.e2 is just a transposition to line B, while Black is allowed an extra option in 8...a5.

8...c6

We shall take a brief look at A) 9.d5 before turning to the usual B) 9.e3.

A) 9.d5

This definitely shouldn't pose Black any problems, although it is useful to have a little knowledge of what to do.

9...a5 10.b5+ d7

The exchange of light-squared bishops combined with the black knight coming to the c4-square is likely to be very good for Black.

11.a4

In one game White tried: 11.a4 0-0 12.0-0 b6 (12...e4, 12...e6 and 12...f5?! are all playable alternatives) 13.g5  xb5 14.axb5  d7 15.b1 e6 16.d5 exd5 17.exd5  e8 Black's position was slightly preferable in Komljenovic – Herrera, Malaga 2002.

11...b6 12.0-0 a6 13.d7+ xd7

B) 9.e3

14.c2

As usual, the endgame is very comfortable for Black: 14.xd7+ xd7 15.b1 c4 16.f4 b5+ Muci Kuechler – Vargas Solano, Hermosillo 2002.

14...0-0 15.g5 c4 16.a4 e5

The immediate 16...b5?! is also fine for Black.
17.\textit{\texttt{b}}3 \textit{b}5

Black had a comfortable game in Christiansen – Gulko, Estes Park 1987.

\textbf{B) 9.\textit{\texttt{e}}3 0–0}

White now chooses from \textbf{B1) 10.\textit{\texttt{h}}4, B2) 10.\textit{\texttt{c}}b1 and B3) 10.\textit{\texttt{c}}c1.}

\textbf{B1) 10.\textit{\texttt{h}}4 \textit{a}5 11.\textit{\texttt{f}}1 \textit{b}6}

It's clearly favourable for Black to trade the light-squared bishops.

12.\textit{\texttt{h}}5 \textit{\texttt{a}}6 13.\textit{\texttt{a}}xa6 \textit{\texttt{xa}}6 14.\textit{\texttt{hxg}}6 \textit{hxg}6 15.\textit{\texttt{g}}1

An example I like is 15.\textit{\texttt{f}}3 cxd4 16.cxd4 \textit{\texttt{e}}ac8 17.\textit{\texttt{f}}2 \textit{\texttt{b}}4! and Black takes over the initiative: 18.\textit{\texttt{b}}1 \textit{\texttt{e}}c4 19.\textit{\texttt{a}}6 \textit{\texttt{xa}}2 20.\textit{\texttt{gxg}}7 \\
\textit{\texttt{g}}xg7 21.\textit{\texttt{a}}1 \textit{\texttt{b}}2 White's strategy had failed and Black's advantage was undisputable in Murey – Dvoirys, Cappelle la Grande 1999.

15...\textit{\texttt{f}}d8 16.\textit{\texttt{d}}2 \textit{\texttt{a}}4 17.\textit{\texttt{h}}6 \textit{\texttt{h}}8

18.\textit{\texttt{f}}8!!

White finds a brilliant idea; however it seems to lead only to a forced draw! Previously the same player had lost a game from this position: 18.\textit{\texttt{e}}3? cxd4 19.\textit{\texttt{h}}h3 dxc3 20.\textit{\texttt{f}}d2 \textit{\texttt{e}}e5 21.\textit{\texttt{h}}h7+ \textit{\texttt{f}}8 22.\textit{\texttt{exc}}3 \textit{\texttt{c}}c2 White had a hopeless position in Nikolaidis – Ivanchuk, Peristeri 2010.

18...\textit{\texttt{f}}6 19.\textit{\texttt{h}}h6 cxd4 20.\textit{\texttt{f}}4! dxc3 21.e5 \textit{\texttt{exe}}5 22.\textit{\texttt{fxe}}5 \textit{\texttt{exe}}5 23.\textit{\texttt{exe}}7 \textit{\texttt{ed}}1+ 24.\textit{\texttt{xd}}1 \textit{\texttt{xd}}1+ 25.\textit{\texttt{f}}2
As so often happens, all the crazy complications have resulted in a perpetual check, Nikolaidis – Banikas, Vrahati 2010.

B2) 10.\textit{B}b1 \textit{cxd}4 11.\textit{cxd}4 \textit{a}5\textdagger

We shall see the same reaction in line B3 after 10.\textit{c}c1.

12.\textit{B}d2

Other continuations for White are:

12.\textit{f}f1 \textit{a}3!

This has not been the most popular option here, but I cannot find any reason why not.

13.\textit{B}d2

The endgame with the white king on f1 can be better only for Black: 13.\textit{B}c1 \textit{xc}1\textdagger (the standard 13...\textit{Ed}6\textdagger is not bad either) 14.\textit{B}xc1 \textit{Ed}8 15.\textit{d}5 \textit{e}5 16.\textit{B}b3 \textit{b}6 17.\textit{g}1 \textit{a}6 18.\textit{d}4 \textit{ac}8 Black was slightly better in Kwatschewsky – Wittmann, Beersheba 1985.

13...\textit{Ed}8 14.\textit{f}3

This was Hertneck – Golod, Bad Wiessee 2000. Black should now play:

14...\textit{a}5\textdagger 15.\textit{d}3 \textit{e}6

Black is planning ...\textit{c}4 with a nice game.

16.\textit{d}5 \textit{xd}5! 17.\textit{exd}5 \textit{Exd}5 18.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}4

Black has a strong initiative.

12...\textit{Ed}8!\textdagger

There is no reason to rush with 12...\textit{Ed}2\textdagger 13.\textit{Ed}xd2 \textit{Ed}8, as that gives White the additional option of 14.\textit{B}hd1.

13.\textit{c}d5

Exchanging queens on a5 does not benefit White: 13.\textit{B}xa5 \textit{ca}5 14.\textit{d}d3 \textit{c}c6! 15.\textit{d}5 \textit{e}5 16.\textit{c}c2 \textit{b}6 Black will play ...\textit{a}6 next, with the better chances.

13...\textit{Ed}xd2\textdagger

It is worth considering 13...\textit{Exd}5? 14.\textit{exd}5 \textit{Ed}5 15.0–0 \textit{b}6 16.\textit{f}4 \textit{Ed}6 17.\textit{d}5 \textit{a}5 18.\textit{B}b4 \textit{e}5 with complex play.

14.\textit{B}xd2 \textit{xd}4!

This equalizes comfortably.

15.\textit{B}xd4

Black also has no problems after 15.\textit{B}xd4 \textit{e}6 16.\textit{xb}7 \textit{xb}7 17.\textit{B}xb7 \textit{xd}4.

15...\textit{e}6 16.\textit{B}xb7 \textit{xd}7 17.\textit{B}xb7 \textit{xd}4

The position is absolutely equal.
12...\textit{wh5}!N
This active square for the queen is best.

13.\textit{ae3}
I also examined 13.\textit{ac3} \textit{wg4}! 14.\textit{dg3} \textit{xd1}\# 15.\textit{xd1} \textit{d7}. Black will play ...\textit{ac8} next, with an edge.

13...\textit{wg4} 14.\textit{dg3} \textit{xd1}\# 15.\textit{xd1} \textit{d7}
The endgame is comfortable for Black.

\textbf{B3) 10.\textit{ec1} \textit{xd4} 11.\textit{xd4} \textit{wa5}!}

14...\textit{xd4}!N
I believe that capturing the d-pawn in this way is an important nuance. In practice, Black has always played 14...\textit{xd4} but White maintains some pressure: 15.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 16.\textit{ae1} (16.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4}\# 17.\textit{ae3} \textit{xd1} 18.\textit{xd1} \textit{g4} 19.f3 \textit{c8}! was equal in Juptner - Mikuev, Czech Republic 2000) 16.e5 17.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 18.\textit{d5} \textit{c6} This occurred in Ingersol - Krueger, Internet 2004, and here I would be slightly worried by 19.\textit{xe6}! fxe6 20.\textit{c7}. Although it is probably tenable, Black is doomed to passivity.

15.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 16.\textit{ec3}
16.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4}\# transposes to Juptner - Mikuev in the previous note.

16...\textit{c6} 17.\textit{xd8} 18.\textit{d1} \textit{c6} 19.\textit{d5} \textit{c6}
Black has comfortable equality.

\textbf{B32) 12.\textit{ad2} \textit{wh5}}

This check is Black's principal option. White replies with \textbf{B31) 12.\textit{ad2}, B32) 12.\textit{ad2} or B33) 12.\textit{f1}.}

\textbf{B31) 12.\textit{ad2} \textit{xd2}\# 13.\textit{xd2} \textit{ad8}}

Quickly attacking the d4-pawn is always a key idea when the white king is on d2.

14.\textit{hd1}
14.d5 has been more popular, but it does not look good: 14...e6 15.\textit{c3} (after 15.\textit{hd1} \textit{a5} 16.\textit{e1} \textit{xc4} 17.\textit{xc4} \textit{exd5} 18.\textit{exd5} b6! the bishop pair gives Black the advantage) 15...\textit{a5}! White had serious problems with his centre in Hohl - Niebergall, Budapest 2000.
We have reached the same position as in the note to White’s 13th move of B2.

13...\textit{e}5 14.\textit{b}3

In two games where this position occurred, Black now played 14...\textit{h}4, but it was far from convincing. I felt obliged to find a new idea:

14...\textit{b}5!N 15.\textit{d}3

Both ways of accepting the pawn sacrifice are dangerous for White:

- \textit{xb}5 \textit{b}8 16.\textit{a}4 (or 16.g3 \textit{h}4 17.\textit{a}4 \textit{f}5! with a serious initiative for Black) 16...\textit{a}6 17.e4 \textit{d}7 18.\textit{x}a6 \textit{a}8 19.\textit{b}6 \textit{xc}4 20.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xa}2 It is clear that Black’s initiative is worth more than just a pawn.

- \textit{xb}5 a5! Black’s bishop will join the game from a6 with great effect. 16.g3 \textit{h}4 17.e2 \textit{a}6 18.c5 \textit{xe}2 19.\textit{xe}2 \textit{ab}8 Black again has long-term compensation, due to the exposed white king.

15.\textit{g}4 16.g3 \textit{xd}3\texttt{N} 17.\textit{xd}3 a5

Black’s plan is very simple; he just wants to activate his light-squared bishop via the a6-square. Play could continue:

18.0-0 \textit{b}4 19.e6 \textit{d}7 20.e7 \textit{fd}8

Black is doing fine, with his bishop pair and potential passed pawn on the queenside.

B33) 12.\textit{f}1

A principal idea in this line; White will leave his king on f1 and try to launch an attack on the black king with h4-h5 etc.

12...\textit{a}3!

A remarkable move, which I would designate as prophylactic! First of all Black prevents 13.h4, as then 13...\textit{g}4 is highly unpleasant because f2-f3 would leave the bishop hanging on e3. For the same reason the standard idea of f2-f3 followed by \textit{f}2 is ruled out.

Some years ago, Black used to automatically react with 12...\textit{d}7 but then 13.h4 leads to very complex play.

Now White’s options are B331) 13.\textit{b}3, B332) 13.d2 and B333) 13.c3.

B331) 13.\textit{b}3 \textit{d}6!

Before Black found this move, there were quite a few games in which he suffered in the slightly passive endgame after 13...\textit{xb}3 14.\textit{xb}3.
14.e5
Equally common is 14.d5, after which I like 14...\textit{c}a5 15.\textit{b}b5 \textit{w}b6! 16.\textit{w}xb6 axb6 17.f3 e6 18.\textit{b}3 \textit{d}xb3 19.axb3.

This occurred in Atalik – Rytshagov, Cappelle la Grande 1997, and here the following improvement is very logical: 19...\textit{d}7N 20.\textit{f}f2 \textit{a}3 21.b4 \textit{b}5 22.\textit{e}1 \textit{b}3 23.\textit{h}b1 \textit{x}b1 24.\textit{x}b1 \textit{c}8 25.\textit{e}cl \textit{e}cl 26.\textit{d}xc1 \textit{bc}4? Although White should most likely be able to hold, Black can play for a win.

14...\textit{d}8 15.\textit{w}a3 \textit{f}5 16.f3 \textit{d}a5 17.\textit{f}f2 \textit{xc}4 18.\textit{e}xc4 \textit{e}6
18...f6?! is also worth considering.

19.\textit{b}4 \textit{w}d7
The position was roughly equal in Ingersol – Da Costa Junior, corr. 2007.

\textbf{B332) 13.\textit{d}d2 \textit{d}8}

14.d5
After 14.h4 Black has the tactical blow 14...\textit{d}xd4! 15.\textit{d}xd4 \textit{xd}4 16.h5 McDonough – Masse, Montreal 2004. Here Black missed a very strong move:

16...\textit{b}6!N 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.\textit{d}5 \textit{xe}3 19.\textit{f}xe3 e6 20.\textit{bc}7 \textit{f}8! 21.\textit{we}1 \textit{w}g7 22.\textit{xb}7 \textit{bb}8\# White has restored material equality, but his damaged pawn structure gives Black a clear advantage.

14...\textit{d}e5 15.\textit{b}b5
After 15.\textit{b}b3 b6 the play is very complex. I prefer Black, since the exposed position of the white king should tell at some point: 16.f4 \textit{g}4 17.\textit{d}d4 \textit{a}6 18.e5 \textit{a}c8 Black had the initiative in Anderson – Martin, e-mail 1998.
17.\textit{\&g3}? 

Missing Black's elegant follow-up blow. The critical line is: 17.\textit{\&xe7} \textit{\&xe4} (or 17...\textit{\&h3}?) 18.\textit{\&f4} axb5 19.\textit{\&h3} \textit{\&xe4} 20.\textit{\&xd8} \textit{\&xd8} 21.\textit{\&d1} \textit{\&a4} and Black has sufficient compensation) 18.\textit{\&xd8} axb5 19.\textit{\&g3} \textit{\&g4} 20.h3 \textit{\&d7} 21.\textit{\&g5} \textit{\&c4} Black has fine compensation for the exchange.

17...\textit{\&h3}! 18.gxh3 axb5

Black had a clear advantage in Kobylkin – Khamrakulov, Menorca 1996.

\textbf{B333) 13.\textit{\&c3} \textit{\&d6}}

14.\textit{\&h4}

The most challenging continuation. Quiet play does not promise White anything, for instance: 14.f3 \textit{\&d8} Black immediately starts to attack the white centre. 15.\textit{\&d3} \textit{\&a5} 16.\textit{\&b3} \textit{\&d7} 17.\textit{\&f2} \textit{\&b5} 18.\textit{\&d2} \textit{\&ac8} Black was significantly better in Brettschneider – Schmenger, Binz 1995.

14...\textit{\&h5} 15.\textit{\&f3}

By far the most popular option. Other possibilities are:

15.\textit{\&d3} \textit{\&a5!?N}

This was pointed out by Predojevic in \textit{Chess Informant} 94, and improves on 15...\textit{\&e5}, which is very unclear.

14...\textit{\&f4}

Black has a pleasant game after 16.\textit{\&d5} e6 17.\textit{\&f4} \textit{\&e7}.

16...e5 17.dxe5

White achieves nothing after 17.\textit{\&xe5} \textit{\&xe5} 18.dxe5 \textit{\&xe5} 19.\textit{\&d5} \textit{\&e6}.

17.\textit{\&d3} 18.\textit{\&xd3} \textit{\&c6}!

Predojevic recommended 18...\textit{\&e6}, but I am concerned about Black's position after: 19.\textit{\&d4} \textit{\&xa2} 20.\textit{\&e2} \textit{\&fd8} 21.\textit{\&e3]? White's army is very nicely centralized. 19.\textit{\&c4} \textit{\&xe5} 20.\textit{\&d5} \textit{\&e6} Black has good play.

15.\textit{\&d2}
15...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d8?}}}}}} N

This very natural idea is a novelty. In practice Black has played 15...e5 16.d5 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d5}}}}} b6, but here I don't like: 18.f3N (less convincing is 18.d6 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d7}}}}} 19.g3?! \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{db7}}}}} 20.g2 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{c5}}}}} 21.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d3}}} \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{xd3}}}} 22.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{xd3}}}} f5 and Black had a promising game in Elsness – Predojevic, Pula 2005) 18...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d7}}}} (or 18...f5 19.g1) 19.g3 The position is very complex, but White's passed pawn may be a telling factor in the long term.


20.f3 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{a6}}} 21.\textit{\textit{f2}}} \textit{\textit{\textit{ac8}}} Black has no problems.

15...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d8}}}} 16.\textit{\textit{\textit{d5}}}


16...e5! 17.\textit{\textit{g5}}

Black obtains a good game after 17.\textit{\textit{f2}} \textit{\textit{\textit{e6}}}.

17.\textit{\textit{f6}} 18.dxe5 \textit{\textit{\textit{xe5}}} 19.\textit{\textit{xf6}} \textit{\textit{\textit{xf6}}} 20.\textit{\textit{b3}} \textit{\textit{e6}} 21.\textit{\textit{xe6}}

A draw was agreed in Murray – Freeman, e-mail 2002. The position is somewhat unclear, but it is roughly balanced.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The lines in which White forgoes castling can be very double-edged, especially when White continues with h4-h5. But provided he knows what he is doing, Black can meet such attacks with confidence. In particular, White's attack in line B1 looks extremely scary, but it offers him no more than a draw. I have recommended meeting both B2) 10.\textit{\textit{b1}} and B3) 10.\textit{\textit{c1}} with the natural 10...\textit{\textit{xd4}} 11.\textit{\textit{cxd4}} \textit{\textit{a5}}†. Depending on White's reaction, Black must play inventively with his queen (the manoeuvres \textit{\textit{\textit{h5–g4}}} and \textit{\textit{\textit{a3–d6}} both feature prominently), but with accurate play Black can count on achieving at least equal chances.
Chapter 18

7. $\text{c4}$

10...$\text{g4}$

Variation Index

1.d4 $\text{f6}$ 2.c4 $\text{g6}$ 3.$\text{c3}$ $\text{d5}$ 4.cxd5 $\text{exd5}$ 5.e4 $\text{xc3}$ 6.bxc3 $\text{g7}$ 7.$\text{c4}$ $\text{c5}$ 8.$\text{e2}$ $\text{c6}$ 9.$\text{e3}$ 0–0 10.0–0

A) 11.d5
B) 11.f3 $\text{d7}$!
   B1) 12.$\text{d}2$
   B2) 12.$\text{h}1$
   B3) 12.d5
   B4) 12.$\text{d}3$
   B5) 12.$\text{c}1$

A) after 16.f4
B1) after 16.$\text{b}2$
B4) after 15.$\text{a}4$?

16...c3?!N
16...xd4!N
15...xe2 16.$\text{xe}2$ $\text{xd}4$!
Chapter 18 – 10...g4

1.d4 ćf6 2.c4 g6 3.ćc3 d5 4.cxd5 ćxd5 5.e4 ćxc3 6.bxc3 Ćg7 7.ćc4 e5 8.Će2 ćc6 9.Će3 0–0 10.0–0 Ćg4

This is one of the few places in this repertoire where I have recommended two main options for Black, as I also cover the little-explored line 10...Ćc7 11.Ćc1 b6 in the final two chapters. The reader may of course choose whichever line he feels more comfortable playing.

15...xex2 (of course Black cannot play as in the main line with 15...Ćg7? because of 16.Ćb6) 16.Ćxex2 b5 17.f4 This was Sjoberg – Nylen, Stockholm 1992, and here Black should play:

17...Ćb7N 18.Ćfd1 f6 The position is very complicated and optically White has decent compensation, but I believe that the extra pawn is the more important factor.

12...c4 13.Ćc2 Ćxc3 14.Ćb1

Sacrificing the exchange does not work:

14.f3 Ćxa1 15.Ćxa1 Ćd7 16.Ćh6 Ćb6+ 17.Ćh1 f6 18.Ćxex8 Ćxf8 White has hardly any compensation for being a pawn down.

14...ćg7 15.f3 Ćd7 16.f4

White now chooses between A) 11.d5 and B) 11.f3.

A) 11.d5

This relatively rare option is actually a pawn sacrifice.

11...Ća5 12.Ćd3

Matters are slightly different after 12.Ćb5 a6 13.Ćd3 c4 14.Ćc2 Ćxc3 15.Ćb1.

15...xex2 (of course Black cannot play as in the main line with 15...Ćg7? because of 16.Ćb6) 16.Ćxex2 b5 17.f4 This was Sjoberg – Nylen, Stockholm 1992, and here Black should play:

17...Ćb7N 18.Ćfd1 f6 The position is very complicated and optically White has decent compensation, but I believe that the extra pawn is the more important factor.

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Sacrificing the exchange does not work:

14.f3 Ćxa1 15.Ćxa1 Ćd7 16.Ćh6 Ćb6+ 17.Ćh1 f6 18.Ćxex8 Ćxf8 White has hardly any compensation for being a pawn down.

14...ćg7 15.f3 Ćd7 16.f4

Here I like the idea of giving back the extra pawn in exchange for activity.

16...ćc3N

Most of the games from this position have gone 16...b5 17.e5 a6 18.Ćc3. Although White's results have been far from impressive, I feel that his strong centre gives him serious compensation for the pawn.

17.Ćd4

The only reasonable idea for White. After 17.e5 Ćg4 18.Ćf2 Ćc4 White is unable to create any play.
Another important line is:

19. \textit{d}4†

19... \textit{e}5!

The key idea.

20. \textit{w}e3

Of course White cannot play 20. \textit{w}xe5 \textit{f}6 and his knight drops.

I also checked the piece sacrifice: 20. \textit{f}xe5 \textit{x}e2 21. \textit{e}6† (after 21. \textit{f}2 \textit{c}4 22. \textit{e}6† Black can play 22... \textit{g}8! with advantage) 21... \textit{f}6


20... \textit{xe}2 21. \textit{xc}e2 \textit{d}6

With such a solid blockade, Black has nothing to worry about.

B) 11. \textit{f}3 \textit{d}7†

This move, which leads to typical Grünfeld play, has recently become quite a fashionable alternative to the well-known and exhaustively analysed 11... \textit{a}5. The resulting play is similar to that which arises after 10... \textit{d}7, but the inclusion of \textit{f}2-\textit{f}3 gives Black additional resources connected with the vulnerable position of the \textit{e}3-bishop.
White now has a very wide choice. 12...b1 is examined in the following chapter, as is 12..xc5 13...c7 13...b1, while here we look at B1) 12...d2, B2) 12...h1, B3) 12...d5, B4) 12...d3 and B5) 12...c1.

B1) 12...d2 13...a5!

The standard response, threatening to capture on d4.

- **13...e6**
  - Other options are:
  - **13...d5 14.b3** was played in Naumkin – Kyas, Cattolica 1993:

**13...fd1**

Other options are:

13.d5 14.b3 was played in Naumkin – Kyas, Cattolica 1993:

13...a5!

This equalizes on the spot. 14...xb5 (14...d5 cxd4 15.cxd4 e6 16...b3 15...a5 gives Black good play) 14...xb5 15...b5 16...d3 Other moves would leave White worse. Michaelsen – Joecks, Hamburg 1989, was agreed drawn here, in view of 16...xe2† 17...xe2 18...a5 followed by 19...c5.

13...a5

I also quite like: 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 b5N 15...xa5 (or 15...b3 16...xd2 16...a5=) 15...xa5 16...d3 17...f8 Black has decent play.

14...b5

Black tries to maintain his pressure on the centre, and avoids the simplifying line: 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 16...xd2 16...a5 17...d3 e6=

15...b5

After 15.cxd5 16...e5 17...b3 bxc5 Black has no problems.

15...d8 16...b2

16...cxd4†

This is the right moment to release the pressure. After 16...e8 Barkhagen – I. Sokolov, Malmo 1992, White missed the powerful 17...d2N, when the threats against the black queen would force the undesirable 17...c4.
17.\textit{cxd}4 \textit{a}6 18.\textit{\underline{x}}c6
18.\textit{\underline{c}}4 \textit{b}5 19.\textit{\underline{b}}3 \textit{e}6 is also fine for Black.

18...\textit{\underline{x}}c6 19.\textit{\underline{f}}4 \textit{e}6

The position is roughly level, but I would rather be Black.

14.\textit{\underline{b}}3
After 14.\textit{\underline{b}}3 Black can choose between 14...\textit{\underline{f}}d8!? and 14...\textit{cxd}4 15.\textit{cxd}4 \textit{\underline{a}}6, with a reliable position in either case.

14...\textit{\underline{b}}5!
This blow equalizes immediately. If Black would rather keep things less clear-cut, he could consider 14...\textit{\underline{c}}7, threatening ...\textit{\underline{d}}a5.

14...\textit{\underline{a}}5N
Black intends to continue with ...\textit{b}5.

15.\textit{\underline{b}}xb5
After 15.\textit{\underline{b}}xb5 Black strikes with: 15...\textit{\underline{d}}xd4! (but not 15...\textit{\underline{b}}b8 16.\textit{\underline{a}}4 \textit{a}6 17.\textit{\underline{d}}d5!!) 16.\textit{\underline{d}}xd4 (or 16.\textit{\underline{d}}xd4 \textit{cxd}4 17.\textit{\underline{d}}xd7 \textit{\underline{b}}b8!!+) 16...\textit{\underline{e}}6! Black is slightly better.

15...\textit{\underline{b}}xb5 16.\textit{\underline{b}}xb5 \textit{\underline{c}}xd4 17.\textit{\underline{d}}xd4 \textit{\underline{d}}xd4!
The position is level.

B3) 12.\textit{d}5

I encountered this position in the game Beliavsky – Avrukh, Netanya (rapid) 2009, but I failed to find a reasonable response and obtained a worse position. With hindsight I recommend:

13...\textit{\underline{a}}5N
Black intends to continue with ...\textit{b}5.
12...\textit{\textbf{Be5}}N

I believe that this is Black's best option. The problem with 12...\textit{\textbf{d5}} 13.\textit{\textbf{d3}} is that Black cannot obtain a desirable pawn structure: 13...\textit{\textbf{c4}} (or 13...\textit{\textbf{b6}} 14.\textit{\textbf{Cc1 e5}} 15.\textit{\textbf{c4 b7}} 16.\textit{\textbf{Cc3 d6}} 17.\textit{\textbf{a4\#})} 14.\textit{\textbf{Cc2 e5}}

This occurred in Kiselev – Borisek, Internet 2006, and now the correct 15.\textit{\textbf{dxe6\#}} \textit{\textbf{exe6}} 16.\textit{\textbf{wb1}} would give White the better chances, thanks to his control over the d4-square.

13.\textit{\textbf{b3 w6}}N

14.\textit{\textbf{a4}}

The alternatives are not impressive:

14.\textit{\textbf{f4 g4}} 15.\textit{\textbf{d2? c4\#}} followed by ...\textit{\textbf{c5\#}} wins material for Black.

14.\textit{\textbf{c4}} \textit{\textbf{b5}} gives Black lots of counterplay.

14.\textit{\textbf{wac8}} 15.\textit{\textbf{c4}}N

After 15.\textit{\textbf{Cc1 e6}} White should probably transpose to the following note by 16.\textit{\textbf{c4}}, rather than play 16.\textit{\textbf{dxe6 \textit{\textbf{exe6}}}} 17.\textit{\textbf{exe6 fxe6}} 18.\textit{\textbf{wb3 \textit{\textbf{wa6}}}} when Black has the advantage.

15...\textit{\textbf{e6}}N

16.\textit{\textbf{f4}}

Another line I analysed is: 16.\textit{\textbf{Cc1 exd5}} 17.\textit{\textbf{cxd5}} (17.\textit{\textbf{exd5 \textit{\textbf{fe8}}}} leads to quite comfortable play for Black. In general the pawn structure after White recaptures with the e-pawn is pretty harmless.)

17...\textit{\textbf{c4}} 18.\textit{\textbf{c2 c3}}! The c-pawn is strong enough to demand attention. 19.\textit{\textbf{d4 \textit{\textbf{c4}}}} Black has good counterplay.

16.\textit{\textbf{wfe8}}N
The position is tense and very complicated. Black will aim to find an appropriate moment to release the tension in the centre by capturing on d5.

B4) 12.\textbf{d3}

12...\textbf{c7}

Black has an interesting alternative in:

12...\textbf{cxd4} 13.\textbf{cxd4} \textbf{db4} 14.\textbf{c4}

14.\textbf{b1} \textbf{cxd3} 15.\textbf{cxd3} \textbf{a6}! 16.\textbf{xb7} \textbf{b5}

17.\textbf{d2} \textbf{xe2} 18.\textbf{xe2} \textbf{xd4} results in equality.

14...\textbf{c8} 15.\textbf{c1}

15.\textbf{b3} is strongly met by 15...\textbf{b5}!

This was M. Braun – Benes, Czech Republic 2009, and here I like:

15...\textbf{a5N} 16.\textbf{d2}

Another line is: 16.\textbf{d2} \textbf{a3} 17.\textbf{c3} \textbf{a4}

18.\textbf{b3} (after 18.e5 \textbf{xd1} 19.\textbf{xd1} \textbf{c6}

Black has no problems) 18...\textbf{b5} Black has active play on the queenside.

16...\textbf{e6} 17.a3 \textbf{c6} 18.\textbf{b2} \textbf{b5} 19.\textbf{d3} \textbf{b4}

Black has good counterplay.

13.\textbf{f4}

If White plays 13.\textbf{c1} then Black should probably reply 13...\textbf{b8} with similar play to line B of Chapter 19.

13...\textbf{cxd4} 14.\textbf{cxd4} \textbf{g4} 15.\textbf{a4?}

A tactical oversight. White should prefer 15.\textbf{c1}, although Black is okay after:

15...\textbf{e6} 16.\textbf{h3} \textbf{xe2} 17.\textbf{xe2} \textbf{fd8} 18.e5 \textbf{d7}

(or 18...\textbf{a5}) 19.\textbf{b5} \textbf{d5} Black has a sound position.

15...\textbf{xe2} 16.\textbf{xe2} \textbf{xd4}!
Black seized the initiative in Prohaszka – Valsecchi, Herceg Novi 2008. His tactical blow relies on the following key variation:

17.\text{\textbf{d}}4 \text{\textbf{c}}6! 18.\text{\textbf{d}}1 \text{\textbf{d}}d8 19.\text{\textbf{e}}5 \text{\textbf{e}}4\text{\textbf{f}}

B5) 12.\text{\textbf{c}}1 \text{\textbf{c}}8

19.\text{\textbf{x}}xc4\text{\textbf{N}}

There seems to be no good reason not to grab this pawn, although 19...\text{\textbf{d}}7 was also quite promising for Black in Pinter – Brkic, Fuegen 2006.

20.\text{\textbf{x}}xc4 \text{\textbf{d}}xc4 21.\text{\textbf{e}}5 b5

It is difficult to believe that White has sufficient compensation for the pawn.

13.dxc5 promises Black rich compensation. Here is one illustrative example: 13...\text{\textbf{c}}7 14.\text{\textbf{d}}4 \text{\textbf{d}}a5 15.\text{\textbf{e}}2 \text{\textbf{f}}fd8 16.\text{\textbf{e}}1

This was Levin – Kalinitschew, Novosibirsk 1989, and now Black should play: 16...\text{\textbf{e}}5\text{\textbf{N}} 17.\text{\textbf{b}}3 \text{\textbf{e}}6 18.\text{\textbf{c}}4 \text{\textbf{x}}xb3 (a safe approach, although Black could consider 18...\text{\textbf{c}}6 followed by ...\text{\textbf{d}}d4) 19.axb3 \text{\textbf{f}}8 20.b4 a5 Black has comfortable equality.

13.\text{\textbf{d}}3 has occurred only once and the game continued with the interesting: 13...\text{\textbf{e}}6?
14.\textit{d}2 \textit{a}5 15.\textit{e}5 \textit{e}7 16.\textit{g}3 \textit{cxd}4 17.\textit{cxd}4 \textit{xd}2 18.\textit{xd}2 \textit{f}5! Black had a good game in Volke – J. Horvath, Ljubljana 1995.

13...\textit{a}5
13...\textit{cxd}4 14.\textit{cxd}4 \textit{a}5 should also be good enough for equality.

14.\textit{b}2
I also examined two other moves:

14.\textit{d}5 \textit{e}5 15.\textit{b}3 \textit{a}6!
We have already seen this typical idea in previous variations.
16.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}4 17.\textit{d}3 \textit{xe}3 18.\textit{xe}3

18...\textit{e}5N
Black has opted for 18...\textit{c}4 in three games, but it seems too risky; and so I recommend the text.

19.\textit{f}5
19.\textit{dxe}6 \textit{xe}6 leads to good play for Black.
19...\textit{c}4 20.\textit{c}2 \textit{xa}2
I think that capturing the a-pawn is a risk that Black can afford to take, although he has a decent alternative in 20...\textit{d}6 21.\textit{h}1 \textit{b}5 followed by the advance of his queenside pawns.

21.\textit{f}6 \textit{h}8
Obviously the bishop is not ideally placed on h8, but I don’t see any clear way for White to make use of it. Meanwhile Black has a clear plan of pushing his pawns on the queenside.

14.\textit{dxc}5 cannot pose Black serious problems: 14...\textit{fd}8 15.\textit{d}5 \textit{e}6 16.\textit{b}3 \textit{f}8 17.\textit{h}1 \textit{e}8 18.\textit{e}1

This was Nasybullin – Voitsekhovsky, Roslavl 1989. Black should now play 18...\textit{xc}5N 19.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}7 when White has no compensation for his damaged queenside pawn structure.
Chapter 18 - 10...\textit{g}4

14...\textit{cxd4} 15.\textit{cxd4} \textit{b}4

A very sensible move, because endgames in this line tend to be perfectly playable for Black. Also worth considering is 15...b5!?N.

8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

\textbf{a b c d e f g h}

16.\textit{\textbf{xb}}4 \textit{\textbf{xb}}4 17.a3 \textit{c}6 18.\textit{d}3

It is possible for White to slip into a worse position: 18.\textit{\textbf{fd1}} \textit{\textbf{a}}5 19.\textit{\textbf{d}3} \textit{\textbf{a}4} 20.\textit{\textbf{e}1}?! (the correct 20.\textit{\textbf{xc8}} \textit{\textbf{xc8}} 21.\textit{\textbf{c}1} would maintain equality) 20...\textit{\textbf{d}b}3 21.\textit{\textbf{xc8}} \textit{\textbf{xc8}}++ Black is better due to his control of the c-file, Cooke - Széberényi, Budapest 2000.

18...\textit{a}6 19.\textit{\textbf{c}2} \textit{\textbf{a}5} 20.\textit{\textbf{fc1}} \textit{\textbf{xc2}} 21.\textit{\textbf{xc2}} \textit{\textbf{c}8} 22.\textit{\textbf{xc8}}+ \textit{\textbf{xc8}} 23.\textit{\textbf{d}2} \textit{\textbf{c}6} 24.\textit{\textbf{c}3} \textit{\textbf{e}6} 25.\textit{\textbf{a}4} \textit{\textbf{f}8}

In this equal position a draw was agreed in Dimitriadis - Kruger, e-mail 2001.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The pawn sacrifice A) 11.d5 should not worry Black unduly, but it needs to be met with some care; I believe that my suggestion of 16...c3!?N is a good way to defuse White's initiative and ensure Black an edge.

The principal branching point of this chapter arises after B) 11.\textit{\textbf{f}3} \textit{\textbf{d}7}. White's main reply of 12.\textit{\textbf{b}1} is the topic of the following chapter, but we covered no fewer than five alternatives here. In these various lines there are some ideas which keep reappearing, such as the move ...\textit{\textbf{a}5}. Black's main intention with this queen development is to advance on the queenside with ...\textit{\textbf{b}5} (sometimes as a temporary sacrifice, as in line B2), although he may also be looking to exchange queens, since most endgames in this line tend to be comfortable for Black.
7. \textit{\textbf{c4}}

12. \textit{\textbf{b1}}

\textbf{Variation Index}

1. d4 \textit{\textbf{f6}} 2. c4 g6 3. \textit{\textbf{c3}} d5 4. \textit{\textbf{cxd5}} \textit{\textbf{xd5}} 5. e4 \textit{\textbf{xc3}} 6. bxc3 \textit{\textbf{g7}} 7. \textit{\textbf{c4}} c5

8. \textit{\textbf{e2}} \textit{\textbf{c6}} 9. \textit{\textbf{e3}} 0–0 10. 0–0 \textit{\textbf{g4}} 11. \textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{d7?! 12. \textbf{b1}}}

A) 13. \textit{\textbf{f4}}

B) 13. \textit{\textbf{d3}} \textit{\textbf{ad8}}

B1) 14. d5

B2) 14. \textit{\textbf{wd2}}

C) 13. \textit{\textbf{f4}}

\textbf{note after 12... \textbf{wc7}}

\textbf{B) note after 13... \textbf{ad8}}

\textbf{C) after 20. \textbf{a4}}
Chapter 19 – 12.\textit{b1}

1.d4 \textit{d}6 2.c4 \textit{g}6 3.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}5 4.\textit{c}xd5 \textit{xd}5 5.e4 \textit{xc}3 6.\textit{b}xc3 \textit{g}7 7.\textit{c}4 \textit{c}5 8.\textit{e}2 \textit{d}6 9.\textit{e}3 0–0 10.0–0 \textit{g}4 11.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}7\textsuperscript{?} 12.\textit{b}1 \textit{c}7

I have recently switched to this move, having previously employed 12...\textit{c}8. I have found that playing ...\textit{ad}8 and then ...\textit{c}8 results in a more logical arrangement of Black’s pieces; the kingside rook can be useful on the f-file should Black carry out ...\textit{f}5, or on the e-file when Black plays ...\textit{e}6 followed by capturing on d5.

White’s main options here are A) 13.\textit{f}4, B) 13.\textit{d}3 and C) 13.\textit{f}4, but he has also tried a couple of other moves:

13.dxc5 as always promises Black good long-term compensation: 13...\textit{d}d8 14.\textit{e}1 \textit{a}5 15.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}6 Black prepares the manoeuvre ...\textit{c}8xc5 to regain the pawn. 16.\textit{f}2 \textit{b}5 17.\textit{f}d1

This occurred in Pribyl – P. David, Czech Republic 1995, and now the simple 17...\textit{c}4\textsuperscript{N} would leave Black with a very comfortable game.

13.\textit{d}2 \textit{d}d8 14.\textit{e}c1 \textit{c}8 15.\textit{b}2 \textit{a}5 16.\textit{d}3

This was Timoschenko – Zysk, Budapest 1989. Here I offer the following solution: 16...\textit{e}5\textsuperscript{N} 17.\textit{g}5 (after 17.d5 \textit{c}4 18.\textit{c}2 \textit{b}6 Black would be happy with the pawn structure) 17...\textit{f}6 18.\textit{e}3 \textit{f}5! The position is very complex, but it seems to me that Black is well prepared for a tactical battle.

\textbf{A) 13.\textit{f}4}

The idea of this move is easy to understand, since in this line the white knight can be a bit
passive on the e2-square. However, thanks to the move f2-f3 which the manoeuvre ...\(\text{g}4\)-d7 provoked, Black has a tactical solution here.

13...\(\text{cxd4}\)

13...e6 was played in the game Computer Rebel 10 – Anand, Ischia (blitz [1]) 1998, but after 14.d5\(\text{N}\)\(\text{e}5\) 15.\(\text{a}2\) Black’s position does not appeal to me.

14.\(\text{cxd4}\)

I also examined 14.\(\text{\textit{d}5}\), after which Black can equalize with 14...\(\text{a}5\) 15.\(\text{cxd4}\) e6 16.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{c}3\) 17.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{xe}3\)† 18.\(\text{xe}3\) \(\text{xd}4\) 19.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 20.\(\text{fd}1\) \(\text{c}6\) 21.\(\text{xd}4\) e5.

14...\(\text{xd4}\)

14...\(\text{xd4}\)? doesn’t work: 15.\(\text{xd4}\) e5 16.\(\text{c}1\)†

15.\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{xf}4\)

16.\(\text{a}1\)

White is hoping for compensation due to the absence of Black’s dark-squared bishop. Regaining the pawn by 16.\(\text{xb7}\) is hardly advisable, in view of 16...\(\text{ad}8\) when White has serious problems arising from the vulnerability of his pieces on the d-file.

16...\(\text{ad}8\) 17.\(\text{e}1\)
16.\textdaggerdbl}d5 17.\textdaggerdbl}xa7 \textdaggerdbl}xf3t! 18.gxf3 \textdaggerdbl}xd3 only Black can be better. 16...\textdaggerdbl}e5 17.\textdaggerdbl}d2 b6  
Black has good play; he will start attacking the white centre with either ...e6 or ...f5.

B1) 14.d5

This line was suggested by Glenn Flear on Chesspublishing.com. We shall follow the game in which I faced it.

14...\textdaggerdbl}e5 15.c4 f5  
I played this move instantly, as it activates my f8-rook and secures the position of my central knight.

16.\textdaggerdbl}f4 e6 17.\textdaggerdbl}fb3  
I carefully checked that 17.\textdaggerdbl}xe5 \textdaggerdbl}xe5 18.f4 is not dangerous. Black can reply: 18...fxe4! 19.\textdaggerdbl}xe4 \textdaggerdbl}g7 20.d6 \textdaggerdbl}a5 21.\textdaggerdbl}xb7 (after 21.\textdaggerdbl}xb7 \textdaggerdbl}a6! Black will play ...\textdaggerdbl}a4 or ...\textdaggerdbl}c8 next, followed by capturing the d6-pawn) 21...\textdaggerdbl}a4 22.\textdaggerdbl}d3 \textdaggerdbl}f7 The d6-pawn is falling.

17...\textdaggerdbl}c8! 18.exf5  
Again I was ready for 18.\textdaggerdbl}xe5 \textdaggerdbl}xe5 19.f4. Continuing 19...fxe4 20.fxe5 exd3 21.d6 \textdaggerdbl}g7! leads to an advantage for Black.

18...\textdaggerdbl}xf5  
Aiming for a complex fight. Black could easily choose 18...exf5 with a roughly equal game.  

19.\textdaggerdbl}c3  
Also interesting is: 19...exd5 20.\textdaggerdbl}bel (20.\textdaggerdbl}xd5? runs into 20...\textdaggerdbl}xd5! 21.\textdaggerdbl}cxd5 \textdaggerdbl}c4 22.\textdaggerdbl}xc4 \textdaggerdbl}xc4 23.\textdaggerdbl}xc4 \textdaggerdbl}xc4 and Black's material advantage should tell) 20...\textdaggerdbl}fe8 21.\textdaggerdbl}xd5 \textdaggerdbl}f7 Black has active piece play.

20.\textdaggerdbl}bd1 \textdaggerdbl}g6 21.\textdaggerdbl}g3 e5\textdaggerdbl}

The position remains very complex. I eventually managed to score an important victory in Antonsen – Avrukh, Helsingor 2009.
This reminds me of the line with 12...\textit{xc}8, which I have also employed in a few games. Then after 13.\textit{d}d3 \textit{c}c7 14.\textit{d}d2 \textit{fd}8 White has recently been playing 15.\textit{fc}1, which is considered to be quite annoying for Black.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[very thin, gray] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[very thin, gray] (0.5,0.5) grid (7.5,7.5);
\draw[very thin, gray] (1,1) grid (7,7);
\draw[very thin, gray] (1.5,1.5) grid (6.5,6.5);
\draw[very thin, gray] (2,2) grid (6,6);
\draw[very thin, gray] (2.5,2.5) grid (5.5,5.5);
\draw[very thin, gray] (3,3) grid (5,5);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

15...\textit{b}6 16.\textit{h}6
This looks natural, but Black is ready for the exchange of dark-squared bishops.

16...\textit{x}h6 17.\textit{x}h6 \textit{xd}4 18.\textit{xd}4 \textit{d}d6
Immediately attacking the d4-pawn.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[very thin, gray] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[very thin, gray] (0.5,0.5) grid (7.5,7.5);
\draw[very thin, gray] (1,1) grid (7,7);
\draw[very thin, gray] (1.5,1.5) grid (6.5,6.5);
\draw[very thin, gray] (2,2) grid (6,6);
\draw[very thin, gray] (2.5,2.5) grid (5.5,5.5);
\draw[very thin, gray] (3,3) grid (5,5);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

19.e5
White tries an interesting tactical idea. Objectively the stronger option may be: 19.d5

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[very thin, gray] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[very thin, gray] (0.5,0.5) grid (7.5,7.5);
\draw[very thin, gray] (1,1) grid (7,7);
\draw[very thin, gray] (1.5,1.5) grid (6.5,6.5);
\draw[very thin, gray] (2,2) grid (6,6);
\draw[very thin, gray] (2.5,2.5) grid (5.5,5.5);
\draw[very thin, gray] (3,3) grid (5,5);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20...\textit{f}5!
I wanted more than the draw by perpetual check which results from 20...\textit{d}d7 21.\textit{c}c6 \textit{a}3 22.\textit{x}g6 (\textit{White cannot develop his attack with 22.\textit{g}3 because of 22...\textit{a}4\text{\textdagger}}) 22...\textit{fxg}6 23.\textit{x}g6\dagger \textit{hxg}6 24.\textit{x}g6\dagger \textit{h}8 25.\textit{h}6\dagger.

21.\textit{dxe}5 \textit{xe}5
The alternative 21...\textit{d}d2 leads to an equal endgame after 22.\textit{xd}x2 \textit{xd}2 23.\textit{c}c2 \textit{fd}8 24.\textit{bc}1 \textit{a}6 25.\textit{g}3 \textit{fxe}4 26.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xc}2 27.\textit{xc}2 \textit{d}d5.

22.\textit{g}5 \textit{a}6
A very concrete approach, although my engine prefers the "inhuman" 22...\textit{g}7.

23.\textit{f}4 \textit{d}4\dagger 24.\textit{h}1 \textit{fxe}4 25.\textit{e}6 \textit{d}6 26.\textit{xf}8!
Capturing the other rook is wrong: 26.\textit{xe}8 \textit{exf}3! 27.\textit{c}6 (27.\textit{xf}3 runs into the nice 27...\textit{e}2\text{\textdagger}) 27...\textit{f}2 28.\textit{xe}7\dagger \textit{g}7 29.\textit{f}1 \textit{xf}1 30.\textit{xf}1 \textit{e}6 Black obtains a winning advantage.
Chapter 19 – 12. $\text{f}b1$

26...exf3 27.gxf3 $\text{b}7$?

A more or less equal position also arises after 27...\text{xf8} 28.\text{d}1!.

$\text{g}4$?

My opponent played this mistake rather quickly. The correct continuation is 28.\text{xg6!Ng}4 $\text{xf3}$ 29.\text{gf1 $\text{d}3$} 30.\text{gf1 $\text{d}3$} 31.\text{gf1} and Black must give perpetual check, as after 31...hxg6? 32.\text{b}3 he would be in trouble.

28...\text{xf8} 29.\text{b}3 $\text{f}4$

Black had a clear advantage in Dubessay – Avrukh, Cannes 2011.

C) 13.\text{f}4

The most popular move in practice.

13...\text{c}8

I prefer this retreat to 13...e5 14.\text{g}3 cxd4 15.cxd4 \text{ad8 Kaspi – Khmelniker, Israel 2007;}
with 16.\text{h}1N White would keep annoying pressure along the h2-b8 diagonal.

14.d5 \text{a}5 15.\text{d}3 e5

After 15...c4 16.\text{c}2 e5 17.dxe6! \text{xe6} 18.\text{c}1 White is slightly better.

16.\text{e}3

An important move; Black should prevent c3-c4. The alternative is somewhat risky, but at the same time very interesting:

16...\text{f}5 17.\text{xf5 gxf5} 18.\text{c}4

Black has a sound game after 18.\text{h}1 b6
19.\text{g5 $\text{e}8$} 20.\text{g}3 $\text{g}6$.

18...b6

The alternative 18...e4 19.\text{xe4 fxe4} 20.\text{xf8} $\text{xf8}$ 21.\text{xe4 $\text{c}4$} leads to a complicated game with mutual chances, Trajanovski – Jakovljevic, Yugoslavia 1991.

19.\text{d}2 $\text{b}7$

It might be interesting to try 19...\text{e}4N 20.\text{xe4 fxe4} 21.\text{xe4 $\text{c}4$}
20.\text{g}3 $\text{e}8$ 21.\text{e}1

Black had no problems after 21.\text{c}3 $\text{g}6$
22.\text{c}2 $\text{d}6$ 23.\text{f}4 e4= in Seirawan – Fracnik, Lugano 1989.
21...\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}6} 22.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}3} \textit{ae}8 23.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}2} \textit{e}7 24.\textcolor{red}{\textit{b}2} \textit{fe}8 25.\textcolor{red}{\textit{e}2} \textit{h}5 26.\textcolor{red}{\textit{be}1} \textit{h}4 27.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}1} \textit{h}6 28.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}1} \textit{d}6


17.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}2} \textit{b}6

This prepares the manoeuvre \ldots \textit{b}7-d6.

18.f\textcolor{red}{4} f\textcolor{red}{6} 19.\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}3} \textit{b}7 20.\textcolor{red}{\textit{a}4}

\textbf{Conclusion}

After 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{b}1} \textit{c}7 White can take the game in various directions. Against A) 13.\textit{f}4 Black should accept the challenge and grab the pawn; although White obtains some compensation, Black is fine. Following 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}3} \textit{ad}8, I have personally faced both B1) 14.d5 and B2) 14.d2; in each case the position remains complex and roughly balanced. With C) 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}4} White crosses Black's plan of \ldots \textit{ad}8 and then \ldots \textit{c}8. However the bishop is a bit exposed on f4, and in the main line Black plays 15...e5 followed by 16...c4, and obtains good play.

We have been following J. Ivanov – Koziak, La Roda 2007. Black should now unexpectedly change direction and play:

20...\textit{exf}4N 21.\textit{xf}4 \textit{e}8?N

After the trade of light-squared bishops Black may bring his knight to c5, with the idea of penetrating to the d3-square.
Variation Index

1. d4 .gf6 2. c4  g6 3. e3  d5 4. cxd5  xd5 5. e4  xc3 6. bxc3  g7 7. c4  c5
   8. e2  c6 9. e3  0–0 10. 0–0

A) 11. d2
B) 11. f4
C) 11. d5
D) 11. c1  d7
   D1) 12. d1
   D2) 12. d3
   D3) 12. b1
E) 11. b1  b6
   E1) 12. dxc5
   E2) 12. f3
   E3) 12. f4

B) note to 13. d5
D2) after 12. d3
E3) after 18. fd1

15... g5!N
12... d6N
18... c5N
1. d4 d6 2. c4 g6 3. c3 d5 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. e4 c6xc3 6. bxc3 g7 7. c4 c5 8. c2 c6 9. c3 0-0 10. 0-0 c7

This move usually leads to a big main line after 11. c1 d8, but this is not my intention here. Instead I will give the lesser known, but equally viable 11...b6!?. The details of this line can be found in the next chapter.

In this chapter we shall cover all the other relevant options: A) 11. d2, B) 11. f4, C) 11. d5, D) 11. c1 and E) 11. b1.

A) 11. d2

Here a small problem is that if Black plays 11...d8, then 12. c1 leads us straight into a big tabiya, which falls outside of the recommended repertoire. Luckily Black can use the slightly vulnerable position of the c4-bishop:

11...xd4

I would like to briefly mention the following alternative: 11...d7 12. c1 d8 13. h6 a5 14. d3 e5 15. h1

This all happened in Lutsko – Azarov, Minsk 2010. Now 15...f5!N would have lead to a complex game with fully adequate play for Black.

12. cxd4 d4

Less good is 12...e5, as after 13. b3 g4 14. f4 e5 15. g3 White was simply better in Bonrud – Hendrick, Dallas 1997.

13. xf7†

The only move that avoids losing a pawn.
13...\texttt{exf7}

13...\texttt{exf7} was tried out in Vuong Trung - Pham Hoai, Vung Tau 2005. This is brave, of course, but I am a bit concerned about the vulnerable position of the black king. White can improve upon that game by capturing the knight with his bishop: 14.\texttt{xd4N \texttt{ed}8 15.e3} White has the better chances.

14.\texttt{xd4}

A complicated battle lies ahead. Black should have at least equal chances thanks to the two bishops and the extra pawn on the queenside.

14...\texttt{d7N}

The idea behind this novelty is of course to quickly mobilize the queenside forces, but it is also important to have the resource ...\texttt{a4} to harass White, should he decide to place one of his rooks on d1.

In Bouma - Thomas, e-mail 1996, Black went for 14...\texttt{d6}. Here White should have continued with 15.\texttt{fd1N \texttt{d}7 16.e2! \texttt{a4} 17.d2, instead of 15.f1 c6 16.c6 \texttt{d}8 17.f3 e5 18.b3 \texttt{x}d2 19.xd2 \texttt{b}7, which gave Black a decent game.

15.a4

Black easily solves his problems after: 15.a1 \texttt{d6} 16.fd1 \texttt{a4} 17.b3 \texttt{x}d2 18.xd2 b6=

12.\texttt{g3}

This is the most natural move, keeping Black restrained, but we should of course also look at:

15...\texttt{d8} 16.a2 \texttt{g4! 17.a1 \texttt{d7}
In this instance it is useful for Black to exchange the dark-squared bishops in order to avoid an unpleasant pin.

More principled is 13.\textit{xe5}N and after 13...\textit{xe5} 14.\textit{d5} \textit{e6} 15.\textit{f4} \textit{ae8} 16.\textit{c4} \textit{e7} the position is complex, offering the players mutual chances.

After 13...\textit{e6} 14.\textit{d5} \textit{ad8} 15.\textit{xe5}

the position is more or less equal.

15...\textit{xe5}

This is too aggressive. White could have maintained the balance with 16.\textit{f4}N.

16...\textit{c4} 17.\textit{d3} b5

Black already had a clear positional advantage in Caceres – Retamozo, Lima 1993.

Black has a reasonable alternative in:

12...\textit{e7}

The following interesting game showcases some of Black’s ideas.

13.\textit{c5} \textit{e5} 14.\textit{d6}

This looks quite challenging for Black, but Vallejo found a remarkable (and strong) idea.

14...\textit{b6} 15.\textit{d5}

The main point behind Black’s play is of course the queen sacrifice 15.\textit{b1} \textit{xc4}!

16.\textit{x}b6 \textit{xb6}, when Black has nice positional compensation.

Black was already a pawn up and on his way to claiming the full point in Del Rio Angelis – Vallejo Pons, Calvia 2005.
13.d5

Again we should consider 13.dxe5. The correct response is 13...dxe5 14.d5 e6, when after 15.f4, as in Bator – Konopka, Gistrup 1992, Black should play:

15...g5!N Fighting for the d5-square. After the possible line 16.d3 c4 17.b1 xxd5 18.exd5 b6 19.g4 d2 20.e1 d8 21.bd1 f5 22.h5 c4 Black consolidates just in time, with a decent game.

13...a5

14.d6

Again this push looks to be the most challenging move.

After 14.d3 c4 15.c2, which was White's choice in Csonkics – Kis, Hungary 1992, we have a thematic position for this variation. Black should have reacted with the standard idea 15...b6N 16.d2 b7, transferring the knight to the ideal d6-square, with promising play.

14...d7 15.d5 h8 16.f4 xxd6 17.xe5 xxe5 18.xf7 xg3 19.xg3 xxd1 20.ad1 g7 21.d5 g4=

Black is by no means worse in this endgame, Davidov – Gusan, e-mail 2007.

C) 11.d5 a5

12.d3

As the bishop has no other sensible squares, there is only one alternative to consider:
12.\textit{d}f4 \textit{d}7 13.\textit{b}b3
This slightly odd move has actually occurred twice in practical play.
After 13.\textit{d}d3 I strongly recommend:
13...e6N (after 13...e5 14.\textit{e}e3 \textit{c}4 15.\textit{c}c2 \textit{b}6 16.f4 \textit{f}6 17.f5\textsuperscript{+} Black looked to be in some danger in Bator – Zezulkin, Gistrup 1992)
14.dxe6 fxe6! Fighting for the d5-square. (I prefer this to 14...\textit{f}xe6 15.\textit{g}g3! followed by the \textit{f}4-d5 manoeuvre.) 15.\textit{b}b1 \textit{b}6 Black has a good game.

13...b6N
This idea appeals to me a lot more than 13...\textit{b}5, which has previously been played here. Black's idea is to activate the bishop on a6, which is logical now that the queen is on d7.
14.\textit{c}c1
14.\textit{d}d3 \textit{e}6 is good for Black.
14...\textit{x}xb3!
14...\textit{a}a6 15.\textit{c}c4 \textit{b}5 16.\textit{x}xb5 \textit{xb}5 17.\textit{e}e1 \textit{xb}3 18.\textit{ax}b3 might be slightly worse for Black, so the bishop should be eliminated.
15.\textit{ax}b3 \textit{a}5
The idea of ...\textit{a}5-a4, along with the two bishops, should offer Black great counterplay in the middlegame.

12...\textit{e}6 13.\textit{b}b1
White has so far failed to prove sufficient compensation for the exchange after 13.c4 \textit{xa}1 14.\textit{xa}1. Willetts – D. Howell, Kidlington 2001, continued with 14...\textit{f}6 15.\textit{h}h6 \textit{f}7 16.f4
b6 17.h4 exd5 18.exd5 \textit{e}7 19.\textit{e}e1 \textit{e}3\textsuperscript{+} leading to a big advantage for Black.

13...\textit{xd}5 14.\textit{xd}5
At this point there is only one sensible move.

14...\textit{b}6N
14...\textit{c}4? is premature. After 15.\textit{c}c2 \textit{g}g4 16.f3 \textit{d}7 17.d6 \textit{c}8 18.d4\textsuperscript{+} White had a clear positional edge in Vasilev – Drenchev, Borovets 2008.
15.\textit{e}e1 \textit{e}5 16.h3 \textit{e}8 17.c4 \textit{b}7
With ...\textit{d}6 coming soon, promising Black adequate counterplay.

D) 11.\textit{c}1
This move has been played many times, but has never been rated highly by theory.

11...\texttt{d7}

Out of the huge range of possible continuations, this is the one I like the most. Black immediately tries to underline the somewhat vulnerable position of White's bishop on c4. He intends to follow up with \ldots\texttt{ac8}, after which White must constantly watch out for \ldots\texttt{cx}d4 followed by a random knight jump.

We should look briefly at what the options would be if Black decided to play similarly to our main line:

11...b6 12.h6

12...\texttt{b7}N

The only game played from this position went 12...\texttt{xh}6 13.xh6 \texttt{cx}d4 14.cxd4 \texttt{xd}4, but after 15.xf7\texttt{xf}7 16.xd4 Black had definite problems. In the game he lost quickly after 16\ldots\texttt{c5} (I tried to make 16\ldots\texttt{f}4N work, but after 17.xf4 \texttt{xf}4 18.f3 \texttt{d}7 19.xc1 White has unpleasant long-term pressure.) 17.xf3! \texttt{g}4?! 18.xc1 \texttt{a}3? 19.e5\texttt{--}, and it was already reasonable to contemplate resigning, Cerezo Montes – Garcia Carpallo, Aragon 1997.

13.\texttt{h}6

In one game White played 13.b5?. This serious error allows a typical tactic:
Black was clearly better in Dudyev – Ziuliarkin, Rodatychi 2006.

I believe White’s best move is 13...b1N. Then after 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 Black has a choice between 14...a6 15.a3 b5 16.d3 a5 with balanced play, and the more energetic 14...a5 15.d3 a4 16.e1 c5 17.xc2 xc2 18.a3 c4 19.xc7 xc3 20.fxe3 b5! when Black has good compensation for the pawn.

13...cxd4!N

An obvious novelty. For some reason Black opted for 13...a5 in the two previous games to reach this position. Maybe this is a typical case of knowing some standard ideas, but not understanding when they are desirable and when they are unnecessary.

14.xg7 xg7 15.cxd4

15...b4! 16.b3 xc1 17.axc1 b5

Black has taken over the initiative and will surely enjoy playing this endgame.

D2) 12.d3

This retreat has occurred twice in practical play. Here I found an unexpected way to put pressure on the white centre.

12...d6!N 13.b2

There are a few ideas behind the last move. One of them works out after: 13.d1 cxd4 14.cxd4 b4 15.b1 White cannot aspire to play for an advantage if he gives up the light-squared bishop. 15...fc8 16.b2 b6!

14.xg7 xg7 15.cxd4

Here we see the idea, to meet 17.a3 with 17...c2! invading the white position. And after 17.d2 Black plays 17...c4 with the
powerful idea 18.a3 $\text{eac8}$!, which offers him good counterplay. The knight remains untouchable, as after 19.axb4 $\text{AXB4}$ 20.$\text{Wa2} \text{a4}$ Black wins.

13...cxd4 14.exd4 $\text{f8d8}$ 15.f8d1
15.$\text{f8d1}$ is comfortably met by 15...$\text{b4}$=.

15...e6

16.$\text{eac1}$
If White gets greedy with 16.$\text{Wxb7}?!$ his fortune will quickly turn after 16...$\text{ab8}$ 17.$\text{Wxa6}$ $\text{xd4}+$, when he will need to play some accurate moves to avoid drifting into a seriously worse position.

And if White plays 16.$\text{b5}$, then 16...a6 17.$\text{a4} \text{c4}$! Black has the better bishops and the more pleasant game.

16...$\text{xd4}$ 17.$\text{Wxb7} \text{ab8}$ 18.$\text{Wxa7} \text{ba8}$ 19.$\text{Wxc7}$
Also 19.$\text{Wb7} \text{db8}$ 20.$\text{Wc7} \text{xe2}+$ 21.$\text{xe2} \text{xc7}$ 22.$\text{xc7} \text{xa2}$= is quite safe for Black.

19...$\text{xc7}$ 20.$\text{xc7} \text{xe2}+$ 21.$\text{xe2} \text{xd1}+$
22.$\text{xd1} \text{xa2}$=
The game will end in a draw, or with one of the players committing suicide, on the board and then outside the playing hall.

This position occurred in Paessler – Balcazar Novoa, e-mail 2001. Now I like the natural idea:

14...a6$
$N
The following approximate line seems reasonable:

15.$\text{fc1} \text{a5}$ 16.$\text{b3}$
Black is absolutely fine after 16.$\text{xa5} \text{xa5}$ 17.$\text{d3} b5$.

16...b5 17.$\text{d3} e6$
We have a thematic, complex Grünfeld middlegame, with chances for both players.

E) 11.$\text{b1} b6$

D3) 12.$\text{b1} \text{ac8}$ 13.$\text{a3} \text{xd4} 14.\text{cx}d4
I like this move, played in the spirit of our main line. At this point it is worth considering the following options: E1) 12.dxc5, E2) 12.f3 and E3) 12.\(\text{f4}\).

**E1) 12.dxc5**

This move always needs to be checked, but almost universally Black gets good positional compensation for the pawn.

12...\(\text{e}5\) 13.d5 \(\text{e}8\)

14.cxb6

14.f4 is quite challenging, but also rather likely to backfire. Black played strongly in the following encounter: 14...\(\text{g}4\) 15.cxb6 axb6 16.d4 \(\text{x}d4\)† 17.cxd4 (17.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{a}6\)! is inferior for White) 17...\(\text{e}3\) 18.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{x}d5\) 19.exd5 \(\text{d}6\) 20.c6

17...\(\text{a}8\)N 18.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{a}6\) 19.c4 \(\text{h}c8\)

Black has excellent compensation.

**E2) 12.f3**

12...\(\text{d}8\)

Again we have the tactical option 12...\(\text{c}d4\) 13.\(\text{x}d4\) \(\text{c}d4\), but after the counterblow 14.\(\text{xf7}\)† \(\text{xf7}\) 15.\(\text{x}d4\) \(\text{a}6\) 16.\(\text{f}2\), White
emerges with a better position due to the slightly weakened black pawn structure.

13.\textit{f}4 \textit{b}7
This non-standard square looks a strange place to put the queen, but concretely it works out well.

14.d5 \textit{a}5 15.\textit{b}5
If White plays 15.\textit{d}3, then Black replies 15...c4 16.\textit{c}2 e6 with good counterplay in the centre.

15...d7 16.\textit{c}5 \textit{a}5 17.\textit{d}5 \textit{e}5 18.\textit{d}5 \textit{c}4

Black cannot be prevented from completing the thematic transfer of the knight to the excellent d6-square. Furthermore the threat of ...\textit{e}3 means that White does not have time to arrange to meet ...\textit{d}6 with c3-c4.

20.\textit{d}3 \textit{d}6 21.\textit{b}2 c4!
It is essential to prevent White from reinforcing his centre with c3-c4.

22.\textit{c}2 \textit{b}8
Black is preparing the ...f5 advance, and clearly has a fine game, Lautier – Kamsky, Belgrade 1991.

E3) 12.\textit{f}4

12...e5
Again this makes most sense.

13.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}7
Black does not delay removing his queen from the unpleasant pin.

14.\textit{d}5 \textit{b}7 15.\textit{a}4 \textit{f}8
It is also worth considering the following idea: 15...\textit{a}5?!N 16.dxe5

16...\textit{d}5! (accurate play is needed, as White would be better after 16...\textit{xe}5 17.c4!)
17.exd5 \textit{xe}5 18.\textit{f}e1 \textit{f}6 With a complex game ahead.

16.dxe5 \textit{xe}5
17. \textit{\textbf{f4}}  
17.\textit{c4} leads to an unbalanced position:  
17...\textit{\textbf{exd5}} 18.\textit{\textbf{exd5}} (18.\textit{\textbf{cxd5}} allows 18...\textit{\textbf{c4}}! with nice counterplay for Black; the passed c-pawn is certainly an asset.) 18...\textit{\textbf{e8}}

17...\textit{\textbf{c4}} 18.\textit{\textbf{fd1}}

This position occurred in Le Quang – Ponomariov, Dortmund 2010. Here I found a nice improvement:

18...\textit{\textbf{c5N}} 19.\textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{xd5}} 20.\textit{\textbf{xd5}} \textit{\textbf{e8}}

21.\textit{\textbf{c2}}

The endgame after 21.\textit{\textbf{xe8\#}} \textit{\textbf{exe8}} 22.\textit{\textbf{xe5}} \textit{\textbf{exe5\#}} should give Black adequate play, based on the \textit{...f5} break.

21...\textit{\textbf{d3\#}}?

I find this exchange sacrifice very tempting. The powerful knight on d3 offers Black fine compensation.

22.\textit{\textbf{c7}} \textit{\textbf{xc7}} 23.\textit{\textbf{xc7}} \textit{\textbf{we7}} 24.\textit{\textbf{g3}}

24...\textit{\textbf{a3\#}}

If White chooses to return the exchange then Black will obtain strong counterplay against his pawns. I have not been able to find a way for White to play for an advantage.

\textbf{Conclusion}

10...\textit{\textbf{a7}} is Black's most popular move from the starting position of the chapter, and has been played in thousands of games. The queen move is normally associated with a quick \textit{\textbf{ed8}}, but I am yet to be convinced of the merits of this plan, which is why I am advocating a different approach based on an early \textit{\textbf{b6}}. We saw this plan working well against E) 11.\textit{\textbf{b1}} in the present chapter, although White's position is not without bite and the lines should be studied carefully.

Of course the real test lies in the main line of 11.\textit{\textbf{c1}}, after which my recommendation of 11...\textit{\textbf{b6?}} can be found in the next chapter.
Chapter 21

7. \texttt{c4}

11...\texttt{b6}!? 

Variation Index

1.\texttt{d4 \texttt{f6} 2.\texttt{c4 \texttt{g6} 3.\texttt{c3 \texttt{d5} 4.\texttt{cxd5 \texttt{exd5} 5.\texttt{e4 \texttt{c3} 6.\texttt{xc3 \texttt{g7} 7.\texttt{c4 \texttt{c5} 8.\texttt{e2 \texttt{c6} 9.\texttt{e3 0-0} 10.0-0 \texttt{c7} 11.\texttt{c1}}}}}}}

11...\texttt{b6}!?

A) \texttt{12.f4} 243
B) \texttt{12.\texttt{f4}} 245
C) \texttt{12.\texttt{xc5}} 246
D) \texttt{12.\texttt{d2 \texttt{b7} 13.\texttt{h6 \texttt{ad8}}} 247}
   D1) \texttt{14.\texttt{g5}} 248
   D2) \texttt{14.\texttt{fd1}} 249
   D3) \texttt{14.\texttt{bg7 \texttt{xg7} 15.\texttt{e3 e5}}} 249
      D31) \texttt{16.d5} 250
      D32) \texttt{16.\texttt{b5}} 251
      D33) \texttt{16.\texttt{d5}} 252

B) after 19.\texttt{exe4}

D31) after 19.\texttt{d3}

D33) after 18.\texttt{f4}
1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.e4 Oxc3 6.bxc3 Og7 7.c4 c5 8.0e2 0c6
9.Ke3 0-0 10.0-0 wc7 11.Ac1

The main continuation, played in no less than 84% of the games from this position. So although it is important to keep an eye on the lines in the previous chapter, this is where you are likely to do business.

11...b6?

Rather a forgotten continuation, played in less than one in forty of the games from this position. Your opponents will certainly be familiar with the standard move 11...Oxd8, which is played in more than nine out of ten games.

But obviously White has plenty of legal moves in this position, many of them tried out in practice, creating quite a few branches for us to climb along. The main options are A) 12.f4, B) 12.Of4, C) 12.dxc5 and finally D) 12.0d2. The last still is by far the main line here, and we shall spend a lot of time on it later on in the chapter.

We should also have a quick look at the following options:

12.f4

12...e6N

I prefer to immediately control the d5-square, rather than allowing any ideas connected with Of4-d5.

12...Ob7 was Black's choice in Berczes - Szembery, Budapest 2005, but now 13.0d5N Oxd8 14.dxc5 e6 15.Ob4 would have been quite dangerous for Black.

13.d5

This is obviously the testing move.

13.e5 Ob7 14.0g4 Oe7 followed by ...Oe5 leads to a very nice game for Black.

13...Oxd8!

Accurate play is needed. 13...Oa5 14.Ab5 a6 15.0e2 e5 16.d6 Od8 17.Od5 Oxd6 18.Ob1 gives White a lot of activity.

14.0c2 Oa5 15.0e2 e5 16.Od3 Oc4 Black has a decent game.

12.f3 Ob7

Now 13.Od2 would transpose to a position examined in line D after 12.Od2 Ob7 13.f3. For this reason we only need to check the following move here:

13.Oe1
This has been played in two games. I managed to find a logical continuation:
13...\text{b}c8\text{N} 14.\text{w}h4

If White plays 14.\text{w}f2, then Black replies with 14...\text{c}a5 15.\text{d}d3 cxd4 16.cxd4 \text{w}d6
17.\text{c}e3 \text{a}6, with ideas such as ...\text{w}a3 and ...
\text{b}b4 securing Black a good game.
14...cxd4 15.cxd4 \text{w}d6! 16.e5 \text{w}b4 17.\text{g}g5 \text{e}6
Black is doing fine. 18.\text{f}6 is not a dangerous idea, as after 18...\text{f}x6 19.exf6 \text{f}d8! Black always has the defensive resource \text{w}f8.

\textbf{A) 12.f4}

White is looking for immediate action on the kingside. This certainly has some logic given that Black has been focusing on the centre and queenside with his last two moves. Black has to react precisely:

12...\text{e}6!

13.\text{f}5!? 

Quite a principled way of playing the position – White is certainly not thinking about the endgame.

We should also have a quick look at a few other options:

13.\text{w}e1 \text{c}a5
13...\text{b}7\text{N} 14.\text{w}h4 \text{e}7 is also an option worth considering.

14.\text{d}3 \text{f}5
This is the standard reaction to White's aggressive stance on the kingside. Black does not want the battle for his king's future to take place on the sixth or seventh rank.

15.dxc5 bxc5 16.\text{w}f2

16...\text{f}d8
Giving up the f5-square with 16...fxe4 would be a positional concession. It is important to keep this square and restrict White's minor pieces. 17.\text{xe}4 \text{b}7 was played in Shen Yang – Bu Xiangzhi, Hefei (rapid) 2010, and now the simple 18.\text{g}3\text{N would have offered White the better chances.}

17.\text{f}d1 \text{f}8!
Black keeps everything under control.

18.\text{h}1

So far we have followed Krush–Charochkina, Moscow 2008. At this point I don't see any reason to refrain from natural development:
18...\texttt{b7}!N
The bishop belongs here and the e6-pawn is a grown boy in no need of protection.

19.\texttt{g3} \texttt{ab8} sp
Black's position seems preferable.

13.\texttt{d3} \texttt{d8}

Black had the better chances in this complex middlegame in Kudrin – Elizarov, Tula 2004.

14.\texttt{e1}

I also examined the following principled continuation: 14.\texttt{f5} exf5 15.exf5 (15.\texttt{g5} is not dangerous, in view of 15...\texttt{e7}
16.exf5 \texttt{xf5}! 17.\texttt{x}f5 \texttt{xe}5 18.\texttt{xd}8
\texttt{xd}8 when Black has great compensation for the exchange) 15...\texttt{e7} (not 15...\texttt{d}6
16.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{d}7 17.\texttt{g}3! followed by \texttt{e}4, with an initiative for White) 16.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{cxd}4
17.\texttt{cx}d4 \texttt{cx}d4 18.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{xd}4\texttt{g} 19.\texttt{xd}4
\texttt{xd}4 20.\texttt{c}e1 Now Black should take the chance to simplify the position with 20...\texttt{xd}3! 21.\texttt{xd}3 \texttt{c}5\texttt{g} 22.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{xe}3\texttt{g} 23.\texttt{xe}3 \texttt{xf}5, leading to a drawish endgame.

14...\texttt{d}7 sp
Increasing the pressure on the d4-pawn.

15.\texttt{b}5??
It is understandable that White did not like 15.e5 \texttt{b}7, but still this was already the lesser evil.

15...a6 16.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xc}6 17.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{cxd}4
17...a5N followed by ...\texttt{a}6 also looks very strong.

18.cxd4 \texttt{a}4 sp

14.\texttt{g}3

White offers a pawn, but he can of course also recapture at once:

14.exf5 \texttt{e}7?! 14...\texttt{xf}5 is also possible. In Chess Informant 18 Savon gives 15.\texttt{xf}5 gxf5 16.\texttt{g}3, considering this position to be dangerous for Black. In the computer era such emotional evaluations are becoming rare, as it is possible to check such assumptions accurately. In this case Black is almost winning after 16...cxd4!
17...exd4 Qxd4! For example: 18.Qh5 (18.exd4 Bxd8 19.Qxf5 Qxd4+ 20.Qxd4 Qxf4+ --) 18...e5 19.Qf4 Qe4 20.Qh6 (20.Qd3 Qe6+) 20...exd5 21.Qxd8 Qe3+ 22.Qh1 Qxf8 Black is much better.

15.Qd2 Qxf5 16.Qg5 Qd7 17.Qg3 Qa5 18.Qc2

All this occurred in the game Knaak - Savon, Halle 1974. The improvement is not surprising:

18...Qe6N

However, it leaves Black with a serious advantage.

14...Qa5! 15.Qd5 Qb7 16.Qxc5

Just bad is 16.Qxb7? Qxb7 17.exf5 Qc4+.

13.Qg3

The standard idea in these positions, as we saw in the previous chapter. Fortunately it fails to pose Black any serious problems in this version either.

13...Qb7 14.d5

I also checked 14.Qd3, when 14...Qa5 15.d5 transposes to the main line, while 15.f4 is strongly met by 15...f5! giving Black nice counterplay.

14...Qa5 15.Qd3 c4 16.Qb1 Qc5

It is useful to get this move in before carrying out the standard break ...f7-f5.

17.Qh1 f5 18.f4

White needs to play actively. After 18.f3 f4 19.Qf2 Qd6 Black has a clear focus on the kingside in the spirit of the King's Indian, while it is entirely unclear what White is trying to do.

18...fxe4 19.Qxe4
So far we have been following Ludgate – J. Littlewood, Blackpool 1971. It is not hard to improve upon Black's play here:

The active 13.\texttt{d5#} looks quite tempting. I think this is best met with the following idea: 13...\texttt{e5!} 14.\texttt{xa8} \texttt{xc4\#} (an interesting alternative is 14...\texttt{a6?!} 15.\texttt{xf8#} \texttt{xf8} 16.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{c6}, with the idea that after 17.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xa6} 18.\texttt{d4} \texttt{d3!} Black has good compensation) 15.\texttt{d5} \texttt{xe3} 16.\texttt{fxe3} \texttt{h6} Black has a lot of play for the exchange. The dark squares look very tender.

I also considered what would happen after the 'too greedy to be true' 13.\texttt{xc5}?. Still this most unfortunate decision was taken in R. Graf – Brunsch, Leipzig 2000. Here Black missed the strong idea 13...\texttt{d8!#}, with the point that after 14.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{e5} 15.\texttt{b5} \texttt{a5} 16.\texttt{b3} \texttt{xc4} 17.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{d7} Black is clearly better.

20...\texttt{e5#}

This novelty is a good deal stronger than 13...\texttt{e6} 14.\texttt{d3} \texttt{a5} 15.\texttt{a4!} which allowed White to apply serious pressure on the black position in Pekarek – Smékal, Prague 1989.

14.\texttt{d5}

The most challenging move. After 14.\texttt{e2} \texttt{e6} Black has a comfortable game.

14...\texttt{d7} 15.\texttt{b3} \texttt{e6} 16.\texttt{xc5}

Another line goes 16.\texttt{f4} \texttt{c6} 17.\texttt{xc5} exd5 18.\texttt{xf8} \texttt{xf8} 19.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{b8}\# and Black's position seems preferable to me.

16...\texttt{exd5} 17.\texttt{xf8} \texttt{xf8} 18.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{b8}

Black has a good position, with two pieces for the rook and control of the open b-file. As it is quite natural for White to challenge this, I examined:

19.\texttt{b1} \texttt{xb1} 20.\texttt{xb1}
20...\texttt{Qf3}!

Black has other playable options, but this is too attractive to ignore.

21.\texttt{Sh1}

White should refrain from capturing the knight, since after 21.\texttt{gxh3} \texttt{Qe5} followed by \texttt{...Nh3}, Black has a crushing attack.

21.\texttt{Qe5} 22.\texttt{Wd3} \texttt{Qxb2} 23.f4 \texttt{Qxf1} 24.\texttt{fxe5} \texttt{Qb7} 25.\texttt{c4} \texttt{Qxd5} 26.\texttt{cxd5}

26.\texttt{Qg4} 27.\texttt{Qxf1} \texttt{Qxe4} 28.\texttt{e6}=

The position is drawn. The power of the white pawns forces Black to take a perpetual check, sooner or later. Sooner makes more sense.

13.\texttt{Nh6}

There has only been one game in this position in which White did not play this logical move; or two if you include transpositions.

13.\texttt{f3} \texttt{Qfd8}

There is also nothing wrong with 13...\texttt{Qad8}, as played in Vedrunes – Zigura, Massy 1993.

14.\texttt{Qd1} \texttt{Qac8} 15.\texttt{Qe1} \texttt{cxd4} 16.\texttt{cxd4}

16.\texttt{Qd6}!N

An active new idea. In Urbankova – Koutecky, Klatovy 1999, Black played less energetically with 16...\texttt{Qb8} 17.\texttt{Qh4} \texttt{Qa5} 18.\texttt{Qd3} \texttt{e6}, but still obtained a decent, if slightly passive, position.

17.\texttt{e5}

If White plays into 17.\texttt{Qh4} \texttt{Qa5} 18.\texttt{Qd3}
W3a+ he will find Black's counterplay to be very annoying.
17...Wb4 18.d2 Wa4
Even the seemingly risky 18...Wb2?! comes into consideration.
19.b3 Wa6
Black has a good game.

13...ad8

Here we have a serious branching point. The most common approach is to exchange the bishops, but White has tried other moves as well. So our lines are D1) 14.g5, D2) 14.fd1 and then of course D3) 14.xg7.

D1) 14.g5

14...xh6N
An improvement on the only game to reach this position, which continued: 14..a5 15.xg7 xg7 16.d3 f6 17.h4 g5?! 18.h5 e5 19.g3 c6 20.d5 White was better due to the weakness of the f5-square, Gligoric - Razuvaev, Ljubljana/Portoroz 1973.

15.xh6 a5 16.d3 e5

With or without bishops, this is a standard push in these lines. Black is hoping to get his knight to d6 as usual, as well as simply wanting to challenge the white centre.

17.f4
The most dangerous option. After the compliant 17.d5 c4 18.c2 c8! Black reaches exactly the type of position he is aiming for. We can imagine the natural continuation 19.f6 20.h1 b7 21.xe5 fxe5 22.g1 e7 23.f3 d6= leading to simple equality.

17...f6
This move not only reinforces the centre, it also gives Black the important defensive resource ...Wg7.

18.d5
I also examined 18.h4, but White's centre looks vulnerable: 18...exd4 19.cxd4 We7!
20.f5 g5 21.\texttt{ag4} \texttt{g8}! With better chances for Black.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[very thick] (1,1) -- (1,7) (2,2) -- (7,2) (3,3) -- (3,8) (4,4) -- (4,8) (5,5) -- (5,8) (6,6) -- (6,8) (7,7) -- (7,8);
\draw[thin] (0.5,0.5) -- (7.5,0.5) (0.5,0.5) -- (0.5,7.5) (0.5,7.5) -- (7.5,7.5) (0.5,7.5) -- (7.5,7.5) (0.5,0.5) -- (7.5,0.5);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

18...\texttt{c4} 19.\texttt{a2} \texttt{c8}

Black has achieved exactly the kind of position he has been praying for; similar to the one examined in the note to move 17.

**D2) 14.\texttt{c6d1}**

I hope that by now Black’s reaction will seem quite standard to you.

14...\texttt{a5} 15.\texttt{d3} \texttt{e5} 16.\texttt{xg7} \texttt{xg7} 17.\texttt{e3}

Up to this point we have been following Liang Chong – Bu Xiangzhi, Shandong 2007.

I should mention that Black has a good version of the standard structure after 17.\texttt{d5} \texttt{c4} 18.\texttt{c2} \texttt{g5}! 19.\texttt{g3} \texttt{c8}, followed by the \ldots \texttt{b7-d6} manoeuvre. I prefer Black.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[very thick] (1,1) -- (1,7) (2,2) -- (7,2) (3,3) -- (3,8) (4,4) -- (4,8) (5,5) -- (5,8) (6,6) -- (6,8) (7,7) -- (7,8);
\draw[thin] (0.5,0.5) -- (7.5,0.5) (0.5,0.5) -- (0.5,7.5) (0.5,7.5) -- (7.5,7.5) (0.5,7.5) -- (7.5,7.5) (0.5,0.5) -- (7.5,0.5);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

17...\texttt{d6}!N

This idea is also becoming standard by now. White is forced to clarify the pawn structure in the centre.

18.\texttt{xe5}

After 18.\texttt{d5} \texttt{c4} 19.\texttt{c2} \texttt{c8} Black’s knight is ready to go to the c5-square via b7. Black is also thinking about how to carry out the \ldots \texttt{f5} break.

18...\texttt{xe5} 19.\texttt{f4} \texttt{e7} 20.\texttt{g3} \texttt{f6}

Black has a good position.

**D3) 14.\texttt{xg7} \texttt{xg7}**
15.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{W}e3}

After 15.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{W}}fd1, as played in Pesout – Zigura, Pardubice 1992, Black should continue with 15...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{Q}}a5 16.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{Q}}d3 e5, transposing to line D2 above.

15...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e}}5

We have reached the last branching point of the book (unless you are the type that reads indexes for fun). The options to consider at this point are: D31) 16.d5, D32) 16.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{b}}5 and the main line D33) 16.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d}}5.

On top of this I should mention that after 16.dxc5?! \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{Q}}a5! Black is already a bit better.

D31) 16.d5

16.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{Q}}e7

This move is fully playable, but I actually prefer the following active option:
16...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{Q}}a5?! N 17.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d}}3 c4

17...f5 is quite challenging for White, but at the same time also quite risky for Black: 18.exf5 Otherwise ...f5-f4 is coming. 18...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{x}}d5 19.fxe6 hxg6 I don’t see any concrete problems, but the vulnerable position of Black’s king might tell in the long term.
18.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{c}}2 \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{c}}8

Black is ready to follow up with \ldots\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{Q}}b7-d6, with a good game.

17.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{g}}3 \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{f}}6 18.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{h}}4

White probably wasn’t satisfied with 18.f4 exf4 19.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{xf}}4 \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e}}5! when Black is ready to follow up with the \ldots\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{Q}}c8-d6 manoeuvre and has prospects of an easy game.

18.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{c}}8 19.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d}}3

19...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{c}}4N

It is vital to play this intermediate move.

After 19...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d}}6, as played in Fier – Caruana, Gibraltar 2011, White can reply with the typical 20.c4!N. (Instead he played 20.f4 in the game. After 20...exf4 21.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{x}}f4 \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e}}7 22.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{f}}2 \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e}}5 23.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{x}}e5 fxe5 24.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{f}}f1 \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{c}}4 25.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{c}}2 \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{c}}8 Black got a nice position, with a structure and ideas
typical for this line.) After 20...h5 21.a4 I don’t like Black's position. It seems passive, and even though it might be tenable, White has a much more joyful experience ahead, combining queenside play and kingside ambitions.

20.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{d}6\) 21.\(f4\)

21.h5 is not dangerous for Black, as he can react calmly with 21...\(\text{c}8\).

21...\(\text{exf}4\) 22.\(\text{xf}4\)

22.\(\text{xf}4\) \(\text{e}7\) is not that much different.

22...\(\text{e}7\) 23.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{e}5\) 24.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{c}8\) 25.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{d}e8\)

The position seems pretty balanced.

D32) 16.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{a}5\) 17.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{e}7\)

18.\(\text{dxe}5\)

White initiates an attack on the kingside, which can seem quite a challenge for Black to face. But at the same time White is making a long-term concession, weakening his pawn structure slightly. Although this is all very fascinating, we should not lose sight of the other options at this point:

18.\(\text{dxe}5\) is a concession of sorts. After the natural 18...\(\text{xc}5\) White almost has to force a draw by perpetual with 19.\(\text{h}5\)†, otherwise he will be positionally worse.

If he is eager to avoid the draw, Black can play 18...\(\text{bxc}5\) 19.\(\text{fd}1\)∞ leading to a complex and interesting game.

18.\(\text{fd}1\) \(\text{cxd}4\) 19.\(\text{cxd}4\) \(\text{exd}4\) 20.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 21.\(\text{xd}4\)† \(\text{f}6\) Black has no problems finding adequate play.

18.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{c}4\) 19.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{exf}4\) 20.\(\text{xf}4\) \(\text{f}5\)! leads to a very complex game, which is in no way worse for Black.

18...\(\text{xe}5\) 19.\(\text{f}4\)

White has also tried: 19.\(\text{fd}1\) \(\text{e}7\) 20.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 21.\(\text{e}2\)

This was played in the old game Averbakh – Botvinnik, Moscow 1956. I believe Black could have secured himself a slightly better game with 21...\(\text{e}5\)N 22.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{f}6\) 23.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}7\).
Had he played this, White would have had to use a lot of his energy defending his e4-pawn.

19...\textit{d}6! 20.\textit{f}d1!!

A strange decision at first sight. White wants to use the tandem of the queen and knight in an offensive against the black king.

20.f5 should also be considered. I find the following line to be quite instructive: 20...\textit{d}2 (20...f6 should not be too bad for Black either) 21.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}5 22.\textit{c}d1 \textit{d}d1 23.\textit{d}d1 \textit{c}6! Black is in excellent shape thanks to his control of the dark squares.

20...\textit{d}x\textit{d}1+ 21.\textit{d}x\textit{d}1 \textit{d}x\textit{d}1+ 22.\textit{f}d2

22...\textit{c}c6!

An understandable decision. Black wants to bring his misplaced knight to the defence. Obviously White cannot allow this.

23.\textit{x}c6 \textit{x}c6 24.f5!

The correct decision. It seems that, although certainly unbalanced in nature, the position should ultimately be evaluated as balanced nonetheless.

24...\textit{d}d8 25.\textit{g}5 \textit{d}1d6 26.\textit{h}5+ \textit{f}8 27.\textit{f}6 \textit{g}7

White has nothing better than this draw by perpetual, Renet – Vachier Lagrave, Aix-les-Bains 2007.

D33) 16.\textit{d}d5 \textit{a}5 17.\textit{x}b7 \textit{xb}7
18...f4
This is the critical continuation. In another game White tried:
18...g3
There is no time for such moves, and it is not surprising that this line is quite harmless for Black.
18...e7
Another option worthy of consideration is 18...c4 19.e2 b5.
Black could also choose the safety-first option 18...exd4 19.cxd4 Bxd4, when White is forced to make a draw with 20.Qf5+ gxf5 21.Qg5+ h8 22.Qf6+ g8, and there is nothing more than a perpetual. Note that 23.Qe3? Bxe8! just loses for White.
19.Qd1 h5 20.dxe5 c4 21.Qe2 Qxe5 22.Qf4 d4 23.h3 Qh6
The position remained unclear in Kindermann - Hort, Germany 1988.

18...c4?N
This is my new idea, intended to revitalize the whole line. Maybe this is not the only playable move, but Black's position does not appeal to me after 18...exd4 19.cxd4 Bxe8, as played in Hoen – Olsson, Lidkoeping 1969. The issue is that instead of 20.e5, White could have played 20.d5!N, with the main point that 20...f5 21.Qc3 fxe4 22.f5 gives White a strong attack. Also 19...xd4 20.Qxd4 b5 21.f5 looks a bit scary, so I had to find a new way to play the position.

19.Qd3 Qd6

20.d5
Black is almost begging for this to be played, but White does not have any challenging alternatives:

20.Qg3 is met strongly by 20...exd4 21.cxd4 f5! Black is making the most out of the active position of the knight on d6, and after 22.Qc3 Qxe4 23.Qxe4 Qxe4 24.dxc5+ Qd4+ 25.Qxd4+ Qxd4 his chances are not worse.

Even weaker is 20.fx e5 Qxe4 21.Qf3 Qxf3 22.Qxf3 Qe4 23.Qe3 Qd2! 24.Qe1 Qf2+, when Black has the better chances in the endgame.

20...Qe8 21.f5
Again it is worth looking for dangerous alternatives, although the search may be futile.
After 21.Qg3 exf4 22.Qxf4 Qe7 23.Qc1 Qe5 Black is fine, enjoying a nice thematic dark-squared blockade.
And after 21.Qc1 c4 22.Qf3 f5 Black has strong counterplay in the centre.

21...gx f5 22.exf5 Qh8
Conclusion

The 11...b6!? variation has not been a popular choice at either amateur or grandmaster level. However, I believe it to be a serious option whose popularity looks set to increase.

Despite leading to tactically fertile ground, the entire variation runs along clearly defined positional contours. Throughout the chapter, we have seen that Black's play tends to revolve around the plan of ...\(\text{a}5\), ...\(\text{e}5\) and later ...\(\text{c}4\), ...\(\text{c}8\) and ...\(\text{a}7\text{-d}6\). If Black gets that far—which seems to happen remarkably often—he may be able to follow up with ...f5, destroying White's optically impressive pawn centre.

White's main plan is to soften up the black kingside by exchanging the dark-squared bishops, followed by a quick f2-f4 to launch an attack. There are a number of ways in which he can go about this task, some more dangerous than others, but all of them insufficient to claim an advantage according to the analysis I have presented here.

Theory will surely march forward and new ideas will be found for both sides, but at this stage it seems to me that White will have a hard time searching for an advantage against the 11...b6 line.

The opening is over and we have reached a complicated middlegame, in which Black should not be worse.
Chapter 1

1.d4 ∆f6 2.c4 g6 3.∆c3 d5 4.cxd5 ∆xd5 5.∆f3 ∆g7
A) 6.g3 8
B) 6.∆d2 0–0 7.∆c1 ∆b6 9
   B1) 8.e3 9
   B2) 8.∆g5 10
C) 6.∆b3 13
D) 6.∆a4† 14
E) 6.∆g5 c5 7.∆c1 ∆xc3 8.bxc3 0–0 16
   E1) 9.∆d2 16
   E2) 9.e3 17

Chapter 2

1.d4 ∆f6 2.c4 g6 3.∆c3 d5 4.cxd5 ∆xd5 5.∆f3 ∆g7 6.e4 ∆b6 7.∆e3
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