A Rock-Solid Chess Opening Repertoire for Black

Viacheslav Eingorn

Gambit
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Symbols

capture
check
double check
checkmate
brilliant move
good move
interesting move
dubious move
bad move
blunder
championship
nth match game
the game ends in a win for White
the game ends in a draw
the game ends in a win for Black
White went on to win on move 63 (etc.)

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Introduction

The appeal of a ‘universal’ defence is easy to understand. By playing the same move against both 1 e4 and 1 d4, Black reduces his workload and can use some move-order subtleties to make it harder for White to reach his preferred systems. Our focus here is on 1 e4 e6 and 1 d4 e6, but we also briefly discuss how best to answer White’s other options on move 1.

The French Defence, 1 e4 e6, is clearly the backbone of the repertoire. It is a popular opening with a long history, and a list of adherents that includes several of the all-time greats. After 1 d4, the reply 1...e6 is less common, and normally used as a way to transpose to standard opening lines. If White replies 2 e4, then obviously we have a French Defence, but if White refrains from this central advance, he must take into account that Black might follow up with 2...f5, 2...d5, 2...b6, 2...c5 or 2...Qf6. If White has a highly rigid repertoire (as many club-level players do), then this might give him an immediate problem, and lead to a rash decision. In this book, we shall only investigate transpositional ideas when they are particularly attractive, and focus more on independent lines, where Black tries to take full advantage of the unique possibilities presented by the move 1...e6. We shall examine a wide variety of ideas and variations, and in some cases little-investigated opening positions arise after the first few moves.

I would like the make the following general points about the repertoire:

• The repertoire based on 1...e6 lays the foundation for multi-opening preparation. Chess-players often consider the initial order of moves exclusively as a way to restrict the opponent’s possibilities, forgetting that thereby they themselves become a stationary target. In the era of computers and free exchange of theoretical information, such a view of opening strategy looks like an anachronism. If we are willing to play a variety of structures and variations, and even wholly different openings, then our opponent’s choices will be more difficult, and in this repertoire we shall make extensive use of this.

• The variations recommended (the French Defence as well as lines arising after 1 d4 e6) are rather stable and allow a variety of interpretations, and this enhances the reliability of the opening repertoire as a whole for Black. In a majority of potential ‘problem lines’, two or more options are discussed. Some
additional options remain off-screen, so they can be considered as a strategic reserve – for example, Dutch formations, although possible, are almost absent from this book. Most readers will no doubt have experience with other openings, and may well be able to put this knowledge to use when they see an opportunity to transpose to lines of, e.g., the Nimzo-Indian, Dutch or Queen's Gambit that appeal to them.

• The modern study of the opening is a serious matter. One should not get carried away with trying to make an idea work and lose one's objectivity. Assessments must, with only rare exceptions, be based on concrete proofs or examples. In the book we discuss some opening variations in considerable detail and, where it is both possible and expedient, give preference to less well-known continuations.

• Since I am presenting a repertoire for Black, I only recommend lines if I consider them playable for Black, and the reader can consider all quoted variations to be quite satisfactory by default – if this is not the case, then I make this very clear in the text. In some cases the assessment 'unclear' is given; this suggests that I suspect the position is also acceptable for Black, but that more detailed investigation is needed before this can be stated with certainly or a more precise assessment given.
The French Defence, whose main systems arise after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 (D), is one of the most complex chess openings, with an extreme wealth of strategic content.

The position in the diagram serves as jumping-off point for several different continuations (the clarifying 3 exd5, the blocking 3 e5, and the two main lines, 3 d2 and 3 c3), but it represents only the visible tip of an enormous opening iceberg. The question of how to construct an opening repertoire is sometimes answered by Black in the simplest way: meeting both 3 d3 and 3 c3 with 3...dxe4. This saves a good deal of effort, but also deprives Black of much of the variety of French Defence possibilities and ideas. On the other hand, a repertoire should not be made needlessly elaborate, and rather than playing every line and tackling every structure, a player has to make some choices. In this book I present my recommendations according to the following structure:

- In Chapter 1 we discuss all continuations (with the exception of the King's Indian Attack) in which White avoids the move 2 d4. We also cover the rare variation 2 d4 d5 3 d3. These sidelines are not dangerous for Black, but they occur in practice every now and then, and it makes sense to be ready for them.
- Chapter 2 is devoted to the popular set-up known as the King's Indian Attack, which in the French can be introduced by 2 e2 or 2 d3.
- The Exchange Variation, 3 exd5 exd5, is considered in Chapter 3. One cannot hide the fact that this can lead to drawish and rather tedious positions. However, both players have ways to spice up the game, and I shall be looking closely at ways for Black to create winning chances against an opponent who plays 'resolutely' for a draw.
- The move 3 e5 (Chapter 4) defines the Advance Variation. This is the first chapter in the book where Black
The opening repertoire sounds straightforward enough, but within these variations lies a great variety of pawn and piece battles in the centre, and strategies ranging from long positional manoeuvres to sharp attacks on the kings. I also offer a choice of lines for Black where this is practical. It is worth noting that White does not have a simple task fighting against the French Defence since it is literally woven of contradictions: for example, the space seized by White often comes at the cost of a vulnerability on his first two ranks, and the ‘bad’ c8-bishop can quickly become a strong and active participant in the battle. Therefore, if White has to study the French Defence simply because of necessity, this opening is rather attractive for Black for several reasons:

- From the early stages of the game he has ways to seek counterplay, often by violent sacrificial means.
- He can also adopt slower manoeuvring approaches; Black’s wide choice of options in the main variations noticeably complicates White’s opening preparation.
- Last but not least: having the French Defence in his arsenal, Black can freely play 1...e6 also after 1 d4, and this move-order brings some practical benefits, as we shall see in Part 2 of the book.

This overview of our French Defence repertoire sounds straightforward enough, but within these variations lies a great variety of pawn and piece battles in the centre, and strategies ranging from long positional manoeuvres to sharp attacks on the kings. I also offer a choice of lines for Black where this is practical. It is worth noting that White does not have a simple task fighting against the French Defence since it is literally woven of contradictions: for example, the space seized by White often comes at the cost of a vulnerability on his first two ranks, and the ‘bad’ c8-bishop can quickly become a strong and active participant in the battle. Therefore, if White has to study the French Defence simply because of necessity, this opening is rather attractive for Black for several reasons:

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- He can also adopt slower manoeuvring approaches; Black’s wide choice of options in the main variations noticeably complicates White’s opening preparation.
- Last but not least: having the French Defence in his arsenal, Black can freely play 1...e6 also after 1 d4, and this move-order brings some practical benefits, as we shall see in Part 2 of the book.
In this chapter we examine a variety of lines in which White sidesteps standard French Defence positions, in most cases by avoiding 2 d4 altogether. Before moving on to the most significant of these sidelines, we should first take a brief look at a few miscellaneous replies. These have nothing strategically in common with the French Defence apart from the fact that the game begins with 1 e4 e6. They can be adequately dealt with using just a few lines of text, and minimal verbal commentary:

- 2 e5 d6 3 exd6 ♞xd6 4 d4 (4 ♟f3 e5) 4...♕f6 5 ♟f3 0-0 (5...b6; 5...♗bd7) 6 ♘d3 ♗c6 7 0-0 e5.
- 2 g3 d5 3 ♖g2 dxe4 4 ♗c3 (4 ♖xe4 ♟f6 5 ♖g2 e5) 4...♗d7 (4...f5!? ) 5 d3 (5 ♖xe4 ♞c6; 5 ♖xe4!? maintains an equal position) 5...♗c6 6 dxe4 ♗xd1+ 7 ♘xd1 ♘f6 8 f3 ♘bd7.
- 2 ♗c3 d5 3 f4 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♗f6 5 ♖xf6+ (5 d3 ♖xe4 6 dxe4 ♗xd1+ 7 ♘xd1 ♘d7; 5 ♘f2 ♘c5 6 ♖f3 ♖xf2+ 7 ♘xf2 ♗g4+ 8 ♗g1? ♘e3) 5...♗xf6 6 d4 (6 g3 e5) 6...c5 7 ♘f3 ♖c6.
- 2 d4 d5 3 ♘e3? is a poorly motivated gambit, most often played by Blackmar-Diemer Gambit enthusiasts (with the game starting 1 d4 e6 2 e4 d5 3 ♘e3). After 3...dxe4 4 f3 (4 ♗c3 ♘f6 5 f3 ♖b4; 4 ♘d2 ♘f6 5 f3 ♗d5 6 ♗e2 ♗c6 7 c3 ♘xf3) 4...♗f6 (4...♗h6!? is also viable) 5 ♖xe4 ♘xe4 6 ♗f3 (6 ♘d3?! c5 7 ♘f3 ♗xd4 is even less convincing) 6...♗c6 White does not have sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

In the above cases White’s opening play lacks a solid positional basis and therefore these continuations are not of any real theoretical value. However, other sidelines are more interesting and worthy of serious attention. The King’s Indian Attack, in which White plays 2 d3 or 2 ♗e2 and follows up with a fianchetto of his king’s bishop, is considered separately in the next chapter. That leaves us with:
This is a rather inoffensive continuation, but gives White an acceptable game.

2...d5 3 cxd5

Only the variation with the double pawn exchange on d5 has independent significance. After 3 exd5 exd5 4 d4 we reach a line of the Exchange Variation (see Section 3.4).

3...exd5 4 exd5

The gambit 4 wb3?! makes no sense if only because of the reply 4...we7.

4...df6

Now White needs to show what he has gained by avoiding the move 2 d4.

5 h5+!?

Simple developing continuations cannot cause any inconvenience for Black; for example:

a) 5 d4?! dxd5 6 c3 (6 df3 d4+ 7 d2 we7+ 8 c3 0-0 9 d2 can be met by 8...c5!? or 8...xe8+ 9 e2 xc3 10 bxc3 we7 11 c4 df5, when Black takes over the initiative) 8...c5 gave Black the initiative in Kuijf-Korchnoi, Tilburg 1992.

b) 5 df3 dxd5 6 xc3 xc6 7 d4

b4 8 d2 0-0 9 e2 de7 (9...h6 10 0-0 e6 is also equal) 10 a3 a5 11 e3 and now both 11...d5 and 11...df5 12 0-0 b6 are equal.

Therefore White must act more vigorously and the bishop check is probably the best move at his disposal. The attempt to create pressure along the a2-g8 diagonal by 5 c4 is unpromising: 5...dxd5 6 c3 (6 df3?! df7+ 7 e2 db6) 6...db6 (this is simpler than 6...db4 7 d3 d6 8 we2 e7) 7 db3 dc6 8 ge2 (8 df3 we7+) 8...d6 (8...c5!?) 9 d4 0-0 10 0-0 wh4 with good play for Black, Masserey-Kindermann, Horgen 1995.

5...db7 6 c3

6 df3 a6 (6...dxd5?! 7 c3 grants White the initiative) 7 e2 (7 xdx7+ xdx7 also gives White no advantage) and now both 7...d6 and 7...dxd5 8 c3 df6 9 0-0 d6 lead to approximate equality.

6...a6!?

It is a good idea to clarify the intentions of the white bishop straight away. 6...e7 7 df3 0-0 is also quite reliable, though after 8 d4 (8 xdx7? 9 dh7 leaves the initiative to Black) 8...db6 9 0-0 df5!? (9...dxd5 10 e1 c6 11 d3) 10 e1 dfxd5 11 e4 db4 12 d2 xdx2 13 xdx2
White’s pieces are more active and the initiative remains on his side, Spassky-Korchnoi, Elista (2) 2009.

7 a4
7...xd7+?! is not even enough to equalize in view of 7...wxd7 8 f3 w7+!.
7...b5 8 b3 b7 9 f3 b4 10 e2 d6
Both sides have chances.

1.2
2 b3 (D)

This move, which we shall call the Réti Variation, has some quite novel ideas, notably of castling queenside. Black should not underestimate this odd-looking move.

2...d5 3 b2 dxe4
Taking the central pawn is absolutely logical, although it allows White to develop as planned. Black has a couple of ways to direct the game in other directions. Firstly, 3 f6 4 e5 (4 exd5 exd5 5 w2+ e7! 6 xf6 gxf6 is OK for Black) 4 fd7 5 w4 c5 6 f4 c6 7 f3 leads to a complicated position and chances for both sides, while the waiting move 3 a6?! (Atalik) is an interesting way to interfere with White’s deployment. White then has nothing more logical than 4 w2 (4 c3 is met by 4.d4, while 4 exd5 exd5 gives Black full equality) with the following pleasant choice for Black:

a) 4...dxe4 5 c3 (5 wxe4?! f6) 5...f5 (the point!) 6 0-0-0 f6 7 f3 (7 d3 exd3 8 xd3 d6) 7...fxf3 8 xf3 d6 and it is hard to say whether White has real compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

b) 4...f6 5 e5 (5 exd5 can be met by 5...c5!? or the unclear 5...xd5! 6 f3 c6 7 c3 w5) 5...d7 6 g4 c5 leaves Black a move up compared to the 3...d6 line that we saw above.

4 c3 d6 5 w2
Premature aggression with 5 g4?! promises White nothing but hardship; for example, 5 c6 6 g5 d5 7 exe4 e5 (7...h6!?) or 5...d7 6 g2 c6 7 w2 h5 8 g5 d5 9 h3 xc3 10 xc3 wd5, Gelashvili-B.Socko, European Clubs Cup, Panormo 2001.

5...e7
If Black aspires only to equalize, then the line 5 c6 6 exe4 (6 0-0-0 d4 7 w1 d7 8 exe4 c6 is also equal) 6 exe4 7 wxe4 w5 8 wxd5 exd5 9 0-0-0 f6 10 e2 (10 g3 f5! 11 w1+ d7) 10...f5, as in the game Gelashvili-Ramon Perez, Balmager 2007, is worth noting.

6 0-0-0
6 g4?! is still inappropriate in view of 6 c6 7 exe4 (7 g5?! d4) 7...exe4 (7...b4!) 8 wxe4 wd5.
Also after 6 \( \square \text{xe}4 \) 0-0 7 \( \square \text{f}3 \) a5 the most judicious policy for White is to sound the retreat and play 8 g3 followed by \( \text{g}2 \) and 0-0, trying to keep approximate equality.

6...0-0 7 g4!

Now this move comes just at the right time, since 7 \( \square \text{xe}4?! \) a5 favours Black.

After the text-move (7 g4), a very unclear position has arisen:

a) 7...c6 8 g5 \( \square \text{d}5 \) (8...\( \text{d}4 \) 9 \( \text{we}1 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 10 \( \text{xe}4 \) 9h4 f5 (weaker is 9...\( \text{db}4?! \) 10 \( \text{xe}4 \), Milović-Kosić, Montenegrin Team Ch, Herceg Novi 2008) 10 gxf6 \( \text{xf}6 \) is unclear.

b) 7...a5 8 g5 (8 a4 \( \text{c}6 \) gives Black the initiative, while 8 \( \text{g}2 \) is met by 8...a4) 8...\( \text{d}5 \) 9 h4 a4 (9...\( \text{d}7?! \)?) 10 \( \text{xa}4 \) (10 \( \text{xe}4 \) axb3 11 axb3 \( \text{a}3 \) 10...b5 11 \( \text{c}3 \) b4 (11...f5 12 gxf6 \( \text{xf}6 \)) 12 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xa}2 \) is unclear.

1.3

2 f4 (D)

This is called the McDonnell & Labourdonnais Attack, and as the name suggests, chess-players in the 19th century often reacted to the French and Sicilian Defences with this f-pawn thrust.

2...d5 3 e5 c5 4 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 5 c3

The d4 advance needs to be prepared. White should avoid 5 d4?! \( \text{wb}6 \) with the possible continuation 6 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 0-0 \( \text{h}6 \).

5...\( \text{h}6 \) 6 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \)

Black has other satisfactory moves too, such as 6...f6 7 \( \text{c}2 \) (weaker are 7 d4 \( \text{xd}4 \) 8 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 9 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xa}3 \) and 7 ef6 \( \text{xf}6 \) 8 d4 \( \text{xd}4 \) 9 \( \text{bd}4+ \) 10 \( \text{f}2 \) 0-0 11 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 7...\( \text{xe}5 \) 8 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{f}5 \) (White can benefit from complications like 8...\( \text{xe}5?! \) 9 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{h}4+ \) 10 g3 \( \text{e}4+ \) 11 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{b}1+ \) 12 d4 – Bangiev) 9 d4 \( \text{e}7 \) 10 \( \text{d}3 \) 0-0, with equality. With the text-move, Black strives for more.

7 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 8 d4

White may be well-advised to opt for Chigorin’s more cautious move 8 \( \text{e}2?! \). After 8...\( \text{e}7 \) 9 0-0 (9 d4?! \( \text{c}8 \) gives Black the initiative) 9...0-0 10 \( \text{h}1 \) (10 \( \text{e}3 \) f6) 10...f6 and only now 11 d4, White maintains the equilibrium. The restrained 8 d3 is also worthy of some attention; for example, 8...\( \text{e}7 \) 9 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 10 0-0 h5 11 \( \text{b}1 \) – Bangiev. However, we should note that the final position of this variation is also reached in another opening with reversed colours, viz. 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 \( \text{f}3 \) e4 4 \( \text{g}1 \) (or 4 \( \text{g}5 \) f5 5 \( \text{c}3 \) c6 6 \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 7 e3 \( \text{f}6 \) 4...f5 5 \( \text{c}3 \) c6 6 \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 7 e3 \( \text{f}6 \) 8 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 9 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 10 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 11 h4 0-0. One can hardly complain as Black about getting a position that strong.
players have been happy to play as White. It remains to add that 8 Qe3?! is not a good choice: 8...f6 9 exf6 (9 d4? cxd4 10 cxd4 Qb4+ occurred twice in the match McDonnell-de Labourdonnaiss, London 1834) 9...gxf6 10 d3 0-0 0 11 Qe2 Qd6 gave Black the initiative in Komliakov-Rustemov, Russia Cup, Moscow 1998.

8...cxd4!

White’s position is like an Advance Variation (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3) but with the seemingly inappropriate move f4. However, it is difficult for Black to exploit this circumstance in clear-cut fashion. Another active possibility is 8...c8 9 d3 (9 d2 Qe7 10 Qd3?! c4 11 Qe2 Qxb2) 9...cxd4, when 10 Qcxd4?! Qxd4 11 Qxd4 Qc5 gives Black the initiative, but 10 cxd4 makes it harder for him to pursue aggressive plans; both 10...Qf5 11 Qxf5 Qxf5 12 0-0 Qe7 13 Qe3 Qe6 14 Qd3 0-0 15 Qd2 and 10...Qb4?! 11 Qxb4 Qxb4+ 12 Qd2 Qb5 13 Qxb5+ Qxb5 14 Qxb4 Qxb4+ 15 Qd2 Qc4 16 Qxb4 Qxb4 17 b3 Qf5 18 Qf2 h5 19 Qxc1 Qd7 20 Qab1 are equal.

9 Qcxd4

After 9 cxd4 Qf5 10 g4 Qfe7 11 Qd3 (11 h3 h5 12 Qh2 Qc8 gives Black the initiative) 11...h5 12 g5 Qf5 (12...a5 and 12...g6 can also be considered) White’s position may turn out to be even worse.

9...Qc5 10 b4 Qxd4 11 Qxd4 Qxd4 12 Qxd4 Qxd4 13 cxd4 Qc8

Black has a minimal advantage.

1.4

2 Qf3 d5 3 e5 (D)

3 Qc3 Qf6 4 e5 Qd7 5 d4 transposes to a line of the Steinitz Variation (see Section 6.1).

This sequence can transpose to the Advance Variation, but this precise move-order normally indicates that White intends to play the French Wing Gambit, which is quite popular nowadays at club level.

3...c5 4 b4

By distracting the c5-pawn away from the d4-square, White hopes to set up a strong and stable centre that will enable him to attack unhindered on the kingside.

4...xb4

Accepting the gambit is not obligatory. 4...d4 is good enough, when 5 bxc5 (5 Qa3 a6 6 bxc5 Qxc5 7 Qc4 b5 and 5 b5 Qe7 6 Qd3 Qg6 are unclear) 5...Qxc5 6 Qa3 Qa5 7 Qe2 (7 Qxc5 Qxc5 8 c3 Qc6 9 cxd4 Qxd4 10 Qa4+ Qd7! 11 Qxd4 Qc1+ 12 Qe2 Qb5+ 13 d3 Qd8 14 Qbd2 Qa3) 7...Qd7 8 Qxc5 Qxc5 9 Qc4 Qxc4 10 Qxc4 Qc6 leads to an approximately equal ending. More complicated play
arises if Black declines the pawn by 4...c4 5 c3 (5 a3!??) 5...a5 6 b5 \( \text{\texttt{d7}} \) 7 d3 cxd3 8 \( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{d3} \) f6!? 9 \( \text{\texttt{We2}} \) fxe5 10 \( \text{\texttt{xe5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xe5}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{xe5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \), as in Zakarian-Antic, Kalamaria 2009.

5 a3

5 d4 \( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 6 a3 bxa3 leads to the same position.

5...bxa3

The line 5...\( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 6 axb4 \( \text{\texttt{xb4}} \) 7 c3 \( \text{\texttt{e7}} \) 8 d4 occurs more often. The point of the text-move is to leave the e7-square vacant for the g8-knight.

6 d4 \( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 7 c3 \( \text{\texttt{d7}} \) (D)

8 \( \text{\texttt{d3}} \)

White does not hurry to liquidate the a3-pawn, although sooner or later he will have to do so. The immediate attack by 8 \( \text{\texttt{g5}} \)? h6 9 \( \text{\texttt{xf7}} \)? \( \text{\texttt{xf7}} \) 10 \( \text{\texttt{f3}} \)+ \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \) looks clearly premature, but it is possible to play 8 \( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \) a6 9 \( \text{\texttt{d3}} \) h6 (or 9...\( \text{\texttt{c8}} \)) right away.

8...h6

Preventive measures: Black establishes control over the g5-square, ruling out any attempt by White to start a quick assault by \( \text{\texttt{g5}} \). Instead he can simply play 8...a6 or provoke an immediate crisis by 8...b5!? Then:

a) 9 \( \text{\texttt{g5}} \)? is no good due to 9...b4.

b) After 9 \( \text{\texttt{xb5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xe5}} \) 10 \( \text{\texttt{xe5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xb5}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \) (11 \( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{d7}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{g4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{g6}} \) 11...\( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{e7}} \) Black parries the threats and retains the extra pawn.

c) 9 \( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \) ? b4 10 cxb4 (10 \( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) a6 11 \( \text{\texttt{d6}} \)+ \( \text{\texttt{xd6}} \) 12 exd6 \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \) ) 10...\( \text{\texttt{xb4}} \)+ (10...\( \text{\texttt{xb4}} \) 11 0-0 \( \text{\texttt{e7}} \) is unclear) 11 \( \text{\texttt{d2}} \) a6 12 \( \text{\texttt{xb4}} \) (12 0-0 can be met by 12...\( \text{\texttt{ge7}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{c2}} \) a5, as in Rahls-Junge, Bundesliga 1987/8) 12...\( \text{\texttt{xb4}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{hxh7}} \) \( \text{\texttt{e7}} \) with equality.

9 0-0

White’s king has no reason to remain in the centre. After 9 h4 a6 (9...b5!?) 10 \( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c8}} \) 11 h5 \( \text{\texttt{a5}} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{b1}} \) (the return of the piece to its home square is a bad sign) 12...\( \text{\texttt{b6}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{c2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c4}} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{h4}} \)? \( \text{\texttt{e7}} \) Black had the advantage in Lerch-Naumkin, Cappelle la Grande 2007.

9...a6 10 \( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c8}} \)

In this comparatively calm situation, White has yet to find real compensation for the sacrificed pawn. For example, 11 c4 \( \text{\texttt{b4}} \) 12 c5 b6 13 cxb6 \( \text{\texttt{xb6}} \) proved unsuccessful in the game Emodi-G.Portisch, Hungarian Team Ch 1998/9.

1.5

2 d4 d5 3 \( \text{\texttt{d3}} \) (D)

It is clear enough that this is not the best way to defend the e4-pawn. Nevertheless, this bishop move crops up from time to time in modern tournament practice.
3...dxe4

The most natural reaction, although 3...c5 4 exd5 (4 c3 dxe4 5 dx e4 d6) 4...exd5 is also good, transposing to a line of the Exchange Variation that is satisfactory for Black (see Section 3.1).

4 dx e4 d6 5 f3

The bishop stays on the long diagonal. Otherwise White’s bishop moves have simply cost him time with nothing to show for it; for example, after 5 d3 (5 g5 c5) 5...c5 6 c3 (6 dxc5 xxc5 7 f3 0-0 8 0-0 b6) 6 c6 7 f3 cxd4 8 cxd4 e7 9 c3 0-0 Black gets a standard IQP position with at least one extra tempo.

5...c5

The simplest path to equality is 5 d6 6 e2 b7 7 bc3 e5, as in Fernandez Romero-de la Villa, Bur­guillos 2007. The text-move leads to a more complicated game.

6 e2 c6 7 e3

Another position with an isolated d-pawn can arise after 7 c3 cxd4 8 cxd4 (8 xd4 is met by 8...e5). Black has no problems here: 8...d6!? (this is preferable to 8...e7, as the e7-square will prove useful to the c6-knight) 9 0-0 0-0 10 bc3 h6 11 e3 e7 (11...d7!??) with equality, Bluv­shtein-Barsov, Montreal 2002.

7...cxd4 8 dx d4 e5

Now the other knight attacks the white bishop. But note how Black delays actually making the exchange on f3, as he has no wish to help White smoothly activate his queen.

9 c3

Keeping the possibility of castling queenside. The calm continuation 9 0-0 a6 (or 9...e7!?) 10 e2 0-0 with equality) 10 c3 (10 e2 and 10 c4 are both met by 10...c7) 10...d6! (10...c7?! is highly careless in view of 11 f4, as in Hector-Short, World Junior Ch, Belfort 1983) 11 e2 0-0 does not allow White to count on the initiative.

9...a6 10 e2 xf3+ 11 xf3

11 xf3 e5 is good for Black; he will answer 12 f5 with 12...a5.

11...e7

Black prepares to castle and has rather good prospects. “The future belongs to he who has the bishops” – this statement by Dr Tarrasch is highly pertinent to this position, but at present the chances of the two sides are approximately equal.
2 King’s Indian Attack

A popular way for White to avoid standard lines of the French is to develop in a similar style to the King’s Indian, with the moves \( \text{c}f3, \text{g}3 \) and \( \text{g}2 \), supporting the e-pawn with the modest pawn move d3. In principle, the King’s Indian Attack set-up should not promise White an advantage, as it is more suited to counterpunching than generating an initiative. However, in the case of the French Defence the situation seems more complicated, since Black has already played \( \ldots \)e6, and a further advance with \( \ldots \)e6-e5 would involve a loss of time. White can expect further action in the centre (usually by playing e5, preparing an attack on the black king) and tends to keep some opening initiative. Not that Black must worry too much though, because White has laid out his plans, whereas Black can still choose from a vast array of set-ups, including options about where to put his king. Our general counterstrategy is as follows:

- In the lines 2 \( \text{w}e2 \) (Section 2.1) and 2 d3 d5 3 \( \text{w}e2 \) (Section 2.2) Black in one way or another targets the white queen.
- In the main continuation, 2 d3 d5 3 \( \text{c}d2 \) (Section 2.3), Black hinders White’s general plan of development or attempts to adapt it for his own use.

\[ 2.1 \]

1 e4 e6 2 \( \text{w}e2 \) (D)

This is known as the Chigorin Variation. The original idea of this move was simply to hinder Black’s intended 2...d5 advance. After 2...\( \text{e}7 \) Chigorin himself played 3 b3 d5 4 \( \text{b}2 \), and then the line 4...\( \text{f}6 \) 5 e5 (as we already know from Section 1.2, 5 exd5 exd5 6 \( \text{xf}6 \) gxf6 is not advantageous for White) 5...\( \text{fd}7 \) gives Black a convenient game. Therefore modern chess-players use the move 2 \( \text{w}e2 \) almost exclusively in a King’s Indian Attack context: 2...\( \text{e}7 \) 3 \( \text{f}3 \) d5 4 d3 \( \text{f}6 \) 5 g3. This thematic variation is discussed in Section 2.2.1, and here we shall consider another continuation as an alternative.

2...\( \text{c}6 \)
Black proposes a wholly different opening structure – a method which we will often use in Part 2 of this book. Instead of a French or Sicilian formation (2...c5) Black is going to play 3...e5 and switch to some kind of Open Game where the additional move $\textit{We}e2$ will have its pros and cons. The immediate 2...e5 is less accurate as 3 f4!? is a form of King’s Gambit where White has some useful extra possibilities.

3 $\textit{Qf3}$

Other moves are not very attractive for White:

a) 3 f4 d5 (3...$\textit{Qd4}$ 4 $\textit{We}d3$ c5 is equal) 4 exd5 (4 d3 dxe4 5 dxe4 $\textit{Ac}c5$) 4...$\textit{Qxd5}$ (4...$\textit{Qd4}$ 5 $\textit{We}d3$ is unclear) 5 $\textit{Qc3}$ $\textit{We}f5$ gave Black the initiative in Dimov-Dokuchaev, Varna 2010.

b) 3 c3 e5 (3...d5!? 4 d3 e5) 4 f4 (an odd kind of King’s Gambit) 4...d6 (4...exf4!? 5 d4 $\textit{Wh}h4+$ is more resolute) 5 d3 (5 $\textit{Lcf3}$ exf4 6 d4 g5) and now 5...$\textit{Qf6}$ or 5...f5!? looks favourable for Black.

c) 3 $\textit{Lc3}$ $\textit{Ac5}$ (3...$\textit{Ae7}$!? 4 $\textit{Qf3}$ d5 is also possible) 4 $\textit{Qf3}$ (4 f4 can be met by 4...$\textit{Aa6}$ 5 $\textit{Qf3}$ $\textit{Qge7}$) 4...e5 5 d3 (5 g3) 5...$\textit{Qf6}$, and the irrelevance of the queen’s position on e2 becomes evident.

3...e5

White is presented with a choice: only play in the centre gives him any chance of an advantage, but that means renouncing his original plan.

4 c3

Black has no problems after 4 g3 $\textit{Ac5}$ 5 $\textit{Ag2}$ d6 6 c3 (6 d3 $\textit{Qge7}$) 6...$\textit{Aa6}$ 7 0-0 $\textit{Qge7}$ (or 7...$\textit{Qf6}$), as his game is flexible and strong.

4...$\textit{Qf6}$ 5 d4 (D)

Now 5 g3 is comfortably answered by 5...d5 6 d3 dxe4 7 dxe4 a5, because the queen’s position on e2 does not prove effective with this structure. After 8 $\textit{Ag2}$ $\textit{Ac5}$ 9 0-0 0-0 10 $\textit{Qbd2}$ (10 $\textit{Qh}4$ b6 11 $\textit{Qd}1$ $\textit{Ag}4$ 12 $\textit{Qf3}$ $\textit{Ac}8$) 10...b6 we have by roundabout means reached a well-known theoretical position, in which the initiative is already on Black’s side.

4

We have a Ponziani Opening (1 e4 e5 2 $\textit{Qf3}$ $\textit{Qc6}$ 3 c3 $\textit{Qf6}$ 4 d4) with the extra move $\textit{W}e2$ for White. This means the e4-pawn is protected, but White’s queen’s location also has some significant drawbacks.

5...d6

5...exd4!? is less solid, but interesting. Then:

a) After 6 cxd4 $\textit{Ab}4+$ the unfortunate position of White’s royal couple will tell. 7 $\textit{Wd1}$? would be highly incautious, while 7 $\textit{Qc3}$ 0-0 8 e5 $\textit{Qd}5$ 9 $\textit{Ad2}$ $\textit{Ax}c3$ 10 bxc3 d6 gave Black the initiative in the game Girinath-Kamble, Visakhapatnam 2006. The precise 7
A ROCK-SOLID CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

\[ d2!!? \text{xd}2+ 8 \text{b}xd2 0-0 9 d5 (9 \text{d}3 \text{c}e8 10 \text{e}2 \text{d}6 11 0-0 \text{xe}4 12 \text{xe}4 \text{f}5) 9...\text{c}e7 10 \text{d}3 \text{d}6 11 \text{e}2 \text{c}6 12 \text{xc}6 \text{xc}6 13 0-0 \text{d}5 \text{d} leads to equality.

b) 6 e5 \text{d}5 (better than 6...d3 7 \text{xd}3 \text{g}4 8 \text{e}2!) 7 \text{e}4 \text{d}e7 8 \text{f}4!? (8 \text{xd}4 \text{d}5 is unclear, while 8 \text{xd}4 \text{xd}4 9 \text{xd}4 \text{f}5 10 \text{f}4 \text{f}5 is equal) looks stronger, but after 8...\text{g}6 there is still no clear path to an advantage for White. Both 9 \text{g}3 \text{e}7 (9...\text{e}7?) 10 h4 d5 11 \text{exd}6 \text{cxd}6 and 9 \text{cxd}4 \text{b}4+ 10 \text{c}3 (10 \text{bd}2 0-0 11 \text{d}5 \text{f}5) 10...0-0 11 \text{g}5 (11 \text{d}5 \text{xc}3+ 12 \text{bxc}3 \text{cxe}5) 11...\text{d}5 12 \text{d}3 \text{e}7 are unclear, while 9 \text{e}4 \text{e}7 10 \text{g}3 (10 \text{cxd}4 \text{a}5 11 \text{e}2 \text{d}5 12 \text{exd}6 \text{cxd}6 13 \text{c}3 \text{d}5!) 10...0-0 11 \text{cxd}4 \text{d}5!? 12 \text{xd}5 (12 \text{xd}5 \text{e}6) 12...\text{f}5 13 \text{xf}5 \text{xf}5 14 \text{c}3 (14 \text{d}3 \text{ad}8 15 \text{c}3 \text{cxe}5) 14...\text{d}4 15 \text{xd}4 \text{d}4 16 0-0 \text{ad}8 leads to equality.

6 \text{c}2

Exchanging by 6 \text{dxe}5 \text{xe}5 gives Black easy equality. By moving aside his queen, White makes way for the bishop – with the queen on d1 (i.e. after 1 \text{e}4 \text{e}5 2 \text{f}3 \text{c}6 3 \text{c}3 \text{f}6 4 \text{d}4 \text{d}6) he would immediately play \text{b}5, but here this is impossible.

6...\text{e}7 7 \text{b}5

After 7 \text{e}2, Black can choose 7...0-0 8 0-0 \text{e}8 9 \text{b}2 (9 \text{d}1 \text{f}8) 9...\text{f}8, with a Ruy Lopez where the white pieces are unusually placed. If desired, Black could complicate the game by 7...\text{exd}4 8 \text{cxd}4 \text{d}5 9 \text{e}5 \text{b}4 10 \text{d}1 \text{f}5 or 7...0-0 8 0-0 \text{exd}4 9 \text{cxd}4 \text{d}5 10 \text{e}5 \text{e}4 11 \text{a}3 \text{f}5 12 \text{d}3

\[ g4 13 \text{e}3 \text{xf}3 14 \text{xf}3 \text{g}5, with unclear play in both cases.

7...0-0?

Black plays in Chigorin’s style, favouring activity at the cost of structure. A slightly passive continuation is 7...\text{d}7 8 \text{d}5 (there is nothing better) 8...\text{b}8 9 \text{xd}7+ \text{xd}7 10 \text{c}4 \text{c}6 11 \text{dxc}6 \text{bxc}6, with a more agreeable position for White.

8 \text{xc}6

After 8 0-0 \text{d}7 the tactical threats ...\text{xd}4 and ...\text{b}4 appear.

8...\text{xc}6 9 \text{dxe}5 \text{dxe}5 10 0-0

Accepting the gift brings White no advantage: 10 \text{xe}5 \text{d}6 11 \text{xc}6 \text{we}8 12 \text{d}4 \text{c}5 13 \text{e}2 \text{xe}4.

10...\text{d}6

Both sides have chances here. The black bishop-pair counterbalances the weakness of his pawns.

2.2

1 \text{e}4 \text{e}6 2 \text{d}3 \text{d}5 3 \text{we}2 (D)

We shall call this the Barcza Variation. White blunts Black’s threat of ...\text{dxe}4 by sidestepping the exchange
of queens. By avoiding the more obvious move 3 \( \text{d}d2 \) (which we see in Section 2.3), he retains the possibility of \( \text{c}c3 \) and keeps the c1-h6 diagonal open for the bishop. These factors may prove useful in some variations, although the queen’s early entry into the game is still a disadvantage. Black can try to exploit this circumstance right away by 3...\( \text{d}c6 \), but we shall first investigate the classical line of defence:

### 2.2.1: 3...\( \text{f}f6 \)

4 f4?! dxe4 5 dxe4 \( \text{c}c5 \) is dubious for White. The simple advance of the f-pawn does not in itself contribute to the idea of an attack on the kingside.

### 2.2.2: 3...\( \text{c}c6 \)

4...\( \text{e}7 \) 5 g3

White’s standard plan in the King’s Indian Attack is as follows:

- In the near future he will advance the pawn to e5.
- After the moves \( \text{e}1 \) and h4, the manoeuvre \( \text{d}bd2-f1-h2-g4 \) can follow, when a large part of White’s army will be concentrated on the kingside.
- If the black king is also on the kingside, White can seek to launch a direct attack.

You may have noticed that the move \( \text{e}2 \) is not a fundamental part of this scheme – it is usually played only in case the e5-pawn requires defence. On the other hand, the delay in developing the queen’s knight allows White to employ another strategic idea if appropriate: 5...c5 6 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{c}6 \) (a stereotyped reaction) 7 0-0 (7 e5!? \( \text{d}7 \) 8 c4 is also possible) 7...0-0 8 e5 \( \text{d}7 \) 9 c4! gives White the initiative. This discussion helps explain Black’s next move.

### 5...b5!!

Black rules out any c4 ideas, such as the one we saw in the last note, while making a useful move that forms part of a queenside pawn advance – Black’s thematic source of counterplay. It is also possible to play 5...0-0 6 \( \text{g}2 \) \( b5 \), but there is no need to hurry with castling.

### 6 \( \text{g}2 \) (D)

For the time being White should maintain the tension in the centre and continue development. Opening the e-file by 6 exd5 exd5 is not in his favour here, while the immediate 6 e5 \( \text{d}7 \) 7 \( \text{g}2 \) c5 8 h4 \( \text{c}6 \) looks premature since there is still no one to attack on the kingside.

![Diagram](image)

**B**

### 6...c5 7 0-0 0-0

It would be uncomfortable for the black king to remain in the centre any longer. After 7...\( \text{c}6 \), in addition to 8 \( \text{e}1 \) or 8 \( \text{f}4 \), Black must also reckon
with the opening of the centre by 8 exd5!? exd5 9 d4 c4 (9...cxd4 10 wxb5 
\[d7 11 wd3 wb6 12 c3\] 10 \[e5, which is by no means easy for Black to meet.

8 e5

By crossing into Black’s territory, White takes on a serious liability, although after 8 \[e1 (8 b7 is also e5) \] 9 b5 a5 he can delay this decision no longer: 10 exd5 exd5 leads to a balanced game, while 10 e5 d7 will transpose to the main line. Tarrying by 10 \[e2 allows Black to initiate after 10...dxe4 11 dxe4 a6.

8...\[d7 9 h4

The moves 9 \[e1 and 9 b2 are of approximately equal value, in as much as they represent links of the same chain. Here the attempt to disrupt Black’s counterplay by 9 c4?!
turns out only to promote his initiative: 9...bxc4 10 dxc4 a6 (10...c6 11 cxd5 exd5 12 e6 \[b6) 11 b3 c6.

9...c6 10 \[e1

White’s attempt to set up a pawn-barrier by 10 c3 b8 11 f4 c4 12 d4 b4 proved unsuccessful in the game Glek-Korchnoi, Linz 1997 as Black’s queenside counterplay develops rapidly when it has more to bite upon. White should as far as possible avoid a confrontation on the queenside, since that is where Black has the initiative.

10...a5 (D)

11 b2

11 f4 is another option for White, but 11 a6 (11...a4?!) 12 b2 b4 (12...c4? 13 d4 c3 {13...a4?}) 14 bxc3 b4 is unclear, Beletsky-Moskalenko, Badalona 2005) 13 f1 (13 e3?) 13...c4 14 cxd4 (14 e3 can be met by 14...cxd3 or 14...b3!?) 14...x4 gave Black the better prospects in Glek-Chernushevich, Swiss Team Ch 2009.

In any case, it turns out that the tempo White spent on playing \[e2 has been in vain, and his attack is now behind schedule, as it were. For comparison one can quote the textbook game Fischer-Mjagmasuren, Sousse Interzonal 1967: 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 \[d2 f6 4 g3 c5 5 \[g2 c6 6 f3 \[e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 e5 d7 9 e1 b5. Although in this position the move 10 e2?! has been seen in practice, it is better for White to play 10 f1 b4 11 h4 a5 12 f4 a4 13 a3 bxa3 14 bxa3, as Fischer did.

11...b4

Black is going to continue with 12 a6 followed by ...c4, making contact with White’s structure. This creates tension that makes it hard for White to focus on his kingside play. 11...a4? has similar ideas, though after 12 a3 (12 f1 a3 13 b3? dx5) 12...b4 13 f1 bxa3 14 a3! (14
bxa3? \( \text{dxe5} \) 14...c4 15 \( \text{g5} \) the situation remains unclear.

12 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{a6} \) 13 \( \text{g5} \)

After 13 \( \text{h1h2} \) (or 13 \( \text{h5} \)) 13...c4 Black threatens to detonate White's queenside by 14...b3, while 13 c4 bxc3 14 bxc3 \( \text{b8} \) is not much more palatable since 15 \( \text{h1h2} \) a4 gives Black the initiative.

13...c4 14 \( \text{e3} \)

Or 14 dxc4 \( \text{xc4} \). We can already state that White's opening strategy has been a failure.

14...cxd3 15 cxd3 b3

It is simpler to play 15...\( \text{b6} \) 16 d4 \( \text{fc8} \).

16 a3 \( \text{xg5} \) 17 hxg5 \( \text{c8} \)

Black has somewhat the better position, Smirin-I.Popov, European Ch, Plovdiv 2008.

2.2.2

3...\( \text{c6}! \) ? (D)

We already know this motif: Black makes use of the queen's odd location on e2 to change the nature of the opening struggle.

4 \( \text{f3} \)

The same reply will also follow after 4 c3.

4...e5 5 c3

The attempt to open the game by 5 exd5!? is interesting: 5...\( \text{xd5} \) 6 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{b4} \) 7 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 8 \( \text{xc3} \) (better than 8 bxc3?! \( \text{f6} \) 9 g3 0-0 10 \( \text{g2} \) e4 11 dxe4 \( \text{xe4} \) 12 c4 \( \text{f5} \), Strikovic-Stojanovic, Belgrade 2009) 8...\( \text{g4} \) 9 \( \text{e4} \) (9 d4?! 0-0-0 10 dxe5 \( \text{f6} \) 9...\( \text{xf3} \) 10 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 11 gxf3 f6. However, it is then difficult for White to develop his initiative; for example, 12 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d4} \) 13 0-0-0 \( \text{f3} \) 14 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 15 \( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{d8} \) gives both sides chances in a complicated ending, while the pawn sacrifice 12 f4 exf4 or 12 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{f7} \) 13 0-0-0 \( \text{d8} \) 14 f4 exf4 offers White no advantage.

5 g3 \( \text{f6} \) 6 \( \text{g2} \) is another possibility, but Black obtains a pleasant game by 6...dxe4 (a typical method: the pawn exchange on e4 gains in appeal after the white bishop moves to g2) 7 dxe4 \( \text{c5} \) 8 c3 a5 followed by ...b6 and ...

5...\( \text{f6} \) (D)
6 b4

An adventurous move: White grabs space, but delays his development and gives Black chances of a counterattack by ...d4 or ...a5. Positionally it is more appropriate to play 6 c2 a5 7 e2, with a reversed Philidor. Then the advance b4 will demand additional preparation and although the extra tempo will undoubtedly prove valuable to White, he cannot pose Black any significant opening problems.

6...g4

After pinning the knight, Black’s gaze rests firmly on the d4-square.

7 bd2

White can try to reinforce his queenside by 7 a3, but some holes will appear in his structure in any case: 7...d4 8 c4 (8 b5 a5) 8...a5 9 b5 b8 10 bd2 (or 10 h3 xf3 11 xf3 bd7 12 d2 g6) 10...fd7.

7...d6

Now the line 7...d4 8 b5 dxc3 9 bxc6 cxd2+ 10 xxd2 (weaker is 10 xxd2?! bxc6 11 h3 xf3 12 xf3 b8, as shown by Striković-Ulybin, Santa Cruz de la Palma 2005) leads to unclear complications.

8 h3 e6

8...d7 is also not bad.

9 b2 0-0 10 g3 a5 11 b5

The careless 11 exd5?! xxd5 12 b5 (Striković-Rodshtein, Benasque 2008) leads to serious hardships for White after 12 e8 13 e4 d4! And the line 11 a3 axb4 12 cxb4 d7 has its own defects.

11...dxe4 12 dxe4 b8

The weakness of White’s queenside pawns provides Black with good play.

His chances in this position are preferable.

2.3

1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 d2 (D)

This is the standard way to implement the King’s Indian Attack and is the strongest and most logical continuation for White.

3...xf6 4 gf3

We have already noted the exchange on e4 as a useful general method versus a premature fianchetto. So it will come as little surprise that the immediate 4 g3 is inaccurate in view of 4...dxe4 5 dxe4 b6 6 g2 (6 gf3 will be considered in note ‘a’ to White’s 5th move in Section 2.3.1) 6 b7 7 gf3? (7 w2 d6 8 gf3 is better) 7...dxe4 8 e5 c3! with an advantage for Black. Therefore White prefers to develop his knight before playing g3.

Here our opening roads fork. We shall dwell on two of Black’s possibilities, though in both cases the move ...b6 is in our plans:
2.3.1: 4...b6 23
2.3.2: 4...\(\text{Ke}\)e7 24

2.3.1

4...b6

Black wants to prevent the fianchetto of White's king's bishop.

5 e5

With this move, White changes strategic course and keep chances of retaining an advantage. If White persists with the idea of a kingside fianchetto, Black has nothing to complain about, as the following variations demonstrate:

a) 5 g3 dxe4 (the standard reply) 6 dxe4 \(\text{Ke}\)b7 7 \(\text{We}\)e2 (7 \(\text{Ke}\)d3 can be met by 7...\(\text{Ke}\)bd7, while 7 \(\text{Ke}\)b5?! \(\text{Ke}\)bd7 8 \(\text{Ke}\)e5 a6 9 \(\text{Ke}\)c6 \(\text{Ke}\)xc6 10 \(\text{Ke}\)xc6 \(\text{We}\)c8 gives Black the initiative) 7...\(\text{Ke}\)c6. Now 8 \(\text{Ke}\)g2 \(\text{Ke}\)d4 9 0-0 (9 \(\text{We}\)c4? \(\text{Ke}\)xe4 10 \(\text{Ke}\)xe4 \(\text{Ke}\)d5) 9...\(\text{Ke}\)xc2 10 e5 \(\text{Ke}\)d5 (Yuldashev-Girinath, Hyderabad 2005) is dubious for White, and after 8 c3 (8 a3 a5) 8...\(\text{Ke}\)e7 9 \(\text{Ke}\)g2 \(\text{Ke}\)d7 Black has a pleasant game.

b) The inclusion of the moves 5 c3 c5 somewhat changes the situation, but in any case White does not achieve his desired set-up: 6 g3 (it makes no sense to play 6 \(\text{We}\)a4+ \(\text{Ke}\)d7 7 \(\text{We}\)c2 \(\text{We}\)c7! 8 g3 \(\text{Ke}\)c6 9 \(\text{Ke}\)g2 \(\text{Ke}\)d6) 6...\(\text{Ke}\)e7 7 \(\text{Ke}\)g2 \(\text{Ke}\)a6 8 e5 (both 8 exd5 exd5 and 8 c4 dxe4 9 dxe4 \(\text{Ke}\)c6 10 0-0 0-0 are equal) 8...\(\text{Ke}\)d7 9 \(\text{We}\)e2 \(\text{Ke}\)c6 10 0-0 \(\text{We}\)c7 11 \(\text{Ke}\)e1 g5!? 12 c4 0-0-0 with good counterplay for Black.

c) The uninspiring 5 \(\text{We}\)e2 gives Black a pleasant choice: 5...dxe4 6 dxe4 \(\text{Ke}\)a6 7 \(\text{Ke}\)c4 (7 c4?! \(\text{Ke}\)d6) 7...\(\text{Ke}\)b7 8 e5 \(\text{Ke}\)e4 with equality or 5...\(\text{Ke}\)b7 6 e5 (6 g3 dxe4 7 dxe4 transposes to line 'a') 6...\(\text{Ke}\)d7 7 g3 c5 8 \(\text{Ke}\)g2 \(\text{Ke}\)c6 9 0-0 g5!? and again Black takes over the initiative.

5...\(\text{Ke}\)d7 6 d4

After 6 g3 c5, the pawn sacrifice 7 \(\text{Ke}\)g2 \(\text{Ke}\)c6 8 0-0 \(\text{Ke}\)dxe5 9 \(\text{Ke}\)xe5 \(\text{Ke}\)xe5 10 \(\text{Ke}\)e1 \(\text{Ke}\)c6 11 c4 is only enough for equality at best, and unwarranted stubbornness like 7 \(\text{Ke}\)b3?! \(\text{Ke}\)c6 8 \(\text{Ke}\)f4 \(\text{Ke}\)e7 9 h4 a5 10 a4 (10 \(\text{Ke}\)g2 a4 11 \(\text{Ke}\)bd2 a3) 10...\(\text{Ke}\)a6 brings White to an even worse position.

6...c5 7 c3 (D)

7 c4?! is dubious because of the simple 7...\(\text{Ke}\)e7 8 cxd5 exd5.

For the first time in this book, we see a natural-looking French Defence position! Black has managed to persuade White to abandon his original opening plan and has even obtained a small bonus in the form of an extra tempo in comparison with the line 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 \(\text{Ke}\)d2 \(\text{Ke}\)f6 4 e5 \(\text{Ke}\)d7 5 \(\text{Ke}\)gf3 c5 6 c3 b6. But is it enough to equalize?

7...\(\text{Ke}\)e7
Black does not hurry with the strategically important exchange of the light-squared bishops, hoping to gain one more tempo by waiting for White to move his bishop from f1.

**8 a6**

Other continuations are not effective:

a) 8 d3 allows Black to demonstrate the idea mentioned in the previous note: after 8...a6, both 9 d1 a6 10 axd3 cxd3 10 axb3 g3 cxd4 12 cxd4 b4 13 d1 c7 14 d2 and a6 cxa6 xxa6 10 w2 c8 11 0-0 0-0 are equal.

b) 8 h4 c7 (8...a6 9 a6 cxa6 10 h5 h6 maintains equality, while Black can also try 8...0-0! 9 d3 d6 9 h5 (9 d3 is again met by 9...a6) 9...h6 and now 10 d3?! c6 already gives Black the better chances.

c) 8 a3 c7 9 b4 (9 d3 a6 10 a6 cxa6 is equal) 9...c6 10 c2 (10 c2 is also answered with 10...f6, while 10 d3?! cxd4 11 cxd4 a5 12 b5? xdx4 shows a way for White to land in trouble) 10...f6 11 exf6 xf6 (11...xf6 is also viable), and White again risks finding himself in the worse position.

**8 a6 9 a4!**

White agrees to exchange the bishops, but only on his terms. Now an exchange of bishops on b5 will be answered with axb5, blocking Black’s queenside play. It will require some effort and accuracy from Black to keep the queenside fluid and maintain sufficient counterchances; for example:

a) 9...b7 seeks to complicate the struggle, and after 10 0-0 c6 11 e1 a6 12 d3 g5 Black had good counterplay in the game Vega-Elissalt Cardenas, Guines 1998. However, after the precise 10 d1 White stands somewhat better.

b) 9...c8 10 e2 (10 0-0 cxd4 11 cxd4 c6 10...b7 11 c4 (11 0-0 b5 12 axb5 a6) 11...c6! 12 dxc5 c5 13 0-0 (13 xac6+ bxc6 14 b4 xxc4) 13...0-0 maintains the balance.

c) 9...cxd4 (Black fixes the central pawn-structure right away) 10 cxd4 c8 11 e2 (11 0-0 c6) 11...b7 12 0-0 b5 13 axb5 a6. Little by little, Black frees his game, and White’s attempt to create threats on the kingside by 14 e1 axb5 15 xxa8 bxa8 16 g4 0-0 17 d3 (Andriasian-Hou Yifan, Moscow 2010) can be parried by 17 b8. Although in these variations White retains the initiative, in the final analysis Black can nevertheless count on equality.

**2.3.2**

**4...e7 (D)**

This continuation is in principle different from the previous one: Black is happy for White to develop in the style of the King’s Indian Attack, planning to disrupt the smooth progress of his play once the bishop has reached g2.

**5 g3 b6**

It is also acceptable to make the preliminary pawn exchange 5...dxe4 6 dxe4 before playing 6...b6. After 7 e5 d7 8 e2 (8 g2 a6 transposes
to the main line) 8...\(\text{\textbf{d}c6}\) 9 \(\text{\textbf{g}2} \text{\textbf{c}5}\) 10 0-0 \(\text{\textbf{a}6}\) 11 \(\text{\textbf{c}4}\) 0-0 chances are approximately equal – Black’s pieces are active enough and White’s spatial preponderance is not of vital importance. Nevertheless, the text-move is more critical.

6 \(\text{\textbf{g}2}\)

As already noted in Section 2.2.1, it is not very logical to advance the white pawn to e5 before Black has castled, and the variation 6 e5 (6 \(\text{\textbf{e}2}\)?! can be met by 6...\(\text{\textbf{d}xe4}\) 7 \(\text{\textbf{d}xe4} \text{\textbf{a}6}\) 8 \(\text{\textbf{d}c4} \text{\textbf{c}6}\)) 6...\(\text{\textbf{d}fd7}\) 7 \(\text{\textbf{g}2} \text{\textbf{b}7}\) 8 0-0 \(\text{\textbf{c}5}\) 9 \(\text{\textbf{e}e1} \text{\textbf{c}6}\) does not represent a danger to Black:

a) 10 \(\text{\textbf{c}4}\) 0-0 11 \(\text{\textbf{c}xd5}\) (11 \(\text{\textbf{e}2}\) is met by 11...\(\text{\textbf{e}e8}\), while 11 h4 \(\text{\textbf{w}c7}\) 12 \(\text{\textbf{e}2}\) \(\text{\textbf{d}xc4}\) 13 \(\text{\textbf{d}xc4}\) \(\text{\textbf{d}fd8}\) gives Black the initiative) 11...\(\text{\textbf{e}xd5}\) 12 \(\text{\textbf{b}b1}\)!? (12 \(\text{\textbf{f}f1} \text{\textbf{e}e8}\)) 12...\(\text{\textbf{e}e8}\) 13 \(\text{\textbf{c}c3}\) \(\text{\textbf{d}f8}\) is equal.

b) 10 \(\text{\textbf{f}f1}\) g5!? 11 h3 h5 12 c3 (12 \(\text{\textbf{h}h2}\) \(\text{\textbf{g}8}\)! 13 g4 \(\text{\textbf{w}c7}\) and now 14 \(\text{\textbf{e}2}\)? is poor in view of 14...\(\text{\textbf{d}xe5}\)) 12...g4 13 h\(\text{\textbf{x}g4}\) \(\text{\textbf{x}g4}\) 14 \(\text{\textbf{h}h2} \text{\textbf{d}xe5}\) 15 \(\text{\textbf{x}g4} \text{\textbf{x}g4}\) 16 \(\text{\textbf{w}xg4}\) \(\text{\textbf{f}6}\) is unclear.

c) 10 h4 \(\text{\textbf{c}c7}\) 11 \(\text{\textbf{e}e2}\) h6 (it is simpler to play 11...b5!?; calmly making queenside progress) 12 \(\text{\textbf{f}f1}\) (12 h5 b5 13 \(\text{\textbf{f}f1} \text{\textbf{b}6}\)) 12...g5!? 13 hxg5 (13 h5 \(\text{\textbf{g}8}\)) 13...hxg5 14 \(\text{\textbf{h}h2}\) 0-0-0 15 \(\text{\textbf{g}4} \text{\textbf{h}h5}\) 16 c3 d4 leads to a double-edged game. The careless 17 \(\text{\textbf{c}xd4}\) \(\text{\textbf{g}g4}\) 18 \(\text{\textbf{d}xd4}\) \(\text{\textbf{c}xd4}\) 19 \(\text{\textbf{d}d2}\) \(\text{\textbf{d}d8}\) led to major hardships for White in Movsesian-Delchev, Šibenik 2006.

6...\(\text{\textbf{d}xe4}\) 7 \(\text{\textbf{d}xe4}\)

After 7 \(\text{\textbf{g}5}\) \(\text{\textbf{b}7}\) 8 0-0 (or 8 \(\text{\textbf{g}xe4}\) right away) 8...0-0 9 \(\text{\textbf{g}xe4}\) \(\text{\textbf{d}xe4}\) 10 \(\text{\textbf{d}xe4}\) both 10...\(\text{\textbf{c}c8}\) and 10...\(\text{\textbf{c}c6}\) lead to equality.

7...\(\text{\textbf{a}6}\)!? (D)

Black’s idea resides precisely in this risky-looking move. 7...\(\text{\textbf{b}7}\) is safer but passive, and after 8 0-0 0-0 (the e4-pawn is taboo: 8...\(\text{\textbf{d}xe4}\) 9 \(\text{\textbf{e}e5}\) 9 e5 \(\text{\textbf{d}fd7}\) 10 \(\text{\textbf{e}e2}\) \(\text{\textbf{c}6}\) White has good control of the game.

Rather than fight for equality in a cramped position, Black prefers to engage in a dispute about which of the light-squared bishops occupies a more effective diagonal.
8 e5
White accepts the challenge. The alternative is 8 c4 $\text{d}c6 9 0-0 (9 a3 is met by 9...$\text{d}d7 10 b4 $\text{f}6$ and 9 e5 by 9...$\text{d}d7) 9...0-0 10 e5 $\text{d}d7$. Then 11 $\text{w}e2$ $\text{c}5$ or 11 $\text{w}c2$ $\text{xb}8$ offers White no prospects, while after 11 a3 Black can decide between the calm 11...$\text{xb}8$ (but only not 11...$\text{c}xe5$? 12 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{d}xe5$ 13 $\text{w}a4$) 12 $\text{e}1$ $\text{xb}7$ 13 $\text{w}c2$ (13 $\text{w}e2$ $\text{w}c8$) 13...$\text{a}5$, with equality, and the sharp 11...b5. Then:

a) 12 $\text{w}c2$!? $\text{d}xe5$ 13 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{d}xe5$ 14 $\text{d}d1$ $\text{w}d4$ (14...$\text{w}e8$ and 14...$\text{w}d3$ are also possible) 15 $\text{cxb}5$ $\text{xb}5$ leads to unclear play.

b) 12 $\text{e}1$ $\text{bxc}4$ 13 $\text{w}a4$ $\text{c}5$!? (or 13...$\text{d}c8$ 14 $\text{c}xc4$ $\text{c}5$ 15 $\text{w}c2$ $\text{w}d3$ with equality) 14 $\text{w}x$c6 $\text{b}8$ 15 $\text{d}e4$ $\text{b}7$ 16 $\text{w}x$c5 $\text{x}c5$ 17 $\text{d}xc5$ $\text{d}d5$ is again unclear.

c) 12 b4 gives Black a choice between 12...$\text{d}xe5$ 13 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{d}xe5$ 14 $\text{d}b2$ $\text{d}d3$ 15 $\text{d}x$g7 $\text{x}g7$ and the more unbalancing 12...$\text{bxc}4$!? 13 $\text{w}a4$ $\text{b}7$ 14 $\text{c}xc4$ $\text{c}6$ 15 $\text{w}c2$ $\text{d}d4$ 16 $\text{d}xd4$ $\text{x}g2$, although the game is roughly equal in both cases.

8...$\text{d}fd7$!
Precisely so. All is well in White’s position except for one factor: any check could turn out to be very painful for his king, and Black constructs his counterplay on this small but vital detail. Now besides 9 c4 $\text{d}c6$ 10 0-0 0-0 (which transposes to the previous note), practically all admissible moves by the white knights need to be considered:

a) 9 $\text{h}4$ c6 10 $\text{g}4$ (10 $\text{e}4$ $\text{d}xe5$ 11 $\text{w}x$d8+ $\text{x}d8$ leads to an unclear position) 10...$\text{d}xe5$ 11 $\text{w}x$g7

b) 9 $\text{b}3$ $\text{d}c6$ 10 $\text{f}4$ (10 $\text{d}d4$? $\text{d}xe5$) 10...0-0 11 $\text{d}bd4$ (11 $\text{w}d2$ $\text{w}e8$) 11...$\text{a}5$ (11...$\text{d}db8$?) 12 a4 $\text{c}5$ (Black can also choose 12...$\text{c}6$?) 13 $\text{d}b5$ c6 14 $\text{w}x$d8 (14 $\text{d}d6$ f6 15 $\text{b}4$ $\text{fxe}5$ 16 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{d}d7$) 14...$\text{a}xd8$ 15 $\text{d}xa7$ $\text{d}d7$ is equal.

c) 9 $\text{e}4$!? $\text{c}6$ 10 $\text{f}4$ h6 (the immediate 10...0-0!? is an interesting alternative) 11 $\text{h}4$ (11 c3 $\text{g}5$ is unclear) 11...0-0 12 $\text{d}d2$ $\text{d}c5$ 13 $\text{c}xc5$ bxc5! 14 $\text{w}x$d8 (14 0-0-$\text{w}b$8) 14...$\text{f}xd8$ 15 $\text{d}d2$ $\text{d}d4$ 16 $\text{a}xa8$ $\text{d}xc2$+ 17 $\text{d}d1$ $\text{x}axl$ 18 $\text{e}4$c4 19 $\text{c}1$c3 with equal play.

d) 9 $\text{d}d4$c6 10 $\text{d}f3$ (10 $\text{w}h$5 g6 11 $\text{w}f$3 $\text{w}c7$) 10...0-0 11 $\text{f}4$ (11 a4 is answered by 11...$\text{c}5$ 12 $\text{e}3$ $\text{w}d$5) 11...c5 12 $\text{d}xe6$ (12 a4 $\text{c}xd4$ 13 $\text{d}xd4$ $\text{d}xe5$ 14 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{d}d7$ 15 $\text{d}c6$ $\text{d}xe5$!) 12...$\text{fxe}6$ 13 $\text{g}1$ $\text{w}c7$ 14 $\text{a}xa8$ $\text{d}c6$ 15 $\text{a}xc6$ $\text{w}xc6$ is unclear.

e) 9 $\text{g}5$c6 10 $\text{e}4$h6 11 $\text{f}3$ 0-0 12 $\text{f}4$ $\text{c}5$ 13 $\text{d}6$ (13 $\text{w}x$d8 $\text{xd}8$ 14 $\text{f}d2$ $\text{d}xe4$ 15 $\text{d}xe4$ $\text{d}d7$) 13...$\text{d}bd7$! 14 $\text{h}4$ (14 $\text{d}d4$ is met by 14...$\text{d}xe5$! 15 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{xd}6$ 16 $\text{xc}6$ $\text{d}xe5$!) 14...$\text{d}xe5$? 15 $\text{dxe}5$ (15 $\text{d}xe5$ f6) 15...$\text{w}xd6$ is unclear.

In all these rather unusual variations I did not succeed in finding any advantage for White. I can therefore recommend this line to Black as it leads to concrete play of a type that White can hardly have intended when he decided to play the King’s Indian Attack.
3 Exchange Variation

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 (D)

The Exchange Variation of the French Defence continues to attract followers, in spite of its obvious drawish tendencies, unfavourable statistics (strangely enough, Black wins more often than White) and its strategic poverty. With Black free of weaknesses and the structure static and symmetrical, White has no real reference points from which to develop an initiative. Occasionally he succeeds in creating an advanced post on the e5-square or starting an attack on the black king, but most often the open e-file merely leads to exchanges. As Black, one must not be overconfident of course, as all the negative features of White’s position apply equally to Black’s game, and he is a tempo behind to boot. The one advantage Black has is psychological – White may feel obliged to play actively to avoid squandering his first-move advantage. Or if White is seeking a draw, he may play inaccurately in an attempt to force his desired result. We shall examine the following lines:

- After 4 ♘d3 (Section 3.1) Black keeps some hopes of enlivening the game.
- 4 ♙f3 (Section 3.2) gives Black ways to tease White into breaking the symmetry, but he must be careful.
- 4 ♝c3 ♞f6 (Section 3.3) is very sound for Black, but his possibilities for counterplay are minimal. Note that after 4 ♝c3, Black can also play 4...♗b4, but given that our repertoire choice after 3 ♝c3 is 3...♗f6, we will need to be ready to tackle this position in any case.
- The line 4 c4 (Section 3.4) is the most welcome choice from a practical viewpoint, as White creates a major imbalance. Black gets a fighting position and chances to seize the initiative.

3.1

4 ♘d3 (D)

Generally speaking, it is more logical for White to develop one of his knights first as committing his bishop
at this early stage gives Black more possibilities. However, White’s choice is comprehensible if he wants to play c3 and \( \text{c}e2 \). In the case of the immediate 4 \( \text{c}3 \), Black can reply 4...\( \text{d}6 \) 5 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) (transposing to the main line) or 4...\( \text{f}6 \) 5 \( \text{d}3 \) c5 (see line ‘c’ in the next note).

4...\( \text{c}6 \)

4...c5 leads to more lively play:

a) 5 \( \text{w}e2+? \) is a waste of time. After 5...\( \text{e}7 \) 6 dxc5 \( \text{d}6 \) 7 \( \text{f}3 \) 0-0 8 0-0 e8 9 \( \text{g}5 \) h6 Black takes over the initiative.

b) 5 dxc5 \( \text{x}c5 \) 6 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 7 0-0 (7 \( \text{e}2+ \) \( \text{e}6 \) 8 \( \text{g}5 \) w7 and now 9 \( \text{f}5?! \) is calmly met by 9...0-0) 7...0-0 leads to equality.

c) 5 c3 offers Black a choice between 5...cxd4?! 6 cxd4 \( \text{c}6 \) 7 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 8 0-0 \( \text{g}7 \) and 5...\( \text{f}6 \) 6 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 7 0-0 0-0 8 dxc5 \( \text{x}c5 \) – he can count on equal chances in both lines.

d) 5 \( \text{f}3?! \) c4 6 \( \text{e}2 \) (an unpleasant loss of time, but there is nothing to be done) 6...\( \text{c}6 \) 7 0-0 \( \text{d}6 \) 8 b3 cxb3 9 axb3 \( \text{g}7 \) gives equal chances.

Note that the play after 4 \( \text{d}3 \) c5 has some parallels with positions we see after 4 c4 in Section 3.4.

5 c3

5 \( \text{f}3 \) (or 6 \( \text{f}3 \) on the next move) is considered in Section 3.2.

In the case of 5 \( \text{e}2 \), Black can simply play 5...\( \text{b}4 \) 6 0-0 (or 6 \( \text{b}5+ \) c6 7 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) with equality) 6...\( \text{x}d3 \) 7 \( \text{w}d3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 8 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \), levelling the game.

5...\( \text{d}6 \) 6 \( \text{f}3 \)

Here after 6 \( \text{e}2 \) the line 6...\( \text{f}6 \) 7 \( \text{g}3 \) (7 \( \text{a}3 \) is met by 7...a6, while 7 0-0 \( \text{g}7 \) 8 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{f}5 \) was equal in A.Femandes-Matamoros, Ayamonte 2006) 7...\( \text{g}7 \) 8 0-0 (or 8 \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{w}6+ \) 9 \( \text{e}3 \) 0-0 with equality) 8...h5 is possible. By moving his own queen, White seeks to beat Black to the punch and hinder the development of the c8-bishop.

6...\( \text{f}6 \)

Black takes his chance. This continuation is more interesting than 6...\( \text{e}6 \) 7 \( \text{e}2 \) (7 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \)) 7...\( \text{d}7 \) 8 h3 (8 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{e}7?! \) 9 h3 0-0-0 is unclear, J.Vidarsson-M.Gurevich, Amsterdam 2002) 8...\( \text{g}7 \) 9 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 10 \( \text{x}d3 \) \( \text{x}d3 \) with equality, V.Georgiev-Mitkov, Barbera del Valles 1999.

7 h3

If White is striving for no more than a draw, he can choose 7 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 8 \( \text{x}g4 \) (8 \( \text{e}3+?! \) \( \text{d}7 \) gives Black the initiative) 8...\( \text{x}g4 \) 9 \( \text{x}d8 \) \( \text{x}d8 \).

7...0-0 8 \( \text{e}2 \)

8 \( \text{g}5 \) offers Black a pleasant choice between 8...\( \text{w}e8+ \) 9 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{e}4 \) and 8...\( \text{e}7 \) followed by 9...\( \text{e}4 \). The position is no longer quite so boring!
8...\(\text{Q}e4!\) 9 0-0

Accepting the pawn sacrifice by 9
\(\text{Q}xe4\) dxe4 10 \(\text{W}xe4\) \(\text{Q}e8\) 11 \(\text{W}f3\)
(weaker is 11 \(\text{W}d3?!\) \(\text{W}f6\)) 11...\(\text{Q}e6\) 12
\(\text{Q}e3\) \(\text{Q}e7\) provides Black with plenty
of compensation, Balin-Cech, Czech Team Ch 2009/10.

9...f5 10 \(\text{B}e1\) \(\text{Q}e6\)

Black has a good game.

3.2

4 \(\text{Q}f3\) (D)

4...\(\text{Q}c6\)

Black can maintain the symmetry a
while longer by playing 4...\(\text{Q}f6\) 5
\(\text{B}d3\) \(\text{B}d6\) 6 0-0 (6 \(\text{W}e2+\) \(\text{Q}e6\) 7 \(\text{g}5\)
\(\text{W}e7\) is equal) 6...0-0, and then:

a) 7 h3 \(\text{Q}e8\) 8 \(\text{g}5\) (8 \(\text{B}e1\) \(\text{B}e1\) + 9
\(\text{W}xe1\) \(\text{Q}c6\) and 8 c3 \(\text{Q}c6\) both give
Black comfortable equality) 8...h6 9
\(\text{B}h4\) \(\text{Q}c6\) 10 c3 (10 \(\text{B}c3\) g5 11 \(\text{B}g3\)
\(\text{Q}e4\)) 10...g5 11 \(\text{B}g3\) \(\text{h}xg3\) 12 \(\text{fxg3}\)
g4 is unclear.

b) 7 \(\text{B}e1\) \(\text{g}4\) 8 h3 (8 \(\text{g}5\) h6 9
\(\text{B}h4\) \(\text{B}bd7\) 10 \(\text{B}bd2\) c6 is equal)
8...\(\text{h}5\) 9 \(\text{g}5\) h6 10 \(\text{h}4\) \(\text{B}bd7\) 11
\(\text{B}bd2\) (after 11 \(\text{B}f5\) c6 12 \(\text{W}xd7\)!

\(\text{W}xd7\) Black has the initiative) 11...\(\text{Q}e8\)
gives Black equal play.

c) 7 \(\text{g}5\) h6 8 \(\text{h}4\) c6 9 \(\text{B}bd2\) (9
h3 is met by 9...\(\text{Q}e6\), while 9 c3 \(\text{Q}g4\)
10 h3 \(\text{Q}xf3\) 11 \(\text{W}xf3\) \(\text{B}bd7\) leads to
equality) 9...\(\text{Q}g4\) 10 c4 (10 h3 \(\text{Q}xf3\)
11 \(\text{Q}xf3\) \(\text{B}bd7\) is equal) 10...\(\text{B}bd7\) 11
cxd5 (11 h3 is met by 11...\(\text{Q}e6\) and 11
c5 by 11...\(\text{Q}f4\)) 11...\(\text{c}xd5\) 12 \(\text{W}b3\) \(\text{B}b8\)
leads to an equal game.

Playing carefully for equality in
lines like these is not a great deal of
fun. The text-move invites a sharper
struggle, but it is still up to White
whether he wishes to play ball.

5 \(\text{B}b5\)

5 c4 \(\text{B}b4+\) 6 \(\text{c}3\) \(\text{Q}f6\) transposes
to Section 3.4, while Black stands well
in the variation 5 \(\text{c}3\) \(\text{B}b4\) 6 \(\text{d}3\)
(both 6 h3 \(\text{Q}ge7\) 7 \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{Q}f5\) 8 0-0 0-0
and 6 \(\text{B}b5\) \(\text{Q}ge7\) 7 0-0 0-0 8 h3 \(\text{Q}f5\)
lead to equality) 6...\(\text{Q}ge7\) 7 0-0 \(\text{h}g4\).

Also after 5 \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{d}6\) 6 0-0 (6 h3
\(\text{B}b4\) 7 \(\text{B}b5+\) c6 8 \(\text{a}4\) \(\text{W}e7+\) and 6
\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{Q}ge7\) 7 0-0 0-0 8 h3 \(\text{B}b4\) show
further ideas for Black) 6...\(\text{Q}ge7\) Black
has no difficulties. White then does
best to play 7 c4 dxc4 8 \(\text{B}xc4\), trans­
posing to the main line below.

5...\(\text{d}6\) 6 0-0

Forcing play arises after 6 c4!?
dxc4 7 d5 a6 8 \(\text{a}4\) b5 9 dxc6 bxa4 10
0-0 (10 \(\text{W}xa4\) \(\text{Q}g4\)) 10...\(\text{Q}e7\). Then:

a) 11 \(\text{W}xa4\) 0-0 12 \(\text{B}bd2\) (12 \(\text{W}xc4\)
\(\text{Q}e6\) gives Black the initiative) 12...\(\text{B}b8\)
13 a3 (13 \(\text{B}xc4\) \(\text{B}b4\) 14 \(\text{W}c2\) \(\text{Q}f5\))
13...\(\text{Q}e6\) (13...\(\text{B}b5?!\)) 14 \(\text{B}xc4\) \(\text{d}5\)
15 \(\text{B}d4\) \(\text{c}5\) was equal in Luther-
G.Meier, Austrian Team Ch 2009/10.

b) 11 \(\text{B}bd2\) 0-0 (11...\(\text{Q}e6?!\) 12
\(\text{W}xa4\) c3 13 bxc3 \(\text{B}d5\) is an interesting
alternative) 12 \( \Boxxc4 \) \( \Boxxc6 \) 13 \( \varnothing xa4 \) \( \Boxxb7 \) 14 \( \varnothing g5 \) and now 14...\( \varnothing b8 \)?! 15 \( \varnothing ac1 \) allowed White the initiative in Gonzalez Perez-Moskalenko, Sitges 2010. 14...\( \varnothing e7 \) should be preferred, when White has slightly the more pleasant position – but Black has no real problems.

6...\( \varnothing ge7 \) 7 c4 dxc4

This capture is forced due to the threat of 8 c5.

8 \( \Boxxc4 \) 0-0

8...\( \varnothing g4 \)? is a blunder in view of 9 \( \varnothing xf7+ \).

9 h3

Preventing ...\( \varnothing g4 \). In case of 9 \( \varnothing c3 \) \( \varnothing g4 \) 10 h3 (10 \( \varnothing e3 \) \( \varnothing f5 \)) 10...\( \varnothing xf3 \) 11 \( \varnothing xf3 \) \( \Boxxd4 \) 12 \( \varnothing xb7 \) \( \Boxdec6 \) 13 \( \varnothing a6 \) (13 \( \varnothing d5 \) \( \Boxb8 \) 14 \( \varnothing a6 \) \( \varnothing b4 \)) 13...\( \varnothing h4 \) Black stands no worse. Note that 14 \( \varnothing e1 \) is met by 14...\( \varnothing f3+ \).

9...\( \varnothing f5 \)

Neutralizing the active white bishop by 9...\( \varnothing e6 \) is also quite good. Then the exchange 10 \( \varnothing xe6 \) fxe6 leads to an approximately equal position because the pawns on e6 and d4 are equally weak.

10 \( \varnothing e3 \)

Or 10 d5 \( \varnothing e5 \) 11 \( \varnothing xe5 \) \( \varnothing xe5 \) 12 \( \varnothing e1 \) \( \Boxwd6 \).

10...h6 11 \( \varnothing c3 \) \( \varnothing e8 \) 12 \( \varnothing e1 \) a6

Both sides have chances, Bologan-Aleksandrov, European Ch, Plovdiv 2008.

3.3

4 \( \varnothing c3 \) \( \varnothing f6 \) (D)

Here we see the Exchange Variation in its Classical form – without ‘extravagances’ like the move c4. This position is especially important for us because it can also arise via 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 \( \varnothing c3 \) \( \varnothing f6 \) 4 exd5 exd5.

5 \( \varnothing g5 \)

Now the black bishop must occupy the e7-square. Other continuations promise White nothing:

a) 5 \( \varnothing d3 \) c5 (an interesting alternative to the routine lines 5...\( \varnothing d6 \) and 5...\( \varnothing c6 \) 6 \( \varnothing ge2 \) \( \Boxb4 \), though these yield equality too) 6 dxc5 (Black can also be happy with 6 \( \varnothing f3 \) c4 7 \( \varnothing e2 \) \( \Boxb4 \) and 6 \( \varnothing g5 \) cxd4 7 \( \varnothing xf6 \) \( \Boxxf6 \) 8 \( \varnothing e2+ \) \( \Boxe6 \)) 6...\( \Boxxc5 \) 7 \( \varnothing f3 \) 0-0 8 0-0 h6 with equality.

b) 5 \( \varnothing f3 \) \( \varnothing d6 \) 6 \( \varnothing d3 \) 0-0 7 0-0 \( \varnothing g4 \) 8 h3 \( \varnothing h5 \) 9 \( \varnothing g5 \) c6 keeps the game level. Then 10 g4?! \( \varnothing g6 \) 11 \( \varnothing e5 \) is inappropriate aggression, because after 11...\( \Boxe8 \) it is liable to rebound on White. Note that this line can be reached via the move-order 1 e4 e6 2 \( \varnothing f3 \) d5 3 \( \varnothing c3 \) \( \varnothing f6 \) 4 exd5 exd5 5 d4.

c) 5 \( \varnothing f4 \) can be met by 5...\( \varnothing d6 \) 6 \( \varnothing d2 \) 0-0 7 0-0-0 \( \Boxe8 \) 8 \( \varnothing d3 \) \( \Boxc6 \) or 5...\( \varnothing b4 \)?! 6 \( \varnothing d3 \) 0-0 (6...c5) 7 \( \varnothing e2 \) c5
8 dxc5  #xc5 9 0-0  #c6, with equality in both cases.

5...#e7 6 #d3

This is yet another variation where White can try a set-up with #d3 and #ge2. Other moves:

a) 6 #f3 0-0 7 #d3 (the move 7 #e2 is entirely passive) 7...h6 8 #e3 (8 #f4 #c6 9 h3 #d6 is equal, while 8 #h4 can be met by 8...#c6 9 h3 #h5) 8...#d6 (or 8...#c6) leads to a level game.

b) After 6 #bd2 0-0, the plan with 7 0-0-0 brings some welcome diversity to the position, but does not represent a serious danger for Black. The simplest reply is 7...#e8, when the attempt to launch a pawn-storm by 8 f3 #bd7 9 g4 (9 #d3 c5??) 9...c6 10 #d3 b5 looks highly dubious for White. In the variations 7 #f3 h6 8 #h4 (8 #f4 #b4) 8...#e4 (8...#e6?? is unclear) 9 #xe7 #xe7 10 #xe4 dxe4 and 7 #d3 #c6 8 #f3 (8 #ge2 #b4) 8...#e8 9 0-0-0 h6 10 #h4 #e4 11 #xe7 #xe7 12 #xe4 dxe4 13 #e5 #xe5 14 dxe5 #xd2+ 15 #xd2 #f5 Black stands at least no worse.

6...#c6

The more flexible 6...0-0 deserves attention. After 7 #ge2 h6 8 #h4 (8 #e3 keeps the game equal) 8...#e8 Black has some chances to take over the initiative.

7 #ge2 #b4 8 #g3

8 #b5+ c6 9 a3 (9 #a4?! a5 10 a3 #a6 concedes Black the initiative) 9...#xc2+ 10 #xc2 cxb5 is equal.

8...0-0

Black has no need to hurry with the exchange 8...#xd3+.

9 0-0

In the case of 9 #e2 h6 10 #e3 (or 10 #f4) 10...c5 White finds himself in somewhat the worse position. Nor is it advantageous for him to play 9 #f5 #xf5 10 #xf5 g6 11 a3 #c6 12 #h3 #e4, when Black had the initiative in W.Richter-Glek, Bundesliga 1992/3.

9...h6 10 #f4 #d6

The game is equal.

3.4

4 c4 (D)

Known as the Monte Carlo Variation, this is a modern opening weapon: White takes on a position with an isolated queen's pawn, relying on the activity of his pieces to provide dynamic compensation for this static weakness. We have already seen this type of strategy used by Black (with colours reversed) in Section 3.1 (in the note about 4 #d3 c5), and we shall meet it again in Chapter 5, when we examine the Tarrasch line 3 #d2 c5 4 exd5 exd5.
Black refrains from immediately taking on c4, seeking to gain a tempo by waiting for White to move his bishop from f1. Instead, 4...dxc4 5 \( \textsf{\texttt{xc4}} \) transposes to a variation of the Queen's Gambit Accepted: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5 4 \( \textsf{\texttt{xc4}} \) exd4 5 exd4.

5 \( \textsf{\texttt{c3}} \)

In the case of 5 \( \textsf{\texttt{f3}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{b4+}} \) 6 \( \textsf{\texttt{d2?!}} \) (6 \( \textsf{\texttt{c3}} \) leads to the main continuation) 6...\( \textsf{\texttt{c6}} \) Black's position becomes preferable.

5...\( \textsf{\texttt{b4}} \) 6 \( \textsf{\texttt{f3}} \)

6 \( \textsf{\texttt{d3}} \) has the idea of developing the king's knight to e2, but such a set-up is more suited to defending than attacking. Black replies 6...dxc4 7 \( \textsf{\texttt{xc4}} \) 0-0 8 \( \textsf{\texttt{e2}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{c6}} \) 9 0-0 \( \textsf{\texttt{d6}} \) and, as a matter of fact, exchanges opening roles with his opponent.

6...\( \textsf{\texttt{c6}} \) 7 \( \textsf{\texttt{d3}} \)

Any further delay in developing the f1-bishop is not of any benefit to White:

a) 7 a3 \( \textsf{\texttt{xc3+}} \) 8 bxc3 0-0 9 \( \textsf{\texttt{e2}} \) dxc4 10 \( \textsf{\texttt{xc4}} \) (10 0-0 \( \textsf{\texttt{e6}} \) 10...\( \textsf{\texttt{e8+}} \) 11 \( \textsf{\texttt{e3}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{a5}} \) 12 \( \textsf{\texttt{d3}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{d5}} \) 13 0-0 \( \textsf{\texttt{f5}} \) and Black intends a blockade on the light squares, Siebrecht-I.Farago, Arco di Trento 2010.

b) 7 \( \textsf{\texttt{g5}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{e6}} \) (7...0-0 8 cxd5 \( \textsf{\texttt{e8+}} \) 9 \( \textsf{\texttt{e2}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{xd5}} \) 10 \( \textsf{\texttt{d2}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{e6}} \) 11 0-0 \( \textsf{\texttt{e7}} \) is equal) 8 \( \textsf{\texttt{e2}} \) (8 c5 h6) 8...h6 9 cxd5 \( \textsf{\texttt{xd5}} \) leaves Black comfortable.

The move 7 \( \textsf{\texttt{d3}} \) is more accurate than 7 \( \textsf{\texttt{e2}} \), as then besides 7...dxc4 the reply 7...\( \textsf{\texttt{e6}} \) is worthy of attention.

7...0-0

7...dxc4 is likely to lead to the same position.

8 0-0 \( \textsf{\texttt{g4}} \) 9 \( \textsf{\texttt{e3}} \) dxc4 10 \( \textsf{\texttt{xc4}} \)

This is the basic position of the whole variation, which can arise via a wide variety of sequences. The white bishop has reached c4 in two moves (unlike in the QGA line mentioned above), but now Black needs to decide on a plan of action.

It is not advantageous for Black to play 10...\( \textsf{\texttt{xf3}} \) 11 \( \textsf{\texttt{xf3}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{xd4}} \) 12 \( \textsf{\texttt{xb7}} \). In order to create the threat of taking on d4, the move 10...\( \textsf{\texttt{b8}} \) has often been played, but 10...\( \textsf{\texttt{d6?!}} \) looks more natural. White does not succeed in deriving any benefit from the opening after 11 h3?! \( \textsf{\texttt{xf3}} \) 12 \( \textsf{\texttt{xf3}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{xd4}} \) 13 \( \textsf{\texttt{xb7}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{xc3}} \) 14 bxc3 \( \textsf{\texttt{fb8}} \) 15 \( \textsf{\texttt{a6}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{xa6}} \) 16 \( \textsf{\texttt{xa6}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{d2}} \), 11 \( \textsf{\texttt{b5}} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{d7}} \) 12 a3 \( \textsf{\texttt{a5}} \) (Weissenbach-A.Graf, Berlin 2008) or 11 a3 \( \textsf{\texttt{xc3}} \) 12 bxc3 \( \textsf{\texttt{ae8}} \) – Black has good play in all cases.
4 Advance Variation

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 (D)

We have now reached the first of the main lines of the French in which White has realistic prospects of maintaining his opening advantage. In the French, one of Black’s main priorities from the outset is to define the central pawn-structure, since this makes it possible for him to decide how best to develop his pieces while generating counterplay. So in one sense the Advance Variation is highly obliging, as White grants his opponent his wish without further ado. Nevertheless, this straightforward strategy also poses problems for Black, as White seizes a space advantage and takes squares away from Black’s minor pieces — in many lines, there is a ‘traffic jam’ over the e7-square. While Black’s first move is obvious (3...c5), later he must act deliberately and purposefully; otherwise White’s spatial plus can become the dominant strategic factor.

After dealing with the minor options 4 dxc5?!; 4 1g4?! and 4 2f3 in Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 respectively, we turn to the normal 4 c3. I recommend a standard set-up but using the move-order 4...b6 5 2f3 2c6. Then:

- 6 2a3 (Section 4.4) is an interesting sideline, but is not very promising for White.
- The same may be said about 6 2d3, the famous Milner-Barry Gambit (Section 4.5). There is insufficient justification for White to give up his d-pawn.
- In Section 4.6 we examine 6 2e2, which may result in either equality or interesting complications.
- Finally, Section 4.7 is devoted to White’s main continuation, 6 a3, by which he aims to stabilize the queenside by b4 and so minimize Black’s counterplay. We examine 6...2d7 (an attempt to play for equality), 6...c4 (which tends to lead to a long positional struggle) and the unconventional 6...f6.

4.1
In this and the next two sections we briefly consider variations in which
White refuses to support the d4-pawn with the natural move 4 c3. White’s main idea in these lines is to establish piece control of the centre, but this Nimzowitschian concept does not bear fruit here. In the best case (4 \text{dxf}3) White can expect at most an unclear position, so one can wonder why these old ideas still enjoy some popularity in our time.

4 \text{dxc}5?! 

This is the most illogical of these oddball continuations: White not only takes away the defence of the e5-pawn, but in addition promotes the opponent’s development.

4...\text{c}6 5 \text{f}3

White should avoid 5 \text{b}5?! \text{xc}5 6 \text{g}4 \text{e}7 (Berezovsky-Glek, Bundesliga 2003/4). It is not much better for him to play 5 \text{c}3 \text{xc}5 6 \text{g}4 \text{xe}5 7 \text{xg}7 \text{f}6, when Black has the initiative.

5...\text{xc}5 6 \text{d}3

6 \text{f}4 is not good in view of 6...\text{b}6 7 \text{g}3 \text{xb}2, while 6 \text{c}3 a6 7 \text{d}3 f6 resembles the main line.

6...f6 (D)

7 \text{w}e2

7 \text{f}4? \text{fxe}5 8 \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 9 \text{xe}5 \text{g}5 is entirely bad for White, while after 7 \text{exf}6 \text{xf}6 8 0-0 0-0 9 \text{c}4 (9 \text{w}e2 \text{e}5) 9...\text{xc}4 10 \text{xc}4 \text{xd}1 11 \text{xd}1 \text{g}4 12 \text{f}1 \text{d}4 White’s position is worse, Becker-Eliskases, Vienna 1935.

7...\text{fxe}5 8 \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 9 \text{xe}5 \text{f}6

Here any blockade of the squares d4 and e5 is out of the question, since White is clearly behind in development. The urgent priority for White is simply to emerge from his opening mess without too great a disadvantage.

10 \text{b}5+

Or 10 0-0 0-0 11 \text{c}4 (played too optimistically) 11...\text{g}4! 12 \text{h}5 \text{xf}2 13 \text{xf}2 \text{xf}2+ 14 \text{h}1 \text{f}6 with an extra pawn for Black.

10...\text{f}7 11 0-0 \text{f}8 12 \text{d}3 \text{g}8

We have the same position as in the last note, but with two extra moves on the scoresheets. Black stands better.

4.2

4 \text{g}4?!

This has ideas in common with Section 4.3 (4 \text{dxf}3) but is markedly worse, since White simply lacks time for such queen walks at the beginning of the game.

4...\text{c}6 5 \text{f}3 \text{cxd}4 6 \text{d}3 \text{c}7 (D)

White now has an awkward choice:

a) 7 0-0 (giving up the last central pawn) 7...\text{e}5 8 \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 9 \text{f}4 \text{f}6 10 \text{g}3 (10 \text{b}5+ is met by 10...\text{d}7 11 \text{xd}7+ \text{xd}7 12 \text{g}3 \text{f}5, while White should avoid playing 10 \text{xg}7? \text{xf}4 11 \text{h}8 \text{e}7, as
Remlinger indicated) 10...\texttt{Wh}5 11 h3 (11 \texttt{b}5+ \texttt{d}7 12 \texttt{xd}7+ \texttt{xd}7; 11 \texttt{e}5 \texttt{d}7) 11...\texttt{e}4 with an advantage for Black.

b) 7 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{b}4 8 0-0 (after 8 \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{xd}3+ 9 \texttt{cxd}3 \texttt{b}6 10 \texttt{b}3 \texttt{b}4+! White is driven into an unpleasant position since he must play 11 \texttt{e}2 as interposing fails to ...\texttt{g}5 – Belavenets) 8...\texttt{xd}3 9 \texttt{cxd}3 \texttt{c}2 10 \texttt{xd}4 (10 \texttt{bd}2 \texttt{xd}3) 10...\texttt{xb}2 11 \texttt{b}3 \texttt{d}7 does not give White enough compensation for the pawn.

c) Impartially speaking, the line 7 \texttt{g}3 f6 8 exf6 (8 \texttt{h}7 is answered by 8...\texttt{xe}5 and 8 \texttt{f}4 with 8...\texttt{g}5) 8...\texttt{xg}3 9 \texttt{xg}3 (9 f7+ \texttt{xf}7 10 \texttt{xg}3 \texttt{f}6) 9...\texttt{xf}6 may be called the strongest for White, but for the sake of this it was evidently not worth playing 4 \texttt{g}4.

4.3

4 \texttt{f}3 (D)

White’s main idea is to establish a strongpoint on e5, and to achieve this he is ready to sacrifice the d4-pawn, at least temporarily.

4...\texttt{xd}4 5 \texttt{d}3

White can choose 5 \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{e}7 (5...\texttt{c}6!? 6 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{c}7 7 \texttt{c}3 \texttt{a}6 is unclear) 6 \texttt{d}3 (6 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{g}6 7 \texttt{g}3 \texttt{c}6 8 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{c}7) 6...\texttt{g}6 (6...\texttt{ec}6!?) 7 \texttt{g}6 \texttt{hxg}6 8 0-0 \texttt{c}6 9 \texttt{f}4, which leads to equality (Short), but those who choose 4 \texttt{f}3 are not generally looking to bail out at such an early stage.

5...\texttt{e}7 6 0-0

White’s best plan is to advance his queenside pawns with a3 and b4, followed by \texttt{b}2. After 6 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{ec}6 7 0-0 \texttt{d}7 8 \texttt{bd}2 \texttt{e}7 9 \texttt{g}3 (not 9 \texttt{e}1? \texttt{g}5, while 9 \texttt{b}3 \texttt{g}5!? 10 \texttt{g}3 \texttt{h}5 11 \texttt{h}3 \texttt{g}4 gives Black the initiative) 9...\texttt{f}5 (9...\texttt{g}5?) 10 exf6 \texttt{xf}6 Black’s chances are preferable, Spraggett-Gofshtein, Seville 2001.

6...\texttt{ec}6

This line is more interesting than 6...\texttt{g}6 7 \texttt{e}1 \texttt{c}6 8 \texttt{bd}2 (8 a3?! \texttt{e}7 9 b4 \texttt{c}7 10 \texttt{e}2 \texttt{f}6, Dolezal-Rivas, Albacete 2009) 8...\texttt{c}7 9 \texttt{xg}6 \texttt{fxg}6 (or 9...\texttt{hxg}6) with approximate equality.

7 \texttt{e}1 \texttt{d}7 8 a3
8 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{bd2} \) is weaker due to 8...\( \mathcal{W} \text{c7} \) or 8...\( \mathcal{A} \text{b4} \).

8...\( \mathcal{W} \text{c7} \)

Black can also play 8...a5!? (radically preventing b4 but weakening the point b5) 9 a4 \( \mathcal{A} \text{b4} \) with an unclear game.

9 \( \mathcal{W} \text{e2} \) \( \mathcal{A} \text{c5} \) 10 b4 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{xd3} \) 11 \( \mathcal{W} \text{xd3} \) \( \mathcal{A} \text{d7} \)

White will soon re-establish the material equilibrium, but he has no reason to expect any advantage.

4.4

4 c3 \( \mathcal{W} \text{b6} \) (D)

Black creates pressure upon both the central point d4 and the b2-pawn. The more customary move-order 4...\( \mathcal{Q} \text{c6} \) (intending to meet 5 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{f3} \) by 5...\( \mathcal{W} \text{b6} \)) allows the side-variation 5 \( \mathcal{A} \text{e3} \), which we can now exclude from consideration.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{W} \\
\end{array}
\]

5 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{f3} \)

White can also play 5 a3, which after 5...\( \mathcal{Q} \text{c6} \) 6 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{f3} \) leads to Section 4.7.

5...\( \mathcal{Q} \text{c6} \) 6 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{a3} \)

White’s main possibilities (6 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{d3} \), 6 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{e2} \) and 6 a3) are considered in later sections. One can also mention that 6 dxc5?! tears apart White’s pawn-chain for no especially good reason, and 6...\( \mathcal{Q} \text{xc5} \) 7 \( \mathcal{W} \text{c2} \) (7 \( \mathcal{W} \text{e2} \) f6 8 b4 \( \mathcal{A} \text{e7} \)) 7...\( \mathcal{W} \text{c7} \) 8 \( \mathcal{A} \text{f4} \) \( \mathcal{Q} \text{ge7} \) gives Black the initiative.

The knight move to a3 is an interesting idea: the knight is ready to bolster the d4-pawn by \( \mathcal{Q} \text{c2} \), which can be a useful way to counter Black’s ...\( \mathcal{Q} \text{ge7-f5} \) manoeuvre, but Black is not committed to this, and can seek to throw a spanner in White’s plans.

6...\( \mathcal{X} \text{xd4} \) 7 \( \mathcal{X} \text{xd4} \) \( \mathcal{A} \text{b4?} \)

The simplest rejoinder: after the bishop check, the knight can come to e7 and Black thereby solves the often irksome problem of kingside development. 7...\( \mathcal{Q} \text{d7} \) 8 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{c2} \) \( \mathcal{C} \text{c8} \) is also quite good; for example:

a) 9 a3?! \( \mathcal{Q} \text{a5} \) 10 b4 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{b3} \) 11 \( \mathcal{A} \text{bl} \) \( \mathcal{Q} \text{xc1} \) 12 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{xc1 a5} \) (Kupreichik-V.Aleksseev, Minsk 2003), and now it is best for White to give up the pawn by 13 \( \mathcal{A} \text{d3} \).

b) 9 \( \mathcal{A} \text{d3} \) \( \mathcal{Q} \text{b4} \) 10 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{xb4} \) \( \mathcal{Q} \text{xb4+} \) 11 \( \mathcal{A} \text{d2} \) (11 \( \mathcal{A} \text{fl} \) \( \mathcal{A} \text{b5} \)) 11...\( \mathcal{X} \text{xd2+} \) 12 \( \mathcal{W} \text{xd2} \) \( \mathcal{A} \text{b5} \).

c) 9 \( \mathcal{A} \text{e2} \) \( \mathcal{A} \text{b4+} \)!? (or 9...\( \mathcal{Q} \text{b4} \) 10 \( \mathcal{A} \text{e3} \) \( \mathcal{A} \text{b5} \) with equality) 10 \( \mathcal{A} \text{d2} \) (10 \( \mathcal{A} \text{fl} \) is met by 10...\( \mathcal{A} \text{e7} \), while 10 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{xb4} \)?! \( \mathcal{Q} \text{xb4} \) 11 0-0 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{c2} \) 12 \( \mathcal{A} \text{bl} \) \( \mathcal{A} \text{e7} \) is unclear) 10...\( \mathcal{X} \text{xd2+} \) 11 \( \mathcal{W} \text{xd2} \) \( \mathcal{W} \text{xb2} \) 12 0-0 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{d8} \) 13 \( \mathcal{A} \text{fc1} \) \( \mathcal{A} \text{e7} \) with unclear play.

8 \( \mathcal{A} \text{d2} \) \( \mathcal{Q} \text{ge7} \) 9 \( \mathcal{A} \text{b5} \)

White’s knight strays from its intended route, but 9 \( \mathcal{Q} \text{c2} \) is a pawn sacrifice that is not altogether convincing.
after 9...\text{xd2}+ 10 \text{wd2} \text{xb2} 11 \text{d}3 \text{b}6 12 0-0 0-0. However, 9 \text{c}3?! \text{d}7 10 \text{d}2 (10 \text{c}2 \text{xc}3+ 11 \text{xc}3 \text{b}2) 10...0-0 11 \text{e}2 f6 leads to a position with chances for both sides.

9...\text{xd2}+ 10 \text{xd2} 0-0 11 \text{e}2

11 \text{d}3?! is inappropriate in view of 11...f6 12 \text{xf6} \text{xf6}, when the exchange sacrifice ...\text{xf}3 is in the air.

11...f6

11...\text{d}7 12 \text{c}3 \text{f}5 13 \text{d}1 \text{f}6 14 \text{xf6} (14 g4?! \text{fxd}4 15 \text{xd}4 \text{fxe}5 gives Black the initiative) 14...\text{xf6} transposes.

12 \text{xf6} \text{xf6} 13 \text{c}3

White should avoid 13 0-0?! \text{xf}3 14 \text{gx}f3 \text{a}6 15 \text{c}3 \text{xd}4.

13...\text{f}5 14 \text{d}1 \text{d}7

The game is approximately level. Black’s activity fully compensates for the defects of his pawn-structure.

4.5

4 \text{c}3 \text{b}6 5 \text{f}3 \text{c}6 6 \text{d}3 (D)

This move introduces the Milner-Barry Gambit. White puts the bishop on its best square, but he will pay a price for this pleasure, as the d4-pawn is left unprotected. To avoid an inferior game, Black must accept the challenge.

6...\text{xd}4

Fixing the future booty in its place.

7 \text{xd}4 \text{d}7

Now the threat to capture on d4 is real.

8 0-0

Backing down by 8 \text{c}2 \text{b}4 9 0-0 \text{xc}2 10 \text{xc}2 \text{c}8 11 \text{c}3 \text{e}7 makes no sense for White, while 8 \text{c}3 \text{xd}4 9 \text{xd}4 \text{xd}4 10 0-0 (or 10 \text{e}2 a6 11 0-0) is merely a transposition of moves.

8...\text{xd}4 9 \text{xd}4

This is the standard continuation. The aggressive 9 \text{g}5?! is objectively a poor idea: 9...\text{c}6 10 \text{e}1 \text{c}5 11 \text{f}3 \text{h}6 (11...0-0-0?! 12 \text{c}3 \text{f}6 13 \text{xf6} \text{xf6} gives Black the initiative) 12 \text{c}3 \text{d}4 13 \text{f}4 \text{h}5. However, given that his prospects are not too impressive in the main line, White may be advised to play 9 \text{bd}2. After 9...\text{c}5, the sharp line 10 b4?! \text{xf}3+ (10...\text{xb}4?! 11 \text{xd}4 \text{xd}4 12 \text{b}1 \text{c}3 13 \text{f}3 \text{b}6) 11 \text{xf}3 \text{xb}4 12 \text{g}5 \text{a}4 13 \text{h}5 \text{h}6 (Smerdon-Zhao Zong, Queenstown 2006) leaves Black in charge, but the more reasonable 10 \text{xd}4 \text{xd}4 11 \text{f}3 \text{e}7 offers White some compensation for the missing pawn.

9...\text{xd}4 10 \text{c}3 (D)

Slower lines such as 10 \text{e}1 \text{e}7 11 \text{c}3 \text{a}6 or 10 \text{e}2 \text{e}7 11 \text{c}3 \text{c}6 12 \text{e}1 (12 \text{b}5 \text{xe}5; 12 \text{e}3 \text{xe}5 13 \text{f}4 \text{d}6 14 \text{f}5 \text{e}5) 12...a6
only give Black extra defensive possibilities.

10...a6

Black contents himself with just one extra pawn and a sound position – a highly practical decision. But taking the second pawn by 10...\textit{\texttt{wx}}e5 is clearly a critical test of White’s gambit strategy. He obtains open lines and a large development advantage – all he lacks is the means to land any sort of decisive blow: 11 \textit{\texttt{e}}e1 \textit{\texttt{w}}b8 12 \textit{\texttt{xd}}d5 (12 \textit{\texttt{wf}}3 can be met by 12...\textit{\texttt{df}}6!? or 12...\textit{\texttt{d}}d6 13 \textit{\texttt{xd}}5 \textit{\texttt{xf}}2+ 14 \textit{\texttt{h}}h1 \textit{\texttt{c}}7) 12...\textit{\texttt{d}}d6 13 \textit{\texttt{g}}4 (13 \textit{\texttt{h}}5!? \textit{\texttt{f}}8 14 \textit{\texttt{c}}c3 \textit{\texttt{f}}6 15 \textit{\texttt{h}}4 \textit{\texttt{h}}6) 13...\textit{\texttt{f}}8 14 \textit{\texttt{d}}d2 \textit{\texttt{h}}5 15 \textit{\texttt{h}}3 \textit{\texttt{h}}6 and White’s initiative is exhausted. Nevertheless, Black does not have to expose himself to such danger, because the text-move keeps the closed nature of the play, and minimizes the risk of coming under attack.

11 \textit{\texttt{we}}2 \textit{\texttt{ce}}7

11...\textit{\texttt{c}}c8!? 12 \textit{\texttt{h}}h1 \textit{\texttt{c}}c5 (12...\textit{\texttt{h}}4!? 13 \textit{\texttt{g}}5 (13 f4? \textit{\texttt{h}}6 gives Black the initiative) 13...\textit{\texttt{h}}6 14 \textit{\texttt{d}}d2 \textit{\texttt{ce}}7 is an alternative – Black has a reliable game and retains his material plus.

12 \textit{\texttt{h}}h1

After 12 \textit{\texttt{d}}d1 \textit{\texttt{c}}c6 13 \textit{\texttt{xa}}6 \textit{\texttt{wx}}e5 14 \textit{\texttt{xb}}7 (14 \textit{\texttt{wx}}e5 \textit{\texttt{xe}}5 15 \textit{\texttt{xb}}7 \textit{\texttt{a}}7) 14...\textit{\texttt{wx}}e2 15 \textit{\texttt{xe}}2 \textit{\texttt{b}}8 the material is equal, but White’s position has evidently worsened.

12...\textit{\texttt{c}}c6 13 f4 \textit{\texttt{b}}4 14 \textit{\texttt{d}}d1

14 \textit{\texttt{b}}1 \textit{\texttt{c}}4 15 \textit{\texttt{f}}3 (or 15 \textit{\texttt{d}}1) 15...d4 is bad for White.

14...\textit{\texttt{c}}5 15 \textit{\texttt{xa}}6 \textit{\texttt{f}}2

The game moves into an ending in which White will have to struggle for equality.

4.6

4 c3 \textit{\texttt{wb}}6 5 \textit{\texttt{f}}3 \textit{\texttt{c}}c6 6 \textit{\texttt{e}}e2 (D)

With this modest bishop development, White keeps the d4-pawn under the protection of his queen. Black needs to strengthen the siege, and for that his second knight must get to the f5-square.

6...\textit{\texttt{cxd}}4

In this case the exchange serves as useful preparation for the next move.
7 cxd4 \(\Box h6\) (\(D\))

The knight uses this route so as not to allow the variation 7...\(\Box ge7\) 8 \(\Box a3\) \(\Box f5\) 9 \(\Box c2\).

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Now 8 \(\Box a3\) is not advantageous in view of 8...\(\Box xa3\) 9 bxa3 \(\Box f5\) 10 \(\Box e3\) \(\Box a5+\) 11 \(\Box d2\) \(\Box xa3\) (or 11...\(\Box d7\)).

The obvious argument against putting the knight on \(h6\) is 8 \(\Box xh6\), but Black’s idea is to answer this with 8...\(\Box xb2\)!. Then:

a) 9 \(\Box e3\)? is bad due to 9...\(\Box xal\).

b) After 9 \(\Box bd2\) gxh6 10 \(\Box b1\) (10 0-0 \(\Box xd4\)) 10...\(\Box xa2\) it is unlikely that White’s initiative is worth two pawns.

c) 9 \(\Box c3\)? and now 9...\(\Box xc3+\) 10 \(\Box d2\) \(\Box a3\) (10...\(\Box b2\)?) 11 0-0 \(\Box e7\) 12 \(\Box c2\) gave White compensation in Mantovani-Emelin, European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008. It is safer to play 9...\(\Box xd4\)!? 10 \(\Box xd4!\) \(\Box xa1+\) 11 \(\Box d1\) gxh6 12 0-0 \(\Box b2\) 13 \(\Box a4+\) \(\Box d8\) 14 \(\Box b1\) \(\Box a3\) 15 \(\Box xd5\)! with a draw, as Vitiugov analysed.

Overall, these complications are not so attractive for White, and normally he prefers a more careful defence of the \(d4\)-pawn. There are several ways he can do so:

4.6.1: 8 b3?! 39
4.6.2: 8 \(\Box c3\) 40
4.6.3: 8 \(\Box d3\)? 40

4.6.1
8 b3?!
A very dubious continuation. White loses his castling rights, and the initiative remains in Black’s hands.

8...\(\Box f5\)
Black can play even more vigorously by the immediate 8...\(\Box b4+\) 9 \(\Box f1\) 0-0!?, not spending a tempo moving the knight.

9 \(\Box b2\) \(\Box b4+\) 10 \(\Box f1\) 0-0
Black logically prepares to open the f-file by ...\(f6\).

11 g4
Other possibilities are no better.
Black keeps the initiative after 11 \(\Box c3\) f6 12 g4 \(\Box fe7\) 13 \(\Box a4\) \(\Box d8\) 14 a3 \(\Box a5\), 11 \(\Box d3\) f6 12 \(\Box xf5\) exf5 (12...\(\Box xe5\)!) 13 \(\Box c3\) \(\Box e6\) or 11 \(\Box a3\) f6 12 \(\Box c2\) \(\Box e7\) 13 g4 \(\Box h6\) 14 exf6 \(\Box xf6\) 15 h3 (15 g5 is met by 15...\(\Box xf3\)) 15...\(\Box d7\), as in Dimitrov-Rusev, Bulgarian Ch, Borovets 2008.

11...\(\Box h6\) 12 \(\Box g1\)

In comparison with 12 h3 f6, White at least activates his rook.

12...f6 13 \(\Box xf6\) \(\Box xf6\) 14 g5 \(\Box xf3\) 15 \(\Box xf3\)
It is better for White to take the exchange than to suffer for nothing after 15 gxh6 \(\Box f7\) 16 \(\Box xg7+\) \(\Box xg7\) 17 hxg7 \(\Box c7\), as in Inkiov-Justo, French Team Ch 2009/10.

15...\(\Box f5\)
Black has the better chances due to White's numerous weaknesses, Savić-Reutsky, European Ch, Budva 2009.

4.6.2
8 \( \triangleleft c3 \) (D)

This initiates forcing play.

8...\( \triangleleft f5 \) 9 \( \triangleleft a4 \)

Distracting the black queen from its attack on the d4-pawn. 9 \( \triangleleft f1 \)?! \( \triangleleft fxd4 \) 10 \( \triangleleft a4 \) (10 \( \triangleleft e3 \) \( \triangleleft xb2 \) 11 \( \triangleleft xd5 \) \( \triangleleft xe2+ \)) 10...\( \triangleleft b4 \) 11 \( \triangleleft d2 \) \( \triangleleft e7 \) 12 \( \triangleleft g5 \) f6 promises nothing good for White.

9...\( \triangleleft a5+ \) 10 \( \triangleleft d2 \)

Again 10 \( \triangleleft f1 \)?! b5 11 \( \triangleleft c3 \) (11 \( \triangleleft c5 \) \( \triangleleft xc5 \) 12 dxc5 b4) 11...b4 12 \( \triangleleft b1 \) \( \triangleleft wb6 \) 13 \( \triangleleft e3 \) \( \triangleleft e7 \) looks a little absurd. Now, however, simplifications are inevitable.

10...\( \triangleleft b4 \) 11 \( \triangleleft c3 \) \( \triangleleft xc3+ \) 12 \( \triangleleft xc3 \) \( \triangleleft wb6 \) 13 \( \triangleleft b5 \) \( \triangleleft d7 \) 14 \( \triangleleft xc6 \) \( \triangleleft xc6 \) 15 \( \triangleleft b1 \)

Or 15 \( \triangleleft wd2 \) \( \triangleleft b5 \).

15...\( \triangleleft a6 \)

The position is approximately equal. Black will meet 16 \( \triangleleft e2 \) by 16...\( \triangleleft c4 \).

4.6.3
8 \( \triangleleft d3 \)? (D)

A non-standard decision. It looks odd to move the bishop again so soon after it came to e2, but the knight's move to h6 has changed the situation significantly.

8...\( \triangleleft d7 \)

Black creates a threat to take the d4-pawn.

Instead, 8...\( \triangleleft f5 \) 9 \( \triangleleft xf5 \) exf5 leads to a known theoretical position that usually arises from the line 4...\( \triangleleft c6 \) 5 \( \triangleleft f3 \) \( \triangleleft ge7 \) 6 d3 cxd4 7 cxd4 \( \triangleleft f5 \) 8 \( \triangleleft c2 \)? (inviting the black queen to occupy b6) 8...\( \triangleleft wb6 \) 9 \( \triangleleft xf5 \) exf5. Such a pawn-structure is not to everybody's taste, but the chances are approximately equal. For example, 10 \( \triangleleft c3 \) \( \triangleleft e6 \) and now:

a) 11 \( \triangleleft e2 \) \( \triangleleft e7 \) 12 h4 h6 13 \( \triangleleft f1 \) (an attempt to attack) 13...0-0 (13...0-0-0!? 14 h5 \( \triangleleft b8 \), Benjamin-F.Levin, Cologne rapid 1997) 14 \( \triangleleft f4 \) \( \triangleleft ac8 \) 15 \( \triangleleft h3 \) \( \triangleleft b4 \) 16 \( \triangleleft g3 \) \( \triangleleft h8 \).

b) 11 0-0 \( \triangleleft c8 \) 12 a3 (or 12 \( \triangleleft b1 \) \( \triangleleft e7 \) 13 \( \triangleleft e2 \) h6, not allowing the
exchange of bishops) 12...h6 13 b4!? a5 is unclear, since 14 b5 will be met by 14...\(\text{\textit{c}}\)xd4.

9 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)c2

The pawn sacrifice in the spirit of the Milner-Barry Gambit, 9 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c3, is unconvincing after 9...\(\text{\textit{c}}\)xd4 10 0-0 (10 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)xd4 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)xd4 11 0-0 a6) 10...a6 (or 10...\(\text{\textbf{c}}\)c5).

With the text-move, White again offers his opponent the chance to reach the structure discussed in the previous note by 9...\(\text{\textit{c}}\)f5 10 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)xf5 exf5. It is also acceptable to play 9...g6 10 0-0 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)f5 11 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)xf5 gxf5 12 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)c3 \(\text{\textit{g}}\)g8, as in Sandipan-Batchuluun, Cebu 2007, but Black has a more interesting possibility...

9...g5!?

This sharp move, which has so far only been tested in one blitz game(!), deserves additional study. Black finds an original way to continue the attack on the d4-pawn and creates complications.

10 h3 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)f5 11 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)xf5 exf5 (D)

By castling, White intends a piece sacrifice. Here are his other options:

a) 12 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)xg5 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)xb2 13 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)bd2 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)b5!? 14 a3 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)g8 gives Black the initiative.

b) 12 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)xg5 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)xd4 13 0-0 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)xd1 14 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)xd1 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)xe5 15 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c3 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c6 is equal.

c) 12 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c3 h6!? (12...g4 13 hgx4 fxg4 14 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)g5 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)xd4 is equal) 13 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xd5 (13 0-0 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)6 14 \(\text{\textit{a}}\)a4 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)b5) 13...\(\text{\textit{a}}\)a5+ 14 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c3 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)6 15 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)d2 0-0-0 with the initiative for Black.

12...g4 13 hxg4

Perhaps White should do without the preliminary pawn exchange and play the immediate 13 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c3 gxf3 14 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xd5 fxg2 15 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)e1 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)a5!? (15...\(\text{\textit{w}}\)xd4 16 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)f6+ \(\text{\textit{d}}\)d8 is equal) 16 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)f6+ \(\text{\textit{d}}\)d8 17 d5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)d4 18 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e3 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c5 19 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c3, with a very unbalanced game.

13...fxg4 14 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c3 gxf3 15 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xd5 fxg2 16 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e1 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)xd4

Black should avoid 16...\(\text{\textit{a}}\)a5? 17 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)f6+ \(\text{\textit{d}}\)d8 18 d5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)d4 19 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e4!, but taking on d4 now somewhat gains in strength.

17 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)f6+

17 \(\text{\textit{g}}\)g5?!, as played in Movsesian-Caruana, Moscow blitz 2010, is inferior because 17...\(\text{\textit{e}}\)e7! gives Black the advantage.

17...\(\text{\textit{d}}\)d8!

Not 17...\(\text{\textit{e}}\)e7? 18 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)h5!, when Black is in trouble. The text-move lets White regain the piece, but 18 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)xd4 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xd4 19 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)d1 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)f3+ (or 19...\(\text{\textit{c}}\)c5) leaves White fighting for equality.

4.7

4 c3 \(\text{\textit{w}}\)b6 5 \(\text{\textit{f}}\)f3 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c6 6 a3 (D)

This is the main line of the Advance Variation. White prepares the move
b4, which will solve the problem of defending the d4-pawn, as \( b2 \) or \( e3 \) will be possible. Black has several viable replies, and we discuss the following three, between which readers can choose depending on their preferences and mood:

4.7.1: \( 6...d7 \)

This is a slightly passive, but quite reliable strategy. Black ignores his opponent’s intentions and calmly continues developing.

7 \( b4 \)

It makes no sense for White to delay this move. After 7 \( e2 \) \( ge7 \) he will in any case have to play 8 \( b4 \) (already not at the most advantageous moment) or 8 dxc5 \( c7 \) 9 0-0 \( xe5 \) 10 \( xe5 \) \( xe5 \), which does not present any problems for Black.

7...cxd4 8 cxd4

Now White has occupied even more space, but he continues to fall behind in development and (given the opportunity) the b4-pawn can be attacked by \( a5 \).

8...\( c8 \) (D)

For the time being, Black hinders the move 9 \( c3 \) in view of the obvious reply 9...\( xd4 \). Also the line 9 \( a2 \) \( a5 \)! 10 \( b5 \) \( xd4 \) 11 \( xd4 \) \( xc1 \) 12 \( xc1 \) \( xd4 \) gives Black more than sufficient compensation for the exchange, but this tactical idea is ineffective after 9 \( e2 \), as 9...\( a5 \)! 10 0-0! \( axb4 \) 11 \( axb4 \) \( xb4 \) 12 \( a3 \) leaves White with the initiative. In this case it is better for Black to continue 9...\( ge7 \) 10 0-0 (10 \( b2 \)?! \( a5 \) gives Black a good game, while 10 \( e3 \) \( f5 \) 11 \( d3 \)?! is well met by 11...\( a5 \)!) 10...\( f5 \), solving his development problem on the kingside. Meanwhile, the white knight must remain on b1, and White’s prospects of achieving an advantage are remote:

a) 11 \( e3 \) \( e7 \) (11...g6 12 \( d2 \) \( xe3 \) 13 \( xe3 \) \( h6 \) 14 \( c3 \) \( e7 \) is also good, while 11...g5?! is interesting) 12 \( d3 \) (12 \( d2 \) and 12 \( d3 \) are
both met by 12...f6! 13  Qc3 fxe5 12... Qxe3 13 fxe3 gives Black an extra tempo in comparison with the main line below.

b) 11  Qb2 h5 12  Qh1 (12  Qd2 is answered by 12...g6 and 12  Qd3 with 12...g5!? ) 12... Qe7 13  Qc3 (13  Qd2 g5) 13... Qa5 14  Qa4  Qc6 15  Qc5 (or 15  Qc1  Qc4 16  Qxc4 dxc4 17  Qc3 0-0) 15... Qc4 16  Qb3 (D.Kononenko-Mankeev, Alushta 2006) 16...0-0 is unclear.

The conclusion is that after 8... Qc8, White has to strengthen his defence of the d4-pawn right away so as to place his king’s bishop on the better square d3.

9  Qe3

This is the most unpleasant continuation for Black. The other bishop move, 9  Qb2, is also possible:

a) 9... Qh6 10  Qc3 (10  Qd3  Qa5 11  Qc3  Qc4 12 0-0  Qc7 with an equal position) 10... Qa5 11  Qa4  Qc6 12  Qc1 (12  Qc5!?  Qc4 13  Qb3 is unclear) 12... Qc4 13  Qxc4 dxc4 14  Qc3  Qe7. In contrast to line ‘b’ above, White has taken on c4 without delay, but Black still maintains the equilibrium: 15 0-0  Qf5 (another path to equality is 15...0-0!? 16 d5 exd5 17  Qd4  Qg6 18  Qxd5  Qg5, as in Dür-Damjanović, Graz 1979) 16 d5 exd5 17  Qxd5  Qd8 with equal play (Vitiugov).

b) 9... Qge7 (this sortie rules out a later central break on d5, but at the cost of slowing Black’s development) 10  Qc3 (10  Qbd2?!  Qf5 11  Qb3 a5 12 b5 a4 is pleasant for Black, while 10  Qd3!?  Qa5 11  Qc3  Qc4 12 0-0 g6 is unclear) 10... Qa5 11  Qa4  Qc6 12  Qc5  Qc4. Now White must accept the presence of the hostile knight on c4 and try not to allow the other black pieces to become active too. After 13  Qb3 (13  Qc1  Qf5 14  Qd3  Qxc5 15 dxc5 b6 is unclear) 13...b6 14  Qxd7  Qxd7 15 b5!? (15  Qd3  Qc6 16  Qc3 b5) 15...g6 there are chances for both sides.

9... Qh6!

This time the knight is heading for g4, when it can await the best moment to exchange on e3, rather than being forced into it prematurely.

10  Qd3  Qg4 11 0-0

11  Qbd2 is met by 11...a5 12 b5  Qe7.

11... Qe7 12  Qbd2

The cunning 12  Qa2 (with the idea of placing the rook on f2 straight away after 12... Qxe3?! 13 fxe3) allows Black to play 12...f6 or 12...0-0 13  Qf4 (13  Qc1 f6! 14 b5  Qxe5) 13...f6 14 exf6  Qxf6. But after the text-move, the e3-bishop should be taken without further delay.

12... Qxe3 13 fxe3 (D)
Let us sum up: the main defect of Black’s position is the inactivity of his pieces, and he must take measures to improve this situation. He doesn’t yet have time to castle, since White is threatening the unpleasant manoeuvre \( \text{d}b3-c5 \).

13...\( \text{d}8 \\
Opening the file for the rook and the diagonal for the bishop, while preparing the possible undermining move ...,a5. The line 13...\( \text{b}8 \) 14 \( \text{b}3 \) (14 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{a}4 \)) 14...\( \text{a}4 \) 15 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{x}b3 \) (worse is 15...\( \text{c}3 \)?! 16 \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{x}c5 \) 17 \( \text{d}xc5 \), when White has the initiative) 16 \( \text{x}b3 \) 0-0 17 \( \text{ac}1 \) g6 is approximately equal in value: White still has some initiative, but Black is close to equality.

14 \( \text{c}1 \\
In this case 14 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{a}4 \) 15 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{c}3 \) 16 \( \text{c}5 \) (16 \( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{b}5 \)) 16...\( \text{xc}5 \) 17 \( \text{d}xc5 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 18 \( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{xc}1+ \) 19 \( \text{xc}1 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 20 \( \text{c}3 \) a6 only leads to an unclear game, as does 14 \( \text{e}2 \) a5?!

14...\( \text{xc}1 \) 15 \( \text{xc}1 \) \( \text{b}5 \) (D)

A little piece of subtlety: after 16 \( \text{c}2 \) a5 the position becomes level right away.

16...\( \text{a}6 \) 17 \( \text{x}b5+ \) \( \text{x}b5 \\
The exchanges have favoured Black. White’s advantage is minimal, as his pawns in the centre and on the queenside represent a convenient target for Black’s future counterplay.

4.7.2

6...c4 (D)

Black prevents the b4 advance and radically changes the direction of the strategic struggle. The advance of the black c-pawn mirrors the ideas behind White’s move 3 e5, and is justified by the weakening of the b3-square. A long and complex middlegame usually follows.

7 \( \text{bd}2 \\
The move 7 \( \text{e}2 \) is of equal value, but if White wants to play g3, then it is better for him to develop the queen’s knight first. The immediate 7 g3 is less accurate – then besides 7...\( \text{d}7 \) or 7...\( \text{a}5 \) Black may try 7...f6?! 8 exf6
ADVANCE VARIATION

(8 \textit{h3} fxe5 9 \textit{dxe5} \textit{dxe5} 10 dxe5 \textit{dxe7}) 8...\textit{xf6} 9 \textit{h3} (or 9 \textit{g2} \textit{d6} 10 0-0 0-0-0 11 \textit{we2} \textit{a5} 12 \textit{bd2} \textit{d7} with equality) 9...\textit{d6} 10 \textit{we2} 0-0-0 11 \textit{x6e6+ h8} with good compensation for the pawn. It is even weaker for White to play 7 h4?! f6. In short, there is no reason to delay the move \textit{bd2}. It is also worth noting that after 7 \textit{bd2}, the natural-looking 7...\textit{ge7}? is a serious mistake in view of 8 \textit{xc4}!.

7...\textit{a5}

The possibility of attacking the front of the pawn-chain by b3/b4 or ...f6/f5 must constantly be taken into account by both sides. The position represents a curious puzzle, since looking at its separate fragments it is very difficult to imagine a whole picture. As a rough analogy, one can cite the King's Indian line 1 \textit{d4} \textit{f6} 2 \textit{c4} \textit{g6} 3 \textit{c3} \textit{g7} 4 \textit{e4} d6 5 \textit{f3} 0-0 6 \textit{e3} e5 7 \textit{d5} \textit{h5} 8 \textit{d2} f5 9 0-0-0 f4 10 \textit{g2} \textit{f6} 11 \textit{ge2}: this situation looks clearly favourable for White, but even in this case his advantage demands proof.

The immediate 7...f6?! is not so effective in view of 8 \textit{e2} fxe5 9 \textit{dxe5} (we shall see the position after 9 dxe5?! \textit{c5} 10 0-0 in note 'c' to White's 7th move in Section 4.7.3) 9...\textit{dxe5} 10 \textit{dxe5} \textit{d5} 11 0-0 \textit{d7} 12 \textit{b4} \textit{xb3} 13 \textit{h3} with some advantage for White.

But if Black can't attack the white e5-pawn immediately, then he needs to take precautions against the analogous action by his opponent. And that's one reason why he places his knight on a5: now there is nothing good for White in the line 8 b4?! \textit{xb3} 9 \textit{b2} (9 \textit{b1} \textit{d7} 10 \textit{c4} \textit{d7} 9...\textit{d7} 10 c4 \textit{dxc4} (or 10...\textit{d7}).

8 \textit{e2}

Owing to the advanced position of Black's c4-pawn, White also has problems finding a convenient way to develop his pieces. On the e2-square the bishop has more prospects than it would on g2, but now the white queen has less freedom to move. The main alternative is 8 \textit{g3} \textit{d7} (D).

Now the bishop can decide between the squares h3 and g2. The former looks more active, but is hard to implement in a way that doesn't have some sort of drawback:

a) The straightforward 9 \textit{h3} invites a vigorous response on the king-side: 9...\textit{e7} 10 0-0?! (10 \textit{g2}?) 10...h5 (10...g5! is even more accurate) 11 \textit{e1} (11 \textit{g2} is answered by 11...g5 12 \textit{h6}, while 11 \textit{b1} is also answered with 11...g5) 11...g5 12 \textit{g2} 0-0-0 (or 12...h4??) with an initiative for Black.

b) Another version of this idea, 9 h4 0-0-0 (or 9...\textit{h6} 10 \textit{h3} f5) 10 \textit{h3}.
is not very successful either. Black has the interesting reply 10...f5!? 11 exf6 (11 0-0?! is weaker in view of 11...Qh6 followed by ...Qf7 and ...g5) 11...gxf6 12 0-0 Qh6, when it becomes clear that the main impact of the move h4 has been to weaken White’s own kingside. Since the sluggish 13 Re1 Qg8 (taking aim at the g3-pawn) delivers the initiative to Black, White must take emergency measures: 13 Rb1! Qf5 14 b3 cxb3 15 Qxb3 a4 16 Qfd2 with chances for both sides.

c) 9 Rb1!? (the best preparation for Qh3) 9...Qe7 (D) (9...0-0-0?! 10 b3) and now:

c1) 10 h4?! is again of questionable value. After 10...h6 11 Qh3 (11 h5 0-0-0 12 Qh3 b8 13 0-0 g6?!)
11...0-0-0 (11...Qf5 is also possible) 12 0-0 b8 13 Qe1 (White could try 13 Re1) 13...Qf5 (13...g5?!) 14 Qg2
(14 Qf3 is met by 14...Qe7) 14...e7 15 Qf3 g5 Black has the initiative.

c2) After 10 Qh3 h6 11 0-0 0-0-0 12 Qe1 (less logical is 12 Rb1 b8 13 Qf1 c8) 12...b8, the path forward
appears open for the f2-pawn, but the line 13 f4?! g6 is advantageous for Black. White has no natural way to push forward with his pawns, so a manoeuvring struggle usually follows; e.g., 13 Qg2 (or 13 Qf3 Qe8 14 Qg2 h5) 13...a8 (13...g6?! 14 Qe3 Qf5 15 Qg4 Qe7 is another approach) 14 Re3 Qe8 with approximate equality.

d) Since in the final analysis White does not succeed in deriving any real benefit from the bishop’s position on h3, it is simpler for him to play 9 Qg2. After 9...0-0-0 10 0-0 (10 Qg5 Qh6 11 0-0 Qe7) it is in any case better for Black to refrain from the move 10...f5 and to continue, for example, 10...h6 11 Re1 (here 11 Qe1 is less logical since the g2-square is taken, and it is difficult to transfer the knight to e3) 11...Qe7 12 Rb1 Qb8 (12...Qf5 13 b4?! cxb3 14 Qxb3 is unclear) 13 h4 Qa8 (13...Qc8?!?) with chances for both sides, Motylev-Berelowitsch, Bucharest 1998.

Let’s return to 8 Qe2.
8...Qd7 (D)
The play now becomes more concrete.

9 0-0

9...\(\text{\#b7}\) 10 \(\text{\#f1}\) is of independent importance. White wants to regroup his pieces without delay and is willing to play a complex queenless middlegame after 10...\(\text{\#b3}!\) 11 \(\text{\#f4}\) (or 11 \(\text{\#xb3}\) \(\text{\#xb3}\) 12 \(\text{\#f4}\) b5) 11...\(\text{\#a4}\) 12 \(\text{\#xb3}\) \(\text{\#xb3}\) 13 \(\text{\#e3}\) \(\text{\#g6}\) 14 \(\text{\#g3}\) h5! 15 h4 (15 h3 h4 16 \(\text{\#h2}\) \(\text{\#e7}\) is equal) 15...f6.

9...\(\text{\#e7}\) 10 \(\text{\#b1}\)

Removing the rook from the line of fire. After 10 \(\text{\#e1}\) \(\text{\#c7}\) (10...\(\text{\#f5}!\)? is also possible), 11 \(\text{\#g5}\) is answered by 11...h6 12 \(\text{\#h3}\) 0-0-0 13 \(\text{\#f4}\) g6, while 11 \(\text{\#b1}\) transposes to the main line.

10...\(\text{\#c7}\)

Black gradually prepares the manoeuvre ...\(\text{\#c8-b6}\) followed by ...\(\text{\#a4}\).

11 \(\text{\#e1}\)

White needs to unravel his tangled pieces. He intends \(\text{\#f1}\), and then to bring out the c1-bishop. He can also try various moves by the f3-knight, without achieving any particular gains: 11 \(\text{\#h4}\) \(\text{\#c8}!\)? 12 f4 g6 13 \(\text{\#df3}\) h6 14 \(\text{\#e3}\) \(\text{\#b6}\), 11 \(\text{\#e1}\) \(\text{\#f5}\) 12 \(\text{\#g4}\) (12 g4 is met by 12...\(\text{\#h4}\) and 12 \(\text{\#df3}\) by 12...\(\text{\#b3}\)) 12...\(\text{\#e7}\), or 11 \(\text{\#g5}\) h6 12 \(\text{\#h3}\) \(\text{\#c8}\) (simpler is 12...0-0-0 13 \(\text{\#f4}\) g6) 13 \(\text{\#f4}\) (13 \(\text{\#f3}!\)? \(\text{\#b6}\) 14 \(\text{\#e3}\) \(\text{\#a4}\) 15 \(\text{\#c1}\) \(\text{\#b3}\) 16 \(\text{\#e1}\) is unclear) 13...\(\text{\#b6}\) 14 \(\text{\#f3}\) \(\text{\#a4}\) 15 \(\text{\#d2}\) g6, as in Zude-Vaganian, Bundesliga 2004/5.

11...\(\text{\#c8}\) 12 \(\text{\#f1}\) \(\text{\#b6}\) 13 \(\text{\#f4}\) (D)

13 \(\text{\#g5}\) provokes the black pawns forward, but after 13...h6 14 \(\text{\#h4}\) \(\text{\#a4}\) 15 \(\text{\#c1}\) (15 \(\text{\#d2}\) g5 16 \(\text{\#g3}\) g4!? 17 \(\text{\#h4}\) h5) 15...g5 16 \(\text{\#g3}\) 0-0-0 17 h3 \(\text{\#e7}\) it is by no means clear who has gained from this. The simple 13 \(\text{\#g3}\) (or even 13 \(\text{\#d2}\) right away) 13...\(\text{\#a4}\) 14 \(\text{\#d2}\) deserves attention, but then White will have to play \(\text{\#d1}\), offering an exchange of light-squared bishops that it is principle in Black’s favour.

13...\(\text{\#f5}!\)?

Black takes the opportunity to alter the pawn-structure and gain some space on the kingside. He can also preserve the status quo by 13...\(\text{\#a4}\) 14 \(\text{\#c1}\) h6, when White appears to have nothing better than 15 \(\text{\#d1}\), releasing the white queen from the necessity to guard the c2-square.

14 h4 h6

The immediate 14...0-0-0 is of equal value, given that 15 \(\text{\#g5}!\)? h6 16 \(\text{\#f7}?\) \(\text{\#a4}\) is evidently not advantageous for White.

15 h5 \(\text{\#e7}\) 16 \(\text{\#c1}\) 0-0-0

Black enjoys at least his full share of the play: his minor pieces control the queenside, and after a subsequent ...g5 his rooks will find productive work on the kingside.
The moves we examined in the last two sections, 6...d7 and 6...c4, are theoretically well-established and have undergone extensive practical testing. The same cannot be said of this little-known pawn move. However, it is quite possible that in this way Black can solve his defensive problems: by immediately attacking the centre, he wishes to distract his opponent from his plans of pawn-expansion on the queenside.

7 b4

This move is consistent, and clearly a critical test of Black's idea. Of course, other moves are possible too:

a) 7 exf6 Qxf6 (normally Black needs to spend two more tempi to get positions of this type) 8 Qd3 (8 b4?! c4) 8...d6 9 0-0 0-0 (9...c4 10 c2 0-0 is equal, while Black can also try 9...Qc7!?) 10 dxc5 (White should avoid 10 b4?! cxd4 11 cxd4 e5 and 10 Qe1?! Qh8) 10...Qxc5 11 b4 Qxf2+!? 12 Qxf2 Qg4 is unclear.

b) 7 Qd3 fxe5 and now:
   b1) 8 Qxe5 Qf6 9 0-0 Qd6 and here 10 Qf3 transposes to line 'a', while 10 Qxc6?! bxc6 gave Black the initiative in Yilmaz-Sutovsky, World Team Ch, Bursa 2010.

   b2) 8 dxe5 is more principled, although Black's chances look no worse: 8...c4! 9 Qc2 Qh6 10 0-0 g6 (10...Qf7 11 Qbd2 g6 12 b3 is unclear) 11 b3 cxb3 12 Qxb3 Qg4 13 h3 Qgxe5 (13...Qxf2!?) 14 Qxe5 Qxe5 15 Qe1 Qg7 with equality, Panarin-Timofeev, Sarajevo 2010.

   c) 7 Qe2 (a very modest move, but the bishop is not too well placed on e2) 7...fxe5 8 dxe5 c4! (better than the unclear lines 8...Qh6 9 c4 d4 10 Qxh6 Qxb2 11 Qbd2 gxh6 12 0-0 and 8...Qge7 9 c4 d4 10 Qd3 g6 11 We2 Qg7 12 0-0 Qc7 13 Qf4 0-0, as in Li Shilong-Zhang Pengxiang, Singapore 2006) 9 0-0 c5 (9...Qh6 is also possible) 10 Qbd2 Qh6 11 b4 (11 b3? Qg4) 11...Qe7!? (11...Qf2+?) with good prospects for Black.

In all these lines Black is fighting hard for the initiative. It is worth drawing attention to the characteristic move ...Qh6, which occurs in many lines.

7...fxe5 (D)

This exchange is more resolute than 7...c4, which is also acceptable. Then 8 Qf4 a5 9 Qbd2 g5 10 Qe3 (10 Qg3) 10...axb4 11 axb4 Qxa1 12 Qxa1 g4 gives Black the initiative, while 8 Qe3 fxe5 (8...Qc7!?) 9 Qf4 fxe5 9 Qxe5 Qxe5 10 dxe5 Qc7 11 f4 Qh6 and 8 a4!? fxe5 9 b5 e4 (9...Qa5 10 Qxe5 Qb3 11 Qxc4!) 10 bxc6 exf3 11 cxb7 Qxb7 are both unclear.
8 bxc5

It is not advantageous for White to play 8 dxc5 c7 9 c4 d6, but 8 dxe5!? dxe5 9 dxe5 a5 10 d3! axb4 11 h5+ d8 12 c4 b3 leads to absolutely irrational play. 8 dxe5 c4 also leads to an unclear position.

8...a5 9 dxe5

9 dxe5 dxe5 10 dxe5 xc5 11 d3 e7 12 h5+ g6 13 h6 c7

14 f4 f5 15 xf5 gxf5 16 d2 g8 is quite convenient for Black.

9...xc5 10 d3 c7 11 0-0 0-0 (D)

Black stands well. The standard sacrifice 12 xh7+ xh7 13 g5+ g6 14 d3+ (14 g4 can be answered by 14...f5) 14 f5 is not dangerous for him.
The Tarrasch Variation is one of the main lines of the French Defence. White supports his e-pawn with a useful developing move, and seeks to steer the game into more rational channels than those that can occur after the more combative knight move 3 \e2\e2\e3. Striking at White’s centre by 3 ... c5 is one of Black’s main rejoinders – and a very logical one, since with White is not in a position to generate rapid pressure against d5. Most lines feature the pawn exchange exd5, although there are some exceptions, as we see in Section 5.1, where the line 4 \g2\g3 \f2\f6 5 e5 \f2\f7 leads to more typical French structures. After 4 exd5, Black has a major choice between taking on an isolated queen’s pawn by 4...exd5, or the lines with 4...\w2\w5, where he keeps an undamaged structure but must be careful not to fall too far behind in development. In this book, I shall mostly cover the 4...exd5 lines, but shall also briefly present a repertoire with 4...\w2\w5 (in Section 5.2), as some readers may prefer this, and in any case it is good to be able to surprise our opponents once in a while.

4...exd5 demonstrates a classical treatment of this position in the spirit of Tarrasch’s principles of ‘free piece-play’. After 5 \b2\b5+ (Section 5.3) White cannot expect an opening advantage, and 5 \g2\g3 is more critical. Then the line 5...\f2\f6 (Section 5.4) is a pure test of the pros and cons of the isolated pawn and by playing 5...a6 (Section 5.5) Black seeks even more piece activity.

5.1

4 \g2\g3 (D)

This move, maintaining the central pawn-tension at least for a little while, is the only serious alternative to 4 exd5, which is considered in the following sections. Often the lines transpose, but there are some subtleties that need to be noted.

Other moves are seldom played, as they fail to keep White’s ‘opening initiative:
a) 4 \( \texttt{h}b5+ \texttt{h}d7 5 \texttt{d}xc5 (Black can also be happy with 6 \texttt{g}f3 \texttt{cxd4} 7 \texttt{d}xe4 \texttt{dxe}4 8 \texttt{xe}4 e5 and 6 \texttt{exd}5 \texttt{xd}5) 6...\texttt{xc}5 7 \texttt{gf}3 \texttt{f}6 8 \texttt{e}2 \texttt{c}6 with an equal game.

b) 4 c3 (White chooses to take on the IQP, but this is not an effective version) 4...\texttt{cxd}4 5 \texttt{dxe}4 \texttt{dxe}4 6 \texttt{xf}6+ \texttt{xf}6 7 a3 \texttt{d}6 8 \texttt{f}3 can be met by 9...\texttt{h}6 10 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{d}7!? , while 7 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{e}4 8 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{b}4+ 9 \texttt{d}2 \texttt{xd}2+ 10 \texttt{xd}7 is equal) 7...\texttt{e}7 8 \texttt{f}3 a6 9 \texttt{d}3 b5 is the same as a variation of the Queen’s Gambit Accepted, but with an extra move for Black.

c) 4 dxc5 \texttt{xc}5 5 \texttt{d}3 (after 5 \texttt{exd}5 \texttt{cxd}4 6 \texttt{e}3 \texttt{b}6 7 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}6 Black is a tempo up in comparison with Section 5.5) 5...\texttt{d}6 6 \texttt{g}f3 \texttt{f}6 7 0-0 \texttt{c}7 8 \texttt{e}2 (8 \texttt{exd}5 \texttt{xd}5 is equal) 8...0-0 and now 9 c3 is an odd transposition to the Colle System – see Section 13.2. Instead, 9 e5!? can be met by 9...\texttt{d}7 10 \texttt{xe}h7+ \texttt{xe}h7 11 \texttt{g}5+ \texttt{g}6 or 9...\texttt{g}4!?

If Black prefers to meet 4 \texttt{exd}5 with 4...\texttt{xd}5 (as in Section 5.2), then it is logical for him to continue 4...\texttt{cxd}4 here. Besides 5 \texttt{exd}5 \texttt{xd}5 (transposing to Section 5.2) it is also necessary to consider 5 \texttt{d}xd4 \texttt{f}6. Then:

a) 6 \texttt{b}b5+ \texttt{d}7 7 \texttt{exd}5 (7 \texttt{e}d7+ \texttt{d}xd7 is also equal) 7...\texttt{xb}5 8 \texttt{xb}5 a6 9 \texttt{c}3 \texttt{xd}5 with equality.

b) 6 e5 \texttt{fd}7 7 \texttt{f}3 (7 f4? is strongly answered by 7...\texttt{xe}5 8 \texttt{xe}6 \texttt{xe}6 9 fxe5 \texttt{c}6 10 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}5, while 7 \texttt{b}b5 \texttt{b}6 8 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}6 is satisfactory for Black) 7...\texttt{xe}6 8 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{w}6 9 \texttt{b}1 (9 c3 \texttt{xd}4 10 \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{xb}2 11 \texttt{b}5 \texttt{c}5 with a level game) 9...\texttt{g}6 10 \texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xc}6 led to unclear play in D.Howell-A.Grigorian, World Junior Ch, Erevan 2007.

c) 6 \texttt{exd}5 \texttt{xd}5 7 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{b}4+!? (gaining time for development) 8 \texttt{d}2 (8 c3? \texttt{xc}3) 8...0-0 9 \texttt{xb}4 (9 \texttt{c}4 can be met by 9...\texttt{e}5!? 10 \texttt{b}5 e4, as in the game Fedorchuk-Martinović, Aix-les-Bains 2011) 9...\texttt{xb}4 gives Black a satisfactory position. Interesting complications are possible; for example, 10 c3 e5!? (10...\texttt{c}6 proved sufficient for equality in Dgebuadze-Eingorn, Metz 2011) 11 \texttt{xe}5 (11 \texttt{b}5 \texttt{d}5 12 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{e}6 13 \texttt{xe}5 \texttt{c}6 14 \texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xc}6 15 \texttt{d}4 \texttt{xc}3!) 11...\texttt{e}7 (11...\texttt{e}8 is also possible) 12 f4 (12 \texttt{e}2 can be answered with 12...\texttt{e}8) 12...\texttt{c}6 13 \texttt{c}4 \texttt{xe}5 14 fxe5 \texttt{c}6 is unclear.

5 e5

After 5 \texttt{exd}5, 5...\texttt{exd}5 leads to Section 5.4. 5...\texttt{d}5 is an alternative, when 6 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{cxd}4 7 \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{c}7 leaves Black safe, and 6 \texttt{b}3 \texttt{cxd}4 7 \texttt{b}xd4
transposes to line ‘c’ in the previous note. However, 6 dxc5!? is already less inoffensive. After both 6...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}}x\textit{c5}}\) 7 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}}e4} 8 \text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}e7}}\) 9 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b4}}\) 10 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}xd8+}}\) 11 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}xd8}}\) 12 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}d1}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}c4}}\) and 6...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}d7}}\) 7 g3 (7 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}e3}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}xc5}}\) 8 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}d4}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b6}}\) 9 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}c4}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}xb3}}\) and 7 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}c4}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}f6}}\) 8 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b3}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}c7}}\) lead to equal play) 7...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}xc5}}\) 8 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}g2}}\) b5?!, Black doesn’t have serious problems, but White has a preferable game.

5...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}fd7}}\) (D)

This is quite a well-known theoretical position that arises more often via the move-order 3...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}f6}}\) 4 e5 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}fd7}}\) 5 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}gf3}}\) c5. The strategic struggle moves in a very different direction from the standard 3...c5 lines. Throughout this 1...e6 repertoire we shall see many such metamorphoses; if we are prepared for them, then it is most likely our opponents who will find themselves on unfamiliar ground.

6 c3

Additional pawn-tension in the centre will rather suit Black: 6 c4 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}c6}}\) 7 cxd5 exd5 8 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}d3}}\) (8 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b5}}\) can be met by 8...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b6}}\) or 8...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}e7}}\) 8...cxd4 9 0-0 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}e7}}\) 10 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}e1}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}c5}}\) 11 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b3}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}xd3}}\) 12 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}xd3}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b4}}\) 13 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}d1}}\) d3 14 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}fd4}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b6}}\).

White also achieves very little by 6 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b5}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}c6}}\), 6 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b3}}\) cxd4 7 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}bxd4}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}c6}}\) or 6 dxc5 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}c6}}\) 7 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b3}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}dxe5}}\).

6...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}c6}}\) 7 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}d3}}\)

Less logical continuations are 7 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}e2}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b6}}\) (7...f6?!?) 8 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b3}}\) cxd4 9 cxd4 a5 10 a4 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b4}}\) and 7 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b3}}\) cxd4 8 cxd4 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b6}}\) 9 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}d2}}\) (9 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}e3}}\) a5) 9...f6, with chances for both sides.

With the text-move, White shows his willingness to play a gambit in order to keep the initiative. However, Black is by no means obliged to accept the pawn, or to do so on White’s terms:

5.1.1: 7...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b6}}\) 52
5.1.2: 7...h6 53

5.1.1

7...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{\textgreater}b6}}\) 8 0-0 cxd4

It is useful to fix the pawn in its place, whether Black plans to take the pawn next move or not.

9 cxd4 (D)
For the time being, Black keeps his options open, while making it hard for White to secure his hold on d4 (10 \( \text{\&} \text{b}3 \)?! can be met by 10...a4).

The straightforward 9...\( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) 10 \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) 11 \( \text{\&} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{b}6 \) permits White’s pieces to assume an aggressive posture right away. Although Black’s defensive resources appear adequate, rather accurate play is demanded of Black in this case. Here are some critical lines showing the typical cut and thrust:

a) 12 a3 \( \text{\&} \text{c}7 \) (12...\( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \)?! 13 \( \text{\&} \text{c}2 \) \( \text{\&} \text{d}7 \) is another idea) 13 \( \text{\&} \text{a}4 \) (13 \( \text{\&} \text{e}3 \)?! is unclear) 13...0-0 14 \( \text{\&} \text{g}5 \) (14 \( \text{\&} \text{c}2 \)?) 14...\( \text{\&} \text{x}g5 \) (14...f6 is possible too) 15 \( \text{\&} \text{x}h7+ \) (better than 15 \( \text{\&} \text{x}g5 \)?! h6, Fehlhammer-Badestein, Germany (team event) 1992/3) 15...\( \text{\&} \text{x}h7 \) 16 \( \text{\&} \text{x}g5+ \) \( \text{\&} \text{g}8 \).

b) 12 \( \text{\&} \text{e}2 \) h6 13 \( \text{\&} \text{b}1 \) (13 \( \text{\&} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \)?) 13...\( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \) (Black can also try 13...a5) 14 \( \text{\&} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{d}8 \) 15 \( \text{\&} \text{b}5+ \) \( \text{\&} \text{d}7 \) 16 \( \text{\&} \text{f}1 \) a6 17 \( \text{\&} \text{x}d7+ \) \( \text{\&} \text{x}d7 \), Gopal-Wang Hao, Sarajevo 2010.

c) 12 \( \text{\&} \text{a}4 \) \( \text{\&} \text{b}4 \) (not letting the white queen transfer to the kingside) 13 \( \text{\&} \text{c}2 \) \( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \) 14 \( \text{\&} \text{d}2 \) (14 \( \text{\&} \text{h}7 \) \( \text{\&} \text{d}7 \) 15 \( \text{\&} \text{d}2 \) \( \text{\&} \text{g}4 \)) 14...\( \text{\&} \text{a}4 \) 15 b3 \( \text{\&} \text{d}7 \) (15...\( \text{\&} \text{a}3 \)?) 16 \( \text{\&} \text{d}4 \) (16 \( \text{\&} \text{b}4 \) can be answered by 16...b6, and 16 \( \text{\&} \text{e}2 \) by 16...b6 17 b4 \( \text{\&} \text{a}6 \)?) 16...\( \text{\&} \text{d}8 \) 17 \( \text{\&} \text{a}1 \) \( \text{\&} \text{d}7 \) 18 \( \text{\&} \text{e}2 \) \( \text{\&} \text{e}4 \) 19 \( \text{\&} \text{b}5 \) \( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \), Ehlvest-Akobian, USA Ch, Saint Louis 2009.

d) 12 \( \text{\&} \text{c}2 \)?! h6 13 \( \text{\&} \text{d}2 \) (13 a4 \( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \)?! or 13 \( \text{\&} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \) 14 \( \text{\&} \text{d}2 \) a5) 13...\( \text{\&} \text{b}4 \) (or 13...\( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \)?) 14 \( \text{\&} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{d}7 \) 14 \( \text{\&} \text{f}4 \) g5 15 \( \text{\&} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \) 16 \( \text{\&} \text{e}1 \) (A.Sokolov-Housieaux, French Team Ch, Guingamp 2010) 16...g4?! is unclear.

10 \( \text{\&} \text{b}1 \)

10 \( \text{\&} \text{a}4 \)?! offers White nothing good after 10...\( \text{\&} \text{e}7 \) (or 10...g5) 11 a3 0-0 12 \( \text{\&} \text{b}1 \) (Stojanović-N.Ristić, Bar 2007) 12...f6, when Black has the initiative. However, these two variations deserve serious attention: 10 a4 \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) 11 \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) 12 \( \text{\&} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{b}6 \) 13 \( \text{\&} \text{b}5 \) \( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \) (13...\( \text{\&} \text{e}7 \) was tried in Alonso-L.Bronstein, Villa Martelli 2010) 14 \( \text{\&} \text{g}5 \) (14 \( \text{\&} \text{f}4 \) 0-0 15 \( \text{\&} \text{c}1 \) f6) 14...h6 15 \( \text{\&} \text{h}5 \) 0-0 16 \( \text{\&} \text{f}3 \) f6 and 10 \( \text{\&} \text{e}1 \) h6 (10...a4?!) 11 \( \text{\&} \text{a}4 \) (11 \( \text{\&} \text{b}1 \) \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) 12 \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) 13 \( \text{\&} \text{c}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \)?) 11...\( \text{\&} \text{b}4 \) 12 \( \text{\&} \text{e}2 \) \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) 13 \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) 14 \( \text{\&} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{c}5 \).

10...\( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) 11 \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{\&} \text{x}d4 \) 12 \( \text{\&} \text{c}3 \)

Now 12...\( \text{\&} \text{b}4 \)?! leads to unclear play, while 12...\( \text{\&} \text{e}7 \) 13 \( \text{\&} \text{e}1 \) \( \text{\&} \text{b}6 \) is also acceptable.

5.1.2

7...h6 (D)

The position after 7...\( \text{\&} \text{e}7 \) 8 0-0 g5 has occurred more often, but this little pawn move has its advantages.
Black wishes to advance on the kingside, but the real target is the d4-pawn. He is waiting for White to castle before playing 8...g5.

8 0-0

White can sidestep Black’s main idea, although without particular success: 8 a3 (8 Qf1?! is met by 8...cxd4 9 cxd4 Qb6 and 8 h4?! with 8...Qb6) 8...Qb6 9 0-0 a5 10 dxc5 (Black can be content with 10 Qa4 Qe7 11 Re1 0-0 12 Qf1 cxd4 13 cxd4 f6, while 10 c4 cxd4 11 cxd5 exd5 is unclear) 10...Qxc5 11 Re2 a4 12 c4 Qe7, with approximately equal chances.

8...g5 9 dxc5

This capture is considered strongest in the analogous line with 7...Qe7, but here it turns out to be less effective. However, it is by no means simple for White to cast doubt on his opponent’s risky-looking play. For example:

a) 9 c4 Qg7!? (9...g4 10 cxd5 exd5 11 e6 fxe6 12 Qg6+ Qe7 leads to an unclear position, Grütter-Kummerow, Bad Wiessee 2009) 10 cxd5 exd5 11 e6 fxe6 12 Qg6+ Qf8, and Black’s central pawn-majority fully compensates for his awkwardly placed king.

b) The inclusion of the moves 9 h3 h5 sharpens the position even further. Then:

b1) 10 g4?! hxg4 11 hxg4 Qb6 12 Re1?! (12 Qb3 is relatively better) 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 Qxd4 14 Qxd4 Qxd4 15 Qb3 Qa4 16 Qg5 Qg8 17 f4 Qxg5! 18 fxg5 Qf4 with the initiative for Black (Watson).

b2) 10 c4?! g4 11 cxd5 exd5 12 e6 fxe6 13 Qg6+ Qe7 and again Black is to be preferred.

b3) 10 Qb1?! g4 11 hxg4 hxg4 12 Qg5 cxd4 13 cxd4 Qxd4 14 Qxg4 Qc6 15 Qxf7 Qdxe5 gives Black the initiative.

b4) 10 Qb3! (best) 10...g4 (10...c4 11 Qxg5 Qc7 12 Re2 is unclear) 11 Qg5 (11 hxg4 c4 12 Qbl cxb3) and now both 11...Qh6 12 Qxe6 fxe6 13 Qxh6 Qxh6 14 Qd2 Qh8 15 Qg6+ Qf8 16 Qf4+ Qg7 17 Qf7+ Qh6 18 Qxh5 Qg8 and 11...Qe7 12 Qxe6 fxe6 13 Qg6+ Qf8 14 hxg4 hxg4 15 Qxg4 Qh4 16 Qf3+ Qg7 17 g3 (or 17 Qf7+ Qh8 18 g3 Qdxe5) 17...Qf8 18 Qf4 Qg5 lead to very interesting complications, but White cannot rely on emerging with an advantage.

After the text-move, White will most likely lose a pawn, but in return he can expect to gain a significant initiative.

9...Qxc5 10 Qb3

Now:

a) 10...Qb6 11 Qe1 g4 12 Qfd4 Qcxe5 13 Qb5 (13 Qf4?! is weaker, since White loses time after 13...Qf6 14 Qg3 h5, Handke-P.Meister, Bundestag 2008/09) 13...Qf6 gives White enough compensation for the pawn.

b) The line 10...Qf8 (Watson) 11 Qbd4 (11 Qe1 Qg7 12 Qb5 0-0 is unclear) 11...Qdxe5 12 Qxe5 Qdxe5 13 Qc2 Qg7 also deserves attention. In comparison with line ‘a’, Black’s kingside is better defended.

5.2

4 exd5 Qxd5 (D)

This variation is rather popular in modern practice. The pawn-centre will soon be totally liquidated, so White’s
hopes of preserving an advantage are pinned firmly on his piece activity and lead in development. Black’s long-term prospects are quite pleasant, with his central majority likely to be an asset in many middlegame scenarios.

5 \textit{gf}3

This is the main line. The unconventional continuation 5 \textit{b}3 \textit{cxd}4 6 \textit{xd}4 (6 \textit{xd}4 \textit{gf}6) 6...\textit{c}6 7 \textit{e}3 (or 7 \textit{gf}3) 7...\textit{d}7! is safe for Black, but by playing 5 \textit{dxc}5?! White can also hope to keep the initiative:

a) After 5...\textit{xc}5 6 \textit{gf}3 \textit{f}6 the following lines are possible:
   a1) 7 \textit{d}3 0-0 8 \textit{e}2 (8 0-0 b6 9 \textit{b}3 \textit{a}6!?) 8...\textit{bd}7. This development is considered optimal for Black. Now 9 0-0 b6 leads to approximate equality, while attempts by White to sharpen the situation are unsuccessful; e.g., 9 \textit{e}4 b6 10 \textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 11 \textit{e}3 \textit{a}5+!? or 9 b3 b6 10 \textit{b}2 \textit{b}7 11 0-0-0 (the more cautious 11 0-0 leads to a level game) 11...\textit{ad}8 (11...\textit{e}7 and 11...a5 are also possible) 12 g4?! (12 \textit{b}1 is unclear) 12...\textit{d}6 with a preferable game for Black, Shaw-Dizdarević, Khanty-Mansiisk Olympiad 2010.

   a2) 7 \textit{c}4 gains time by attacking the queen, and is more promising. After 7...\textit{c}6 8 \textit{e}2 0-0 9 0-0, if Black continues with conventional development by 9...\textit{bd}7 10 \textit{b}3 \textit{b}6 11 \textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 12 \textit{b}3 \textit{b}7 13 \textit{b}2, then White keeps a small advantage, as in the game Adams-Lemos, Gibraltar 2011. Black can obtain satisfactory play by 9...\textit{e}7!? 10 \textit{b}3 \textit{c}7, not allowing the exchange of the bishop for the knight.

   Returning to the very beginning of the variation 5 \textit{dxc}5, let us note that the reply 5...\textit{xc}5 is not obligatory:

   b) 5...\textit{f}6!? leads to unclear play after 6 \textit{gf}3 \textit{xc}5 or 6 \textit{b}3 \textit{xd}1+ 7 \textit{xd}1 \textit{e}7.

   c) 5...\textit{xc}5 6 \textit{gf}3 (6 \textit{e}4 \textit{b}4+ 7 \textit{c}3 \textit{f}6 8 \textit{d}3 \textit{bd}7 9 a3 \textit{wd}6 is unclear, Timofeev-Morozevich, Russian Ch, Taganrog 2011) 6...\textit{f}6 7 \textit{d}3 \textit{e}7 8 0-0 (8 \textit{e}2 \textit{bd}7) 8...0-0 also deserves attention, immediately achieving the scheme of development from line ‘a2’.

5...\textit{cxd}4 6 \textit{c}4 \textit{d}6

For the time being, Black hinders 7 \textit{b}3 or 7 \textit{e}4, which will be met by 7...\textit{b}4+. White will need to spend some time winning back the d4-pawn, and Black intends to use this respite to develop his pieces.

7 0-0 (D)

The plan with queenside castling, 7 \textit{e}2 \textit{f}6 8 \textit{b}3 \textit{c}6 9 \textit{g}5, sharpens the play, but does not promise White the advantage – partly because at
some point he will need to take time out to play \( \text{b1} \). Black has two satisfactory continuations:

a) 9...\( \text{b4+} \) 10 \( \text{d2 b6} \) 11 0-0-0 \( \text{d7} \) and now both 12 \( \text{g5} \) h6 13 \( \text{h4} \) (or 13 \( \text{xf6 gxf6} \) 14 \( \text{xd4} \) 0-0-0 with equality) 13...\( \text{e7} \) and 12 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{c5} \) 13 \( \text{e5} \) 0-0 14 \( \text{g4 d8} \) (not 14...\( \text{fd8}?! \) 15 \( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 16 g5, with a strong attack) are unclear.

b) 9...a6 10 0-0-0 b5 11 \( \text{d3 e7} \) 12 \( \text{he1} \) (12 \( \text{fxd4 xd4} \) 13 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 14 \( \text{xf6 xf6} \) 15 \( \text{b1 b7} \) 16 \( \text{x5} \) \( \text{e7} \) 17 \( \text{c7 c5} \) 18 \( \text{xg2} \) \( \text{g2} \) Black the initiative – Vitiugov; 12 \( \text{b1 b7} \) 13 \( \text{fxd4 xd4} \) 14 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 15 \( \text{he1}?! \) \( \text{x2} \) 16 \( \text{xa2} \) \( \text{xd4} \), Dovlatov-Malakhatko, Baku 2008) 12...h6! 13 \( \text{h4} \) 0-0 14 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 15 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{b7} \) with equal play (Vitiugov).

\[ \text{B} \]

7...\( \text{f6} \)

Still not letting the d2-knight move to the centre.

8 \( \text{b3} \)

8 \( \text{e1 c6} \) 9 \( \text{e4?!} \) (the white knight occupies this square all the same) 9...\( \text{xe4} \) 10 \( \text{xe4} \) is interesting. Now Black must carefully negotiate some complications: 10...\( \text{e7} \) 11 \( \text{xd4} \) (Psakhis gave the line 11 \( \text{f4 c5} \) 12 \( \text{f3 f6} \) 13 a3 a5) 11...e5! 12 \( \text{f4} \) exf4 13 \( \text{xc6 xd1+} \) 14 \( \text{xd1 bxc6} \) 15 \( \text{e1 f8} \) 16 \( \text{e6 e6} \) 17 \( \text{xf6} \) fxe6 18 \( \text{c7} \) (18 \( \text{xe6}?! \) \( \text{e8} \) 19 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{e1+} \) 20 \( \text{f1 f7} \) 18...h5! 19 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{h6} \), with a complicated position and unbalanced material.

8...\( \text{c6} \) 9 \( \text{xd4} \)

The rook move 9 \( \text{e1} \) is again worthy of attention, this time in connection with the continuation 9...\( \text{e7} \) 10 \( \text{xd4 xd4} \) 11 \( \text{xd4} \) (11 \( \text{xd4} \) leads to our main line) 11...\( \text{xd4} \) 12 \( \text{xd4 d7} \) 13 \( \text{f4 c8} \) 14 \( \text{b3} \) 0-0. However, White's advantage in this ending is minimal; e.g., 15 \( \text{f5 c5} \) 16 \( \text{d6 b8} \), Meszaros-A.Graf, Neustadt an der Weinstrasse 2009.

9...\( \text{xd4} \) 10 \( \text{xd4} \)

The queen exchange by 10 \( \text{xd4 xd4} \) 11 \( \text{xd4} \) does not create difficulties for Black here: 11...\( \text{xd7} \) 12 \( \text{e2} \) (12 \( \text{f4 c8} \) 13 \( \text{b3 c5} \) 14 \( \text{had1 0-0} \) 15 \( \text{f3 fd8} \) 16 \( \text{e5 b5} \) led to equality in the game Pavisović-Roiz, Valjevo 2007) 12...\( \text{c5} \) 13 \( \text{b3 b6} \) 14 a4 a5! 15 \( \text{f3 c8} \) 16 c3 \( \text{c6} \) with equal play, Lobzhanidze-Luther, Cappelle la Grande 2002.

10...\( \text{e7} \) (D)

Opening theory mostly focuses on 10...a6 and 10...\( \text{d7} \).

With the text-move, Black prepares to castle kingside right away in order to provide safety for his king first and only then to occupy himself with the development of the queenside.
11 b3

White has plenty of alternatives, of which this is just a sample:

a) 11 \( \text{\#e3} \) 0-0 12 \( \text{\#f3} \) can be met by 12...\( \text{\#c7} \) 13 \( \text{\#b3} \) \( \text{\#d7} \).

b) 11 \( \text{\#b5} \) \( \text{\#c6} \) 12 \( \text{\#e2} \) 0-0 13 \( \text{\#f4} \) b6 (or 13...a6!? 14 \( \text{\#d4} \) \( \text{\#c5} \) 14 \( \text{\#d4} \) \( \text{\#c5} \) (14...\( \text{\#e4} \)??) 15 c3 \( \text{\#b7} \) 16 \( \text{\#fe1} \) \( \text{\#ad8} \), Radulski-Dizdarević, Belgrade 2010.

c) 11 c3 0-0 (11...\( \text{\#d7} \)!!?) 12 \( \text{\#f3} \) \( \text{\#c7} \) 13 \( \text{\#b3} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) 14 \( \text{\#g5} \) (14 \( \text{\#f4} \) e5 15 \( \text{\#g3} \) \( \text{\#d6} \) 16 \( \text{\#xf5} \) \( \text{\#xf5} \) 17 \( \text{\#xf5} \) e4 18 \( \text{\#xd6} \) \( \text{\#xd6} \) 19 \( \text{\#ad1} \) \( \text{\#b6} \)) 14...\( \text{\#d5} \) (14...a5!!?) 15 \( \text{\#xe7} \) \( \text{\#xe7} \) 16 \( \text{\#fe1} \) \( \text{\#ad8} \), Mista-Gdanski, Polish Ch, Warsaw 2010.

d) 11 \( \text{\#e1} \) 0-0 12 c3 \( \text{\#d7} \) 13 \( \text{\#b3} \) (13 \( \text{\#g5} \)?? is poor due to 13...\( \text{\#c5} \), while 13 \( \text{\#f3} \) \( \text{\#b6} \)!!?) 14 \( \text{\#b3} \) a5 gave Black the initiative in Topalov-Kamsky, Sofia (7) 2009 and Black can choose 13...\( \text{\#b6} \)!!, 13...\( \text{\#c7} \) or 13...e5 14 \( \text{\#f3} \) e4 15 \( \text{\#xd6} \) \( \text{\#xd6} \) 16 \( \text{\#d4} \) h6.

Obviously, these variations are not of a forcing nature. White keeps some pressure, but Black retains a satisfactory position without any weaknesses.

11...0-0 12 \( \text{\#b2} \) (D)

12...\( \text{\#f4} \)

12...\( \text{\#d7} \) is reliable but passive; for example, 13 \( \text{\#e2} \) \( \text{\#fe8} \) 14 \( \text{\#ad1} \) \( \text{\#b6} \) 15 \( \text{\#f3} \) \( \text{\#ad8} \) 16 \( \text{\#e5} \) \( \text{\#c8} \), Khalifman-Kholmov, Minsk 1985. As a matter of principle, Black wants to place his queen's bishop on the long diagonal, but then he has to watch out for piece sacrifices on e6. 12...\( \text{\#c7} \)!!? also deserves attention: 13 \( \text{\#f3} \) (13 \( \text{\#e2} \) can be answered by 13...b6 and 13 \( \text{\#b5} \) by 13...\( \text{\#c6} \) 13...a6 14 \( \text{\#fe1} \) \( \text{\#b4} \)!!? (or 14...b5) with a complicated game.

13 \( \text{\#e2} \)

After 13 \( \text{\#f3} \) b6 14 \( \text{\#e5} \) \( \text{\#g4} \) 15 \( \text{\#d4} \) \( \text{\#b7} \) White gets nothing, while he should not allow himself to be provoked into playing 13 g3?!, because after 13...\( \text{\#c7} \) 14 \( \text{\#f3} \) a6! 15 a4 (15 \( \text{\#ad1} \) can be met by 15...\( \text{\#c5} \)?? or 15...b5 16 \( \text{\#c6} \) \( \text{\#b7} \) 17 \( \text{\#xe7} \) \( \text{\#xe7} \) with equality) 14...\( \text{\#c5} \) 15 \( \text{\#ad1} \) (15 \( \text{\#fe1} \) \( \text{\#b6} \)!!?) 15...e5 16 \( \text{\#f5} \) b5! Black takes over the initiative.

13...\( \text{\#c5} \) 14 \( \text{\#ad1} \)
Or 14 \texttt{Qf3} b6 15 \texttt{We5} (15 \texttt{Qe5 We4} is also equal) 15...\texttt{Wxe5} 16 \texttt{Qxe5 Qb7} with equality, Berbatov-Dizdarević, Khanty-Mansiisk Olympiad 2010.

14...b6

The game is roughly equal; for example, 15 a3 (15 \texttt{Qf3} can be answered by 15...\texttt{b7}, while 15 g3 \texttt{We4} is equal) 15...a5 (15...\texttt{b7} 16 \texttt{Qxe6 fxe6} 17 b4 allows White the initiative) 16 b4!? axb4 17 axb4 \texttt{Qxb4} 18 \texttt{Qxe6} \texttt{Qxe6} 19 \texttt{Qxe6} \texttt{Qae8} 20 \texttt{Qc4 Qxc4} 21 \texttt{Qxc4 Qe4}, with a likely draw in the ending.

5.3

4 exd5 exd5 (D)

\begin{center}
\textbf{W}
\end{center}

We saw a similar position with reversed colours in Section 3.4, and there White even tried to seize the initiative. Here Black will be content with equality, as he is playing with a tempo less. The move \texttt{Qd2} may not be the most active development for the knight, but it is of course quite a useful move.

5 \texttt{Qb5+}

This check is unlikely to pose real problems for Black. We examine 5 \texttt{Qf3} in the next two sections.

5...\texttt{d7} 6 \texttt{We2+}

This is the logical follow-up to the bishop check. The attempt to secure a minimal advantage by 6 \texttt{Qxd7}+ \texttt{Qxd7} 7 \texttt{Qe2} (7 \texttt{Qe2+} is met by 7...\texttt{We6} and 7 \texttt{Qgf3} by 7...\texttt{We6+} 8 \texttt{We2 Qc6}) 7...\texttt{Qf6} 8 0-0 \texttt{Qd6} 9 dxc5 \texttt{Qxc5} 10 \texttt{Qb3 Qb6} 11 a4 0-0 12 a5 \texttt{Qc7} has little chance of success.

6...\texttt{Qe7} 7 dxc5 \texttt{Qf6} 8 \texttt{Qb3}

After 8 \texttt{Qf3} 0-0 9 \texttt{Qb3 We8}, 10 \texttt{Qe3} amounts to a mere transposition of moves. If White does not even temporarily defend the c5-pawn and plays simply 10 0-0, then 10...\texttt{Qxc5} 11 \texttt{Qd3} \texttt{Qb6} (11...\texttt{a6}?) 12 \texttt{Qg5} (or 12 \texttt{Qxd7 Qbxd7} 13 \texttt{Qf4 We4}) 12...\texttt{Qxb5} 13 \texttt{Qxb5 Qbd7} gives Black a pleasant game.

8...0-0 9 \texttt{Qe3 We8} 10 \texttt{Qf3}

If White plans to castle queenside, then it is best to do so right away: 10 0-0-0 \texttt{a6} 11 \texttt{Qxd7} (after 11 \texttt{Qd3}?! a5 12 \texttt{Qd2} a4 13 \texttt{Qd4} \texttt{Qxc5} problems appear for White) 11...\texttt{Qbxd7} 12 \texttt{Qd3} (12 \texttt{Qd2} a5 13 a4 can be met by the equalizing 13...\texttt{Qc7} 14 \texttt{Qe2 Qxc5} 15 \texttt{Qxc5} \texttt{Qxc5} 16 \texttt{Qxc5 Qxc5} or the more adventurous 13...\texttt{b6}?) 12...\texttt{Qc7} 13 \texttt{Qe2} (13 \texttt{Qf3} a5?) 13...\texttt{Qxc5} 14 \texttt{Qxc5} \texttt{Qxc5} 15 \texttt{Qxc5} (15 \texttt{Qd4 Qg4}) 15...\texttt{Qxc5} leads to a standard type of situation. Both sides have chances, since with his king on the queenside, it is hard for White to create real play against the isolated d-pawn.

10...\texttt{a6} 11 \texttt{Qd3} \texttt{Qa4} 12 \texttt{Qfd4 Qbd7}
Now:

a) As mentioned above, 13 0-0-0?! is by now rather risky. Black stands well after 13...\textit{\textbf{b}}xb3 14 \textit{\textbf{d}}xb3 \textit{\textbf{d}}xc5, but he can already count on more: 13...\textit{\textbf{d}}xc5 14 \textit{\textbf{f}}5 \textit{\textbf{d}}xd3+ 15 \textit{\textbf{w}}xd3 \textit{\textbf{f}}8 gives Black the initiative. The prophylactic move 16 \textit{\textbf{b}}1 would now be wise, since the inappropriately active 16 \textit{\textbf{g}}5?! h6 17 \textit{\textbf{h}}4 g5 18 \textit{\textbf{g}}3 \textit{\textbf{b}}5 19 \textit{\textbf{d}}2 \textit{\textbf{e}}2 20 \textit{\textbf{d}}4 (as in B.Vučković-Baklan, Paris Ch 2004) leads to hardships for White after 20...\textit{\textbf{c}}8.

b) 13 0-0!? \textit{\textbf{b}}xc5 14 \textit{\textbf{b}}xc5 \textit{\textbf{b}}xc5 15 c3 (after 15 \textit{\textbf{f}}3?! \textit{\textbf{b}}6 Black gains the initiative) maintains approximate equality.

\textbf{5.4}

4 \textit{\textbf{e}}xd5 \textit{\textbf{e}}xd5 5 \textit{\textbf{g}}f3 (D)

This is White’s strongest continuation. The d5-pawn will soon become isolated, and to compensate for this weakness, Black needs to generate active piece-play. In the main theoretical line 5...\textit{\textbf{c}}c6 6 \textit{\textbf{b}}5 \textit{\textbf{d}}6 7 dxc5 \textit{\textbf{xc}}5 8 0-0 \textit{\textbf{d}}e7 (screening the king from a check on the e-file) 9 \textit{\textbf{b}}3 \textit{\textbf{d}}6 he only partially succeeds: the g8-knight could not move to its most active square, f6, and the bishop was unable to stay on the a7-g1 diagonal because of the threat of a strategically disadvantageous exchange. This explains in brief the motivation behind my two recommendations for Black in this position, namely that Black aspires to develop his minor pieces to their best squares.

\textbf{5...\textit{\textbf{f}}6}

Immediately solving the knight’s development problem. The attempt to bring both the knight and the bishop to their optimal squares by 5...\textit{\textbf{a}}6 is considered in Section 5.5.

\textbf{6 \textit{\textbf{b}}5+}

If White aspires to an opening advantage, then actually he has no other choice. 6 \textit{\textbf{d}}3 is met by 6...c4 and in the case of 6 \textit{\textbf{e}}2 \textit{\textbf{c}}c6 7 0-0 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 (or 7...\textit{\textbf{d}}d6) 8 dxc5 \textit{\textbf{xc}}5 9 \textit{\textbf{b}}3 \textit{\textbf{b}}6 Black has no difficulties – this position (with the unimportant addition of the move ...\textit{\textbf{a}}6) will be found in the next section.

\textbf{6...\textit{\textbf{d}}d7 7 \textit{\textbf{xd}}7+}

The artificial 7 \textit{\textbf{e}}2 changes little: 7...\textit{\textbf{c}}c6 8 0-0 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 9 dxc5 \textit{\textbf{xc}}5 10 c4 (10 \textit{\textbf{b}}3 \textit{\textbf{b}}6 11 \textit{\textbf{g}}5 0-0) 10...dxc4 with an equal position. Black also had quite a satisfactory game after 7...\textit{\textbf{c}}xd4 8 \textit{\textbf{xd}}4 \textit{\textbf{d}}d6 9 0-0 0-0 10 \textit{\textbf{f}}2f3 h6 in Dvoirys-Bareev, USSR Ch, Leningrad 1990.

\textbf{7...\textit{\textbf{b}}xd7 8 0-0 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 9 dxc5}

White does not have to hurry with the exchange of pawns. After 9 \textit{\textbf{e}}1
0-0 10 \( \text{xf1} \) (or 10 c3 \( \text{d}6 \)) it is logical for Black to relieve the tension in the centre by playing 10...\( \text{cxd4} \)!? 11 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{c}5 \), with a good position, though 10...\( \text{e}8 \) 11 c3 \( \text{b}6 \) is not bad either.

9...\( \text{x}c5 \) (D)

The structure has now become more defined. The d4-square is at White's disposal, but the d5-pawn is unlikely to come under any real threat for some time to come. Nevertheless, its long-term vulnerability remains White's main hope. Black also has support-squares for his knights, and for the next few moves both players will seek to manoeuvre their pieces into better positions.

10 \( \text{e}1 \)

The d2-knight will head for f1, with an eye to moving to e3 at a later point. This is probably the plan that poses Black the most difficulties. Other ideas are less fruitful, as they fail to threaten the safety of the d5-pawn:

a) After 10 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) Black takes control of the f5-square. If White persists and continues 11 \( \text{f}3 \) 0-0 12 \( \text{f}5 \) (or 12 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 13 \( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{c}7 \) with equality), then 12...\( \text{d}8 \) 13 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 14 \( \text{e}3 \) \( g6 \) follows, with chances for both sides. Also in the variation 11 \( \text{f}3 \) 0-0 12 \( \text{e}5 \) (12 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 13 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{c}8 \)) 12...\( \text{c}8 \) Black stands no worse and in the case of 13 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 14 \( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 15 c3 \( \text{c}5 \) 16 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) or 13 \( \text{f}4 \) (13 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 14 \( \text{h}4 \)?! \( \text{c}5 \)) 13...\( \text{e}8 \) 14 \( \text{f}3 \) (14 \( \text{e}1 \) is equal) 14...\( \text{e}6 \) he can even try to seize the initiative himself.

b) 10 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}4 \) is another line where Black has active piece-play. After 11 \( \text{e}3 \) 0-0 12 \( \text{d}3 \) (12 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \)) 12...\( \text{e}8 \) 13 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{c}7 \) Black calmly finishes his development, while the d5-pawn remains only a nominal weakness. 11 \( \text{f}4 \) promises White little more: 11...\( \text{d}6 \)?! (a comparatively rare move: the knight voluntarily retreats from the centre, but is ready to occupy a useful post at c4 and at the same time hinders White's intended \( \text{f}5 \)) 12 \( \text{f}4 \) 0-0 13 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{e}8 \), with a satisfactory game for Black.

10...0-0 11 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 12 \( \text{e}3 \)

White plans \( \text{d}4 \), freeing the e3-square for the knight.

12...\( \text{e}6 \)

Black prevents his opponent's intentions. After 12...\( \text{c}7 \), the variation 13 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 14 \( \text{e}5 \) (14 \( \text{e}3 \) is answered by 14...\( \text{x}d4 \) 15 \( \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{c}5 \) – the exchange of the white bishop for the knight is in principle advantageous for Black since his own bishop will have good prospects) 14...\( \text{b}6 \) 15 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}8 \) is also acceptable for Black. However, 13 c3 \( \text{e}6 \) transposes to our main line in any case.
13 c3
Or 13 \( \text{d}4 \text{c}7 14 \text{x}e6 \) (14 c3 \( \text{c}5 \) 14...\text{fxe6} 15 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{c}5 \) with an equal position since 16 \( \text{xf}6 \) is met by 16...\text{f}4.

13...\text{c}7 14 \text{d}3 \text{a}6
White has not succeeded in putting real pressure on the d5-pawn. An approximate equilibrium has been created. Both sides have plenty to play for, although a draw seems the most probable result.

5.5
4 \text{exd}5 \text{exd}5 5 \text{gf}3 \text{a}6 (D)

Behind this modest-looking move lies the ambitious idea of placing the g8-knight and f8-bishop on their best possible squares: the knight on f6 and the bishop on the a7-g1 diagonal. The variation 6 c3 \( \text{c}6 7 \text{dxc}5 \) (7 \( \text{d}3 \) allows Black to equalize by 7...c4 8 \( \text{e}+ \text{c}7 \) or 7...\text{cxd}4!? 8 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 9 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{e}7+ \) 7...\text{xc}5 8 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 9 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 10 0-0 (10 \( \text{e}+ \text{e}7 \) 0-0 (10...\text{e}6) 10...0-0 (Wang Yu-Roiz, World Team Ch, Beersheba 2005) can serve as an illustration of Black's ideas. He has achieved his goal, and experiences no difficulties whatsoever after 11 h3?! \( \text{e}4, 11 \text{g}5 \text{h}6 \) (11...\text{g}4?!?) 12 \( \text{h}4 \text{g}5 13 \text{g}3 \text{e}4 14 \text{f}d4 \text{e}8 \) or 11 \( \text{e}1 \text{g}4 12 \text{h}3 \text{h}5 13 \text{f}4 \) (13 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 13 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 14 \( \text{xb}6 \) \( \text{xb}6 \) 13...\text{e}8. These lines illustrate an almost ideal outcome for Black. So, if White wishes to fight for an advantage, he needs to hinder his opponent's intentions. We discuss:

5.5.1: 6 c4!? 61
5.5.2: 6 dxc5 62
5.5.3: 6 \text{e}2 64

5.5.1
6 c4!?
This rare move is rather venomous. Abandoning the idea of methodical play against an isolated queen's pawn, White relies on his lead in development. Although the inactive d2-knight is an obstacle to White's central initiative, Black faces some distinct challenges in the lines that follow.

6...\text{f}6 7 \text{cxd}5
Less accurate is 7 \( \text{e}2 \text{cxd}4 8 \text{cxd}5 \) (8 0-0 \( \text{c}6 9 \text{cxd}5 \) \( \text{xd}5 \) 10 \( \text{c}+ \text{c}5 11 \text{b}4 \) \( \text{h}5 \) is equal), since then besides 8...\text{cxd}5, which transposes to the note to White's 8th move, 8...\text{xd}5 is also possible. In that case after 9 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{h}5 \) (9...\text{c}5!? 10 \( \text{e}2+ \text{e}7 \) 10 0-0 \( \text{c}6 11 \text{b}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) (the risky 11...\text{g}4?! 12 \( \text{e}1+ \text{e}7 \) 13 \( \text{b}+ \text{b}4 \) 0-0 leads to unclear play) 12 \( \text{f}x \text{d}4 \) \( \text{xd}1 \) 13 \( \text{xd}1 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 14 \( \text{xd}4 \) 0-0 White keeps no more than a minimal advantage.

7...\text{xd}5 (D)
7...cxd4 8 âc4 (8 âe2!? ) 8...b5 9 âb3 âe7+ 10 âf1 d3 is unclear and leads to a sharper fight.

8 âc4
8 âe2 cxd4 9 0-0 âc6 10 âb3 âe7 (10...âd6!? ) 11 âbxd4 (11 âfxd4 0-0) 11...0-0 12 âxc6 bxc6 remains an alternative. White's position is preferable, but the activity of Black's pieces compensates for the defects of his pawn-structure.

8...âc6
8...b5 9 âxd5 (9 âe2 can be met by 9...c4) 9...âxd5 10 0-0 âc6 11 dxc5 âxc5 12 âe4 (or 12 âb3 âxd1 13 âxd1 âe7 14 âe3 0-0 15 âac1 âd8) 12...âxd1 13 âxd1 âe7 14 âd6+ (14 âf4 0-0 15 âac1 âd8 16 âxd8+ âxd8 17 âd6 âb7 is another possibility) 14...âxd6 15 âxd6 (Navara-Volkov, Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008) also deserves attention. Black should then play 15...âe7, little by little achieving equality.

9 0-0
White achieves nothing by 9 âe2+ due to 9...âe7! 10 dxc5 âf4 11 âe4 âxg2+ 12 âf1 âh3 13 âg1 (13 âg5 can be met by 13...âe3++!? 14 âe1 âc2+) 13...f5, with equality.

9...cxd4 10 âb3 âb6 11 âd3 âe7 12 âfxd4 âxd4 13 âxd4 0-0
White's game deserves preference, but Black is close to equality; for example, 14 âe1 âf6 15 âb3 âa4 or 14 âf5 âf6 15 âf3 âe8.

5.5.2
6 dxc5 (D)

Black receives a little present from his opponent: now the f8-bishop gets to c5 in one move. Of course, White does have a specific idea in mind; otherwise this move would be relegated to a small footnote.

6...âxc5 7 âb3
7 âd3 âe7+ 8 âwe2 âc6 9 âb3 âb6 is considered in line 'c2' of the next note.

7...âb6 8 âg5!?
White must act vigorously. Other moves:

a) The indifferent 8 âe2?! âf6 9 0-0 0-0 10 âg5 âc6 11 c3 âe8 gave
Black the initiative in Pavasović-Dizdar, Murska Sobota 2006.

b) The fanciful 8 \( \text{we}2+ \) also does not pose any particular problems for Black: 8...\( \text{Ce7} \) 9 \( \text{Ce3} \) \( \text{Cbc6} \). Now White can spend a further tempo preparing to castle kingside, but 10 \( \text{Wd2} \) 0-0 11 \( \text{Ce2} \) \( \text{Cxe3} \) 12 \( \text{Wxe3} \) \( \text{Cxe8} \) 13 0-0 \( \text{Cg6} \) 14 \( \text{Wd2} \) \( \text{Wf6} \) 15 c3 \( \text{Cf4} \) allowed Black the initiative in Emelin-Erdos, Berlin 2009. Castling queenside allows Black good counterplay: 10 0-0-0 0-0 11 \( \text{Cxb6} \) \( \text{Wxb6} \) 12 \( \text{Cb1} \) (or 12 \( \text{Cfd4} \) \( \text{Cxe8} \) 12...\( \text{f5} \)). A more careful choice is 10 \( \text{Cxb6} \) \( \text{Wxb6} \) 11 \( \text{Wd2} \) 0-0 12 \( \text{Ce2} \) \( \text{Cg4} \) 13 0-0, with equality.

c) 8 \( \text{Cd3} \) is more natural. Now 8...\( \text{Cf6}?! \) is unpleasantly met by 9 \( \text{we2}+, \) so Black should give a queen check himself: 8...\( \text{we7}+, \) Then:

c1) The feeble continuation 9 \( \text{Ce2} \) \( \text{Cf6} \) 10 0-0 0-0 11 \( \text{Ce1} \) (not 11 \( \text{Cg5}?! \) \( \text{Cc6} \), when Black has the initiative) 11...\( \text{Cc6} \) leaves Black comfortable.

c2) After 9 \( \text{we2} \) Black can enter an ending by 9...\( \text{Cg4} \) 10 0-0 (10 \( \text{Wxe7+} \) \( \text{Cxe7} \) 11 \( \text{Cfd4} \) \( \text{Cbc6} \) 12 \( \text{Ce3} \) \( \text{Cg5} \) leads to an equal position) 10...\( \text{Wxe2} \) 11 \( \text{Cxe2} \) \( \text{Cf6} \) 12 h3 \( \text{Ch5} \) or 9...\( \text{Cc6} \) 10 \( \text{Cg5} \) (10 0-0 \( \text{Wxe2} \) 11 \( \text{Cxe2} \) \( \text{Cf6} \) is equal) 10...\( \text{Wxe2+} \) (or 10...\( \text{f6} \) 11 \( \text{Ce3}?! \) \( \text{Cxe2} \) 12 fxe3 with unclear play) 11 \( \text{Cxe2} \), when 11...\( \text{Cg4} \), 11...\( \text{Cge7} \) and 11...\( \text{Cf6}?! \) all give Black good chances of equalizing.

8...\( \text{Cf6} \) (D)

A small achievement for White. Black should avoid 8...\( \text{Cf6} \) 9 \( \text{we2+} \) \( \text{Cg6} \), as he may then experience some difficulties.

9 \( \text{Cd3} \)

The plan with queenside castling is better than it was on the previous move, but still only leads to unclear play: 9 \( \text{Wd2} \) 0-0 10 0-0-0 (10 \( \text{Cg3} \) can be met by 10...\( \text{Cbc6} \) or 10...\( \text{h6}?! \) 11 \( \text{Cf4} \) \( \text{Cbc6} \) 12 0-0-0 a5 with the initiative) 10...\( \text{Cbc6} \); for example, 11 h3 (11 \( \text{Cg3}?! \) 11...\( \text{Cf8} \) 12 \( \text{Ce3} \) (12 \( \text{Cg4} \) a5) 12...\( \text{f5} \) 13 \( \text{Cfd4} \) \( \text{Cg6} \) 14 h4 \( \text{Cf8} \) 15 h5 \( \text{Cg4} \) and Black leads in the race to attack, de la Villa-Topalov, Palma de Mallorca 1992.

9...\( \text{Cbc6} \) 10 0-0 \( \text{h6} \) 11 \( \text{Cg4} \)

11 \( \text{Cxe7} \) \( \text{Wxe7} \) 12 \( \text{Ce1} \) \( \text{Ch6} \) is equal, while 11 \( \text{Cf4} \) 0-0 (11...\( \text{Cg4}?! \) 12 \( \text{Ce1} \) (12 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{Cg6} \)) deserves attention. Then 12...\( \text{Cg4} \) 13 h3 \( \text{Ch5} \) 14 c3 \( \text{Cxe8} \) 15 \( \text{Ce3} \) \( \text{Cc7} \) 16 \( \text{Cf5} \) \( \text{Cbb8} \) is quite good, and 12...\( \text{Cg6} \) 13 \( \text{Cg3} \) (13 \( \text{Cf3} \) is met by 13...\( \text{d4} \) and 13...\( \text{Cxe5} \) \( \text{Cxf6} \) \( \text{Cxf6} \) 14 \( \text{Ce3} \) with 14...\( \text{Cg4} \)) 13...\( \text{Cg4} \) 14 h3 \( \text{Ch5} \) can lead to interesting complications: 15 \( \text{Cxe2} \) \( \text{Cxf3} \) 16 \( \text{Cxf3} \) \( \text{Cg5} \) is equal, while 15 c3 \( \text{f5}?! \) gives Black good counterplay.

11...0-0 12 \( \text{Ce1} \)

In the case of 12 c3 White needs to consider 12...\( \text{g5}?! \) 13 \( \text{Cg3} \) \( \text{f5} \).
12...\textit{\texttt{e6}} 13 c3 \textit{\texttt{f7}}
Black frees himself from the pin and obtains a satisfactory game thanks to his active \textit{\texttt{b6}}-bishop.

\textbf{5.5.3}
\textit{\texttt{e2}} (D)
This modest placement of the white bishop is better than 6 \textit{\texttt{d3}} c4 7 \textit{\texttt{e2}}, when White can expect no advantage after 7...\textit{\texttt{c6}} 8 0-0 \textit{\texttt{d6}} or 7...\textit{\texttt{f6}}!? 8 0-0 \textit{\texttt{d6}} 9 \textit{\texttt{b3}} (9 \textit{\texttt{e5}} 0-0) 9...\textit{\texttt{b5}}.

6...\textit{\texttt{f6}} 7 0-0 \textit{\texttt{e7}}
7...\textit{\texttt{b7}}!? is very rare but interesting. Then 8 \textit{\texttt{e5}}!? is well met by 8...\textit{\texttt{d6}}, while 8 \textit{\texttt{e1}} \textit{\texttt{e7}} 9 \textit{\texttt{f1}} 0-0 10 \textit{\texttt{g3}} \textit{\texttt{e8}} looks quite acceptable for Black. It is hard to say if White can derive any real benefit from his development advantage after 8 c4 \textit{\texttt{e7}} 9 \textit{\texttt{cxd5}} 0-0 10 \textit{\texttt{e1}} (10 d6 \textit{\texttt{xd6}} 11 \textit{\texttt{c4}} \textit{\texttt{c7}}) 10...\textit{\texttt{xd5}} 11 \textit{\texttt{e4}} \textit{\texttt{f6}}.

8 \textit{\texttt{dxc5}} \textit{\texttt{xc5}} 9 \textit{\texttt{b3}} \textit{\texttt{b6}}
Black has accomplished his idea of placing his kingside minor pieces on their best locations, albeit with some loss of time (...\textit{\texttt{f8-e7xc5}} rather than ...\textit{\texttt{f8xc5}}), but on the other hand, White’s bishop is inactively placed on \textit{\texttt{e2}}, and may even get in the way of White’s other pieces.

In the variation 6 dxc5 \textit{\texttt{xc5}} 7 \textit{\texttt{b3}}, the retreat of the bishop to the \textit{\texttt{b6}}-square looked best, but in this case 9...\textit{\texttt{a7}} is equally deserving of attention, and we shall bear both moves in mind as we discuss the main continuations below.

\textbf{10 \textit{\texttt{g5}}}
10 \textit{\texttt{d3}} returns the tempo that Black has lost with his bishop. Then 10...0-0 11 h3!? (11 \textit{\texttt{g5}} can be answered by 11...\textit{\texttt{c6}}, while 11 c3 leads to a position from the game Wang Yu-Roiz that I described as an “almost ideal outcome” at the start of Section 5.5) 11...\textit{\texttt{e4}} (11...\textit{\texttt{c7}}!? 12 \textit{\texttt{bd4}} \textit{\texttt{c6}}) 12 \textit{\texttt{bd4}} \textit{\texttt{e8}} leads to chances for both sides.

10 \textit{\texttt{f3}} 0-0 11 \textit{\texttt{e3}} is too slow to give Black problems. After 11...\textit{\texttt{xe3}} (11...\textit{\texttt{e8}}!? is also possible) 12 \textit{\texttt{xe3}} \textit{\texttt{e8}} 13 \textit{\texttt{d2}} (13 \textit{\texttt{d3}} \textit{\texttt{g4}}) he can choose between 13...\textit{\texttt{e4}} (equalizing) and 13...\textit{\texttt{g4}}. More vigorous action is required of White.

After 10 c4 0-0 (or 10...\textit{\texttt{c6}} 11 \textit{\texttt{g5}} 0-0, if the bishop is on a7) 11 \textit{\texttt{g5}} (11 \textit{\texttt{cxd5}} can be answered by 11...\textit{\texttt{xd5}}, and 11 c5 \textit{\texttt{c7}} 12 \textit{\texttt{g5}} by 12...\textit{\texttt{h6}} 13 \textit{\texttt{h4}} \textit{\texttt{c6}}) 11...\textit{\texttt{h6}} 12 \textit{\texttt{xf6}} \textit{\texttt{xf6}} 13 \textit{\texttt{cxd5}} \textit{\texttt{d8}} little by little Black achieves equality.

\textbf{10...0-0 11 c3 \textit{\texttt{e8}}}
To counter the threat of \textit{\texttt{xf6}}, Black sets his sights on the \textit{\texttt{e2}}-bishop. This is the most natural reaction, but it is worth examining the pawn sacrifice
11...\(\text{c6}\) 12 \(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 13 \(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{f5}\), when the activity of Black’s pieces provides compensation: 14 \(\text{bd4}\) \(\text{fe8}\) 15 \(\text{xf5}\) \(\text{xe2}\) 16 \(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xf5}\) 17 \(\text{xb6}\) \(\text{wb5}\) 18 \(\text{xb5}\) \(\text{axb5}\) is equal, while 14 \(\text{ad1}\) \(\text{c2}\) 15 \(\text{ad2}\) \(\text{ad8}\) 16 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{xd2}\) 17 \(\text{bxd2}\) \(\text{e8}\) and 14 \(\text{fd4}\) \(\text{ae8}\) 15 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{d3}\) 16 \(\text{fef1}\) \(\text{e5}\) 17 \(\text{d2}\) (not 17 \(\text{xb7}\)? \(\text{e7}\) ) 17...\(\text{f4}\) 18 \(\text{ad1}\) (18 \(\text{ad1}\) (18 \(\text{e3}\) \(\text{g4}\) ) 18...\(\text{e7}\) are both unclear.

12 \(\text{e1}\)!? (D)

This move looks at first like an oversight, but it is in fact the strongest continuation for White.

12...\(\text{xf2}\)+

After 12...\(\text{e6}\) or 12...\(\text{bd7}\) White stands better. However, if the bishop is on a7, Black has an extra possibility to complicate the play by 12...\(\text{xb6}\)!?. Then 13 \(\text{bd4}\) \(\text{e4}\) and 13 \(\text{e3}\) \(\text{xe3}\) work out well for Black, while 13 \(\text{fd4}\) \(\text{bd7}\) 14 \(\text{e3}\) (14 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{e4}\) ) 14...\(\text{c7}\) 15 \(\text{c2}\) \(\text{b8}\) 16 \(\text{g3}\) \(\text{e5}\) is unclear. The critical 13 \(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{xf2}\)+ 14 \(\text{h1}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 15 \(\text{xd5}\) (or 15 \(\text{bd4}\) \(\text{c6}\) 16 \(\text{f1}\) \(\text{e3}\) 17 \(\text{xa6}\) \(\text{xd4}\) 18 \(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{wh6}\) ) 15...\(\text{c6}\) leads to equality after 16 \(\text{xa6}\) \(\text{e6}\) 17 \(\text{b5}\) \(\text{bxa6}\) 18 \(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{xb2}\) 19 \(\text{bd4}\) \(\text{xd4}\) 20 \(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{b5}\) or 16 \(\text{d3}\) \(\text{g4}\) 17 \(\text{f1}\) \(\text{xf3}\) 18 \(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{xf3}\) 19 \(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{e5}\) (19 \(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{e5}\) 20 \(\text{g3}\)+ \(\text{g6}\) ) 19...\(\text{ad8}\) 20 \(\text{e4}\) f5.

13 \(\text{xf2}\) \(\text{e4}\)+ 14 \(\text{g1}\) \(\text{xf5}\) 15 \(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{wg5}\) 16 \(\text{f3}\)

Black’s defence is simpler after 16 \(\text{xa6}\) \(\text{e6}\) 17 \(\text{b5}\) \(\text{xe1}\)+ 18 \(\text{xe1}\) \(\text{d7}\). Now he needs to play very accurately to retain approximate equality.

16...\(\text{xe1}\)+ 17 \(\text{xe1}\) \(\text{e6}\) 18 \(\text{d4}\)

Black also holds his ground in the case of 18 \(\text{c5}\) \(\text{e7}\) 19 \(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{fxe6}\) 20 \(\text{g4}\) e5 21 \(\text{d1}\) \(\text{d6}\) 22 \(\text{wd2}\) d4 23 \(\text{wc2}\) (23 \(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{c6}\) 24 \(\text{dxe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) ) 23...\(\text{h8}\) 24 \(\text{cd4}\) \(\text{c6}\) 25 \(\text{dxe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\).

18...\(\text{d7}\) 19 h4 \(\text{f6}\) 20 \(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{c6}\) 21 \(\text{f2}\) (D)

After 21 \(\text{d1}\) \(\text{xd4}\) 22 \(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{c6}\) or 21 \(\text{f1}\) \(\text{g6}\) 22 \(\text{e1}\) \(\text{f8}\) it is difficult for White to strengthen the pressure.

21...\(\text{xf2}\)+ 22 \(\text{xf2}\) \(\text{d8}\)

White has just a small advantage in the ending.
6 Steinitz Variation

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 f6 (D) By playing 3...f6 Black again attacks the e4-pawn, forcing its advance or exchange. The Winawer Variation, 3...b4, is the main alternative, and has the same initial goal.

In this chapter we shall examine 4 e5, but White can also maintain the status quo in the centre by 4 g5 (Chapter 7).

Besides these two main possibilities, the rarely played 4 d3 should be briefly mentioned. However, in this case Black easily secures a comfortable game: 4...c5 5 exd5 (5 f3 cxd4 6 xd4 e5 7 f3 b4) 5...xd4 6 b5 (6 b5+ d7 and now 7 xd7+ xd7 8 xd4 c6 9 d1 exd5 or 7 xd4 xb5 8 xb5 xd5) 6...xd5 7 f3 b4+.

We should also note that the pawn exchange 4 exd5 exd5 transposes to Section 3.3.

4 e5 fd7

White can now decide among several schemes of development:
• 5 f3 (Section 6.1) is an idea of a type we have seen before: White seeks to establish piece control over the central squares. Although this variation enjoys some popularity, Black has no real trouble.
• In the line 5 ce2 (Section 6.2) White demonstrates diametrically opposite intentions – he is going to support his pawn-centre with the moves c3 and f4. This leads to a very complicated opening battle with chances for both sides.
• 5 f4 c5 6 f3 c6 7 e3 (Section 6.3) is the most dangerous continuation for Black. He has quite a wide choice of possibilities, of which I have elected to focus on 7...xd4 8 xd4 c5 (usually very sharp), 7...xd4 8 xd4 b6 (the most forcing) and the calmer 7...e7.

6.1

5 f3 (D)

5 h5?! is a speculative move without any real substance. 5...c5 6 f3 cxd4 (6...c6? allows White to demonstrate the one idea behind his queen
move: 7 \( \text{g5} \) g6 8 \( \text{f3} \) f5 9 \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 10 \( \text{xd5} \) gives White the advantage) 7 \( \text{xd4} \) (7 \( \text{b5} \) is met by 7...\( \text{c6} \)) 7...\( \text{b6} \) (7...g6 plans 8 \( \text{g4} \)?) \( \text{xe5} \) 9 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{bc6} \), but 8 \( \text{g5} \) is a better try) 8 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{c6} \) leaves Black with the initiative.

White is willing to allow the exchange of his pawns on d4 and e5.

5...c5 6 dxc5

Black has no difficulty after 6 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{c6} \); e.g., 7 dxc5 \( \text{xc5} \) 8 0-0 0-0, 7 \( \text{xc6} \) bxc6 8 0-0 \( \text{e7} \) (or 8...\( \text{xd4} \)) or 7 0-0 \( \text{xd4} \) 8 \( \text{e2} \) (8 \( \text{xd4} \) is well met by 8...\( \text{dxe5} \)! 9 \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{d6} \) 8...a6 9 \( \text{xc6} \) bxc6 10 \( \text{xd4} \) c5!? (10...\( \text{c7} \) is unclear, Barle-Pcola, London 2009) 11 \( \text{f4} \) and now Black can choose 11...\( \text{b7} \) or 11...h6.

The active development of the other white bishop by 6 \( \text{g5} \) also has little impact: 6...\( \text{b6} \) (6...\( \text{a5} \)?) 7 dxc5 \( \text{xc5} \) 8 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{c6} \) (Black can also try 8...h6!? 9 \( \text{h4} \) g5 10 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 9 0-0-0 (9 \( \text{a4} \) is met by 9...\( \text{xf2} \) + 10 \( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{b4} + \), and 9 \( \text{b5} \) by 9...d4 10 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 9...\( \text{a5} \) 10 a3 0-0 11 \( \text{f6} \) \( \text{e7} \) (11...h6?) 12 \( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \) led to equality in Zdebskaya-E.Danielian, Romanian Women’s Team Ch, Eforie Nord 2009.

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

Before taking on c5, Black wants to provoke 7 \( \text{f4} \), although 6...\( \text{xc5} \) and 6...\( \text{xc5} \) are viable too.

7 \( \text{f4} \) (D)

Approximate equality arises after 7 \( \text{g5} \)!? \( \text{e7} \) (7...\( \text{a5} \)?) 8 a3 \( \text{xc5} \) 9 \( \text{b5} \) allows White the initiative) 8 \( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 9 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 10 0-0 0-0 11 \( \text{e1} \) a6, as in Haik-Eingorn, Metz 1997.

We have reached the basic position of this line. The standard variation now runs 7...\( \text{xc5} \) 8 \( \text{d3} \) f6 9 exf6, with Black choosing between 9...\( \text{xf6} \) and 9...\( \text{xf6} \). However, other methods of seeking counterplay are also possible, in which Black is in no hurry to liquidate the e5-pawn by playing ...f6, or even avoids it altogether. These alternative plans feature activity on the queenside or (given the opportunity) on the kingside with ...g5. The e5-pawn
can prove a useful target; not only can the white pieces become tied to its defence, but it also blocks lines that they would like to use. Thus we shall examine the following moves:

6.1.1: 7...a6 68
6.1.2: 7...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xc5}}\) 68
6.1.3: 7...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{N}}}_{\text{xc5}}\) 69

6.1.1

7...a6

This preliminary move is useful for Black in practically all cases, and keeps the possibility of taking on c5 with either knight or bishop. Then:

a) 8 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{d3}}\) \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xc5}}\) 9 0-0 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{N}}}_{\text{e7}}\) is considered in note 'b' to White's 8th move in Section 6.1.2.

b) After 8 a3 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xc5}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{d3}}\) f6 (9...h6!?) 10 exf6 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xf6}}\), the inclusion of the moves a3 and ...a6 turns out not to be in White's favour.

c) 8 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{d2}}\) \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xc5}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{d3}}\) (9 a3 0-0) 9...b5 (9...h6!?) 10 h4 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{b4}}\) 11 a3 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{a5}}\) 12 b4 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{c7}}\), Zakharov-V.Gaprindashvili, Moscow 1997) 10 h4 (10 0-0 h6 is unclear) 10...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{B}}}_{\text{b6}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{f1}}\) f6 12 exf6 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xf6}}\) gave Black the initiative in the game Nepomniashchy-Volkov, Novokuzevets 2008.

d) 8 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{a4}}!\) is more of a challenge to Black's idea. After 8...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xc5}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xc5}}\) \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xc5}}\) 10 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{d2}}\) (or 10 c3 0-0 11 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{d2}}\), but 10 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{d3}}\)! is weaker in view of 10...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{B}}}_{\text{b6}}\) 11 0-0 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{B}}}_{\text{xb2}}\)) the game is approximately equal, but the exchange of the passive c3-knight is nevertheless to White's benefit.

6.1.2

7...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{O}}}_{\text{xc5}}\) (D)

Now White faces a major decision. 8 h4

Making use of the fact that he has not yet castled, White makes an aggressive advance on the kingside. This is a risky plan that can easily rebound on White. Other moves:

a) 8 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{e2}}\) is too meek. After 8...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{e7}}\) 9 0-0 Black can choose 9...a6 or 9...0-0.

b) The standard continuation is 8 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{d3}}\) \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{e7}}\) 9 0-0, but it does not promise White an advantage. One move is 9...a6, when 10 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{e1}}\) g5 11 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{G}}}_{\text{g3}}\) h5 12 h3 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{B}}}_{\text{b6}}\) gives Black the initiative, while 10 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{d2}}\) 0-0 11 a3 f5 12 exf6 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xf6}}\) was satisfactory for Black in I.Schneider-Ivanchuk, European Clubs Cup, Ohrid 2009. The simple 9...0-0 10 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{e1}}\) \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xd3}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{xd3}}\) \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{d7}}\) is fine for Black too, while 9...g5!? is interesting; then 10 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{e3}}\) (10 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{G}}}_{\text{g3}}\) h5 11 h3 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{B}}}_{\text{b6}}\) gives Black the initiative, Huerga Leache-Jerez Perez, Barcelona 2006) 10...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{xd3}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{xd3}}\) is unclear.

c) 8 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{d2}}\) a6 (8...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_{\text{e7}}\)?) 9 0-0-0 b5 10 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{R}}}_{\text{e3}}\) is similar to our main line below, and indeed White should probably prefer precisely this move-order.
d) Attacking the c5-knight by 8 a3 \( \text{\underline{d}e7} \) (8...a6?! 9 \( \text{\underline{d}d2} \) (after 9 b4?! \( \text{\underline{d}d7} \), 10 b5 \( \text{\underline{c}a5} \) 11 \( \text{\underline{d}d3} \) \( \text{\underline{w}c7} \) 12 \( \text{\underline{e}e2} \) \( \text{\underline{c}c4} \) gives Black the initiative, while 10 \( \text{\underline{d}b5} \) 0-0 11 c4?! a5 is also pleasant for him, Aronian-Lputian, Erevan 2001) 9...a6 10 b4 \( \text{\underline{d}d7} \) does not provide any benefit for White and only weakens his position.

8...\( \text{\underline{d}e7} \)

Black brings the idea of liquidating White’s e-pawn by \( ...\text{f6} \) back into the picture. He can also be quite happy after 8...a6, which practically rules out queenside castling by White. 9 h5?! and 9 \( \text{\underline{d}d2} \)?! are both well met by 9...d4, but 9 a3 is more natural. After 9...b5 10 h5 h6 11 b4 (White should avoid 11 \( \text{\underline{h}h4} \) d4 and 11 \( \text{\underline{h}h3} \)?! \( \text{\underline{w}c7} \), while 11 \( \text{\underline{d}d4} \)?! \( \text{\underline{b}b7} \) leads to unclear play) 11...\( \text{\underline{d}d7} \) 12 \( \text{\underline{d}d3} \) Black can choose 12...\( \text{\underline{e}e7} \) or 12...\( \text{\underline{w}c7} \). Black can also combine the two ideas by 9...\( \text{\underline{e}e7} \) !?, meeting 10 b4 by 10...\( \text{\underline{d}d7} \) and 10 \( \text{\underline{h}h3} \) with 10...0-0.

9 \( \text{\underline{d}d2} \)

Whether he likes it or not, it is best to evacuate the king from the centre. After 9 h5 (or 9 \( \text{\underline{h}h3} \)?! \( \text{\underline{w}b6} \)) 9...f5 (9...0-0?! and 9...\( \text{\underline{w}b6} \)?! are also interesting) 10 h6 g6 Black takes the initiative.

9...a6

The beginning of a pawn advance. Piece-play by 9...0-0-0 10 0-0-0 \( \text{\underline{w}b6} \) (or 10...f5?! 11 exf6 \( \text{\underline{xf}6} \) may even be more effective.

10 0-0-0 b5 11 \( \text{\underline{w}e3} \)

The careless 11 \( \text{\underline{d}d3} \)?! b4 12 \( \text{\underline{e}e2} \) b3 13 cxb3 \( \text{\underline{b}b4} \) leads to hardship for White.

11...b4 12 \( \text{\underline{e}e2} \) 0-0 13 \( \text{\underline{d}d4} \) \( \text{\underline{d}d7} \)

14 h5

Or 14 \( \text{\underline{g}g5} \) \( \text{\underline{xd}4} \) 15 \( \text{\underline{xd}4} \) a5 16 \( \text{\underline{b}b1} \) a4, as in de Firmian-Raičević, Lone Pine 1980.

14...\( \text{\underline{xd}4} \) 15 \( \text{\underline{xd}4} \) a5 16 \( \text{\underline{b}b1} \) a4

Black’s chances are preferable in this double-edged position, G.Guseinov-Monin, St Petersburg 2000.

6.1.3

7...\( \text{\underline{x}xc5} \) (D)

8 \( \text{\underline{d}d3} \) h6?! 9 h3

White must take Black’s ...g5 idea seriously; for example, 9 0-0 g5?! 10 \( \text{\underline{g}g3} \) h5 11 h4 g4 12 \( \text{\underline{g}g5} \) \( \text{\underline{xe}5} \) 13 \( \text{\underline{xe}5} \) \( \text{\underline{xe}5} \) fxe5 16 \( \text{\underline{g}g6} \) \( \text{\underline{f}f8} \) 17 \( \text{\underline{c}c}4 \) (Faizrakhmanov-Yuzhakov, Belgorod 2008) 17...\( \text{\underline{b}b6} \) with an advantage for Black. The prophylactic retreat 9 \( \text{\underline{g}g3} \) does not completely solve this problem: 9...a6 10 0-0 (10 a3 \( \text{\underline{a}a7} \) 11 b4?! \( \text{\underline{d}d4} \) 10...g5?! (10...b5 is also possible) 11 \( \text{\underline{e}e1} \) g4 12 \( \text{\underline{d}d2} \) \( \text{\underline{g}g5} \) is unclear. The attempt to castle queenside by 9 \( \text{\underline{w}e2} \) a6 10 0-0-0 (10
0-0 is still met by 10...g5) 10...b4!? 11 d2 c7 does not look too attractive. Finally, the radical rejoinder 9 h4 weakens the kingside and strengthens the effect of the undermining ...f6: after 9...0-0!? , Black can meet 10 0-0 by 10...f6 11 exf6 xf6, and need not fear complications such as 10 h3 f6 11 g3 dxe5 12 xh6 f7 or 10 d2 f6 11 xh6 dxe5.

9...0-0

Queenside play with 9...a6 10 0-0 b5 remains an alternative for Black.

10 0-0 f6 11 exf6 xf6

We now see a reason for the modest advance of White’s h-pawn: on h3 it is far less of a target than it would be on h4. Nevertheless, White cannot count on an advantage.

12 e3

12 g3 is similar to a standard theoretical line, which arises after 7...xc5 8 d3 f6 9 exf6 xf6 10 g3 0-0 11 0-0. In that case, Black needs to avoid 11...d5? 12 xe5 xe5 13 xh7+, but in our slightly different position Black plays 12...d5! and takes over the initiative.

12...b6!?

Both sides have chances.

6.2

5 de2 (D)

White prepares c3. Another move-order, 5 f4 c5 6 f3 c6 7 de2, has the same idea.

5...c5 6 f4

6 c3 looks more logical at first glance, but this is probably not so. Black can simply play 6...c6, when 7 f4 transposes to our main line, while

7 df3 is weaker in view of 7...wb6 8 a3 f6. A more critical reply is 6...xd4 7 xd4 f6. Then:

a) The consistent line is 8 f4 fxe5, when after 9 fxe5 b4+ 10 f2 (10 d2 h4+ 10...0-0+ 10...h4+?! can be met by 11 g3) 11 f3 h4+ (11...c6!? has the ideas 12 a3 a5 and 12 f4 xd4) 12 g1 xf3 13 xf3 xe5) 12 c6 13 e3 db6 14 e2 (14 g1 g4) 14...c4 Black stands well. 9 dxe5 has also been tried, without particular success: 9...wb6 (9...c6!? 10 f3 c6 11 c3 c5 also offers Black a good game.

White can of course abandon the idea of supporting his spearhead with his f-pawn:

b) 8 f4 b4+ 9 d2 xd2+ (or 9...wb6 10 xb4 xb4+ 11 d2 xd2+ 12 xd2 e7 with equality) 10 xd2 wb6 (10...e7?!?) and now both 11 f3 fxe5 and 11...xf6 xf6 give Black equal play.

c) 8...xf6? xf6 9 f3 d6 10 c3 0-0 11 d3 c6 transposes to a line of the Tarrasch normally reached
via 3 \( \text{d}2 \text{f}6 \) 4 e5 \( \text{d}f7 \) 5 \( \text{d}3 \) c5 6 c3 \( \text{c}6 \) 7 \( \text{e}2 \) cxd4 8 cxd4 f6 9 exf6 \( \text{xf}6 \) 10 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \), where White has played the somewhat premature 11 \( \text{c}3 \).

One can draw the conclusion that after 6 c3 cxd4 7 cxd4 f6 White does not achieve an advantage. That’s why he often starts with the move 6 f4 instead.

6...\( \text{c}6 \)

We should consider whether it is an opportune moment for Black to tear apart White’s pawn-chain by playing 6...cxd4. This exchange promotes White’s development, but after 7 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) Black has every right to count on equality. 8 \( \text{e}3 \) is met by 8...\( \text{b}6 \), while 8 c3 \( \text{xd}4 \) 9 cxd4 \( \text{wb}6 \) 10 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 11 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 12 0-0 \( \text{d}7 \) is equal. A more principled line is 8 \( \text{gf}3 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 9 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{wb}6 \) 10 c3 \( \text{c}5 \). Then 11 b4 \( \text{x}d4 \) 12 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 13 cxd4 \( \text{b}6 \) 14 b5 \( \text{d}7 \) and 11 b3 f6 12 exf6 \( \text{xf}6 \) are equal, while 11 \( \text{e}2 \) can be met by 11...0-0 12 0-0 \( \text{b}8 \), also with equality, and 11 a4 with 11...a5, intending ...f6 soon (but not 11...f6?? 12 a5).

Overall, 6...cxd4 is an adequate reply to White’s \( \text{e}2 \) plan whether he opts for 6 c3 or 6 f4. However, the main line with 6 f4 \( \text{c}6 \) is more interesting and leads to a richer game.

7 c3 (D)

White can wait a little while with this move, but the attempt to avoid it completely makes no sense. For example, 7 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) (7...\( \text{wb}6 \) 8 g3 cxd4 9 \( \text{exd}4 \) \( \text{c}5 \)) 8 g3 0-0 9 \( \text{h}3 \) cxd4 10 \( \text{exd}4 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 11 0-0 \( \text{b}6 \) gives Black the initiative.

White has now shown his cards. He has constructed a large pawn-centre at the cost of a delay in his development and internal weaknesses left in the pawns’ wake. This gives Black grounds to seek active counterplay, often by drastic tactical means: a piece sacrifice with ...\( \text{dxe}5 \) or an exchange offer on f3. In the spirit of this strategy, ...\( \text{b}6 \), ...\( \text{e}7 \) and ...f6 are all natural moves. However, not all of them seem obligatory, and in any case one needs to start with something. We examine:

6.2.1: 7...\( \text{b}6 \) 71

6.2.2: 7...\( \text{e}7 \) 72

6.2.1

7...\( \text{b}6 \) 8 \( \text{f}3 \) f6

For the time being Black refrains from ...\( \text{e}7 \), planning to play ...\( \text{b}4+ \) should the opportunity arise.

9 a3!?

9 g3 is an attempt to develop the f1-bishop. 9...cxd4 and now:

a) Black’s ...\( \text{b}4+ \) idea is demonstrated in the variation 10 cxd4 fxe5 11 fxe5 \( \text{b}4+ \) 12 \( \text{c}3 \) (12 \( \text{d}2 \)?? 0-0 13 \( \text{g}2 \) invites 13...\( \text{dxe}5 \)! 14 dxe5
\textit{71 A ROCK·SOUL CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash}e5 with an attack) 12...0-0 13 \texttt{\textbackslash}f4
  (13 \texttt{\textbackslash}h3? is met by 13...\texttt{\textbackslash}xf3) and now Black can choose between main-
  taining the tension by 13...\texttt{\textbackslash}e7!? and equality with 13...\texttt{\textbackslash}dxe5 14 \texttt{\textbackslash}xe5
  (14 dxe5 \texttt{\textbackslash}a5) 14...\texttt{\textbackslash}e5 15 \texttt{\textbackslash}xe5 \texttt{\textbackslash}xc3+
  16 bxc3 \texttt{\textbackslash}b2 17 \texttt{\textbackslash}c1 \texttt{\textbackslash}f2+ 18 \texttt{\textbackslash}d1
  \texttt{\textbackslash}xf1+.
  
  b) 10 \texttt{\textbackslash}exd4 is more reliable, but after 10...fxe5 (or 10...\texttt{\textbackslash}xd4 11 cxd4
  fxe5 12 fxe5 \texttt{\textbackslash}b4+ 13 \texttt{\textbackslash}f2 \texttt{\textbackslash}e7 14
  \texttt{\textbackslash}g2 \texttt{\textbackslash}b8 15 \texttt{\textbackslash}d3 \texttt{\textbackslash}c6 with equality,
  N. Kosintseva-Edouard, Cap d'Agde rapid 2010) 11 fxe5 (11 \texttt{\textbackslash}xe6 \texttt{\textbackslash}c5!
  12 \texttt{\textbackslash}xf8 \texttt{\textbackslash}g4) 11...\texttt{\textbackslash}c5 12 \texttt{\textbackslash}h3 \texttt{\textbackslash}e7
  13 0-0 0-0 Black nonetheless stands well, Atlas-Luther, Austrian Team Ch 2001/2.
  
  9...\texttt{\textbackslash}cxd4 \texttt{(D)}
  
  \begin{figure}[h]
    \centering
    \includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{diag1.png}
    \caption{Diagram 1}
  \end{figure}

  10 \texttt{\textbackslash}cxd4
  
  10 \texttt{\textbackslash}exd4 fxe5 11 fxe5 (11 \texttt{\textbackslash}xe6
  \texttt{\textbackslash}c5) 11...\texttt{\textbackslash}c5 (11...\texttt{\textbackslash}dxe5? 12 \texttt{\textbackslash}xe5
  \texttt{\textbackslash}xe5 13 \texttt{\textbackslash}h5+) 12 \texttt{\textbackslash}e3!? (12 \texttt{\textbackslash}b5
  \texttt{\textbackslash}e7 is equal) 12...\texttt{\textbackslash}xb2 13 \texttt{\textbackslash}b5 de-
  serves attention – it is possible that the assessment of 7...\texttt{\textbackslash}b6 as a whole
  hinges on this line.

  10...\texttt{\textbackslash}e7 11 \texttt{\textbackslash}c3
  
  Other continuations are less logi-
  cal:

  a) 11 g3 0-0 12 \texttt{\textbackslash}g2 (after 12
  \texttt{\textbackslash}h3?! fxe5, White has reason to re-
  gret the tempo spent on 9 a3) 12...a5!? 13 b3 \texttt{\textbackslash}a7 gives Black the initiative.
  
  b) 11 h4 0-0 12 \texttt{\textbackslash}h3 \texttt{\textbackslash}a5?! 13 b4
  \texttt{\textbackslash}c4 14 \texttt{\textbackslash}c3 \texttt{\textbackslash}c7 is unclear.
  
  c) 11 b4 (still delaying piece develop-
  ment) 11...0-0 12 \texttt{\textbackslash}b1 (12 \texttt{\textbackslash}d3 \texttt{\textbackslash}c7
  gives Black the initiative; 12 \texttt{\textbackslash}c3?! or
  12 \texttt{\textbackslash}g3 may run into 12...fxe5 13 dxe5
  \texttt{\textbackslash}dxe5) 12...fxe5 13 fxe5 (Black takes
  the initiative after 13 dxe5 a5 14 b5 a4)
  13...a5 14 \texttt{\textbackslash}f4 (14 b5!? \texttt{\textbackslash}xf3 15 gxh3
  \texttt{\textbackslash}h4+ 16 \texttt{\textbackslash}g3 \texttt{\textbackslash}xd4 17 f4) 14...axb4
  15 \texttt{\textbackslash}xe6 \texttt{\textbackslash}xf3 16 \texttt{\textbackslash}xf3 \texttt{\textbackslash}dxe5 17
  \texttt{\textbackslash}xd5 \texttt{\textbackslash}h8! and Black can again be
  happy.
  
  11...fxe5 12 \texttt{\textbackslash}a4
  
  Or 12 fxe5 (12 dxe5 \texttt{\textbackslash}c5) 12...0-0
  13 \texttt{\textbackslash}a4 \texttt{\textbackslash}c7.
  
  12...\texttt{\textbackslash}c7 13 fxe5 0-0 14 \texttt{\textbackslash}e2 \texttt{\textbackslash}b6
  
  The game is double-edged.

  6.2.2

  7...\texttt{\textbackslash}e7 \texttt{(D)}

  \begin{figure}[h]
    \centering
    \includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{diag2.png}
    \caption{Diagram 2}
  \end{figure}

  \end{itemize}
Black is in no hurry with the queen sortie ...\textit{\textbf{b6}}.

\textbf{8} \textit{\textbf{g}f3} \textit{\textbf{0-0}}

8...f6 is also possible, but after 9 g3, 9 a3, 9 h4 or 9 a\textit{\textbf{e}3} the reply 9...\textit{\textbf{0-0}} seems best in all cases; therefore it is logical to castle right away.

\textbf{9} \textit{\textbf{a}e3}!?

White reacts to the change of the situation: he makes use of the absence of the black queen from b6 to plant his bishop on the vulnerable g1-a7 diagonal, also strengthening his piece control of the d4-square.

Other standard moves offer Black additional possibilities:

\textbf{a) 9} \textit{\textbf{g}g3}?! f6 (9...\textit{\textbf{b}b6} is an alternative) 10 \textit{\textbf{d}d3} cxd4 11 cxd4 fxe5 (or 11...\textit{\textbf{b}b6}?! 12 a3 g6) 12 dxe5 \textit{\textbf{b}b4}+ gave Black strong play in the game Musakaev-Hou Yifan, Khanty-Mansiisk 2009.

\textbf{b) 9} h4 f6 10 \textit{\textbf{h}h3} (10 \textit{\textbf{g}g3} can be met by 10...\textit{\textbf{b}b6}; 10 a3 is also possible) 10...cxd4 (or 10...b6) 11 cxd4 (11 \textit{\textbf{d}exd4} \textit{\textbf{c}c5}) 11...b5?!

\textbf{c) 9} g3 and now 9...\textit{\textbf{b}b6} 10 \textit{\textbf{h}h3} cxd4 11 cxd4 f6 12 \textit{\textbf{e}xe6}+ \textit{\textbf{h}h8} 13 exf6 (not 13 \textit{\textbf{d}xd5}? fxe5 14 fxe5 \textit{\textbf{d}dx5})! 13...\textit{\textbf{d}xf6} 14 \textit{\textbf{a}xa8} \textit{\textbf{b}b4}+ and 15...\textit{\textbf{d}axc8} gives Black enough compensation for the pawn. This rather well-known variation can arise from several move-orders. The other standard reaction, 9...cxd4 10 \textit{\textbf{d}exd4} (10 cxd4 can be answered with 10...f6, intending 11 \textit{\textbf{g}g2} \textit{\textbf{b}b6}, while 11 \textit{\textbf{h}h3}?! fxe5 12 \textit{\textbf{e}xe6}+ \textit{\textbf{h}h8} gives Black the initiative) 10...\textit{\textbf{c}c5} (or 10...\textit{\textbf{b}b6}) is enough for approximate equality, but it appears more interesting to play

9...\textit{\textbf{f}5}?! or 9...b5?! 10 a3 (10 \textit{\textbf{h}h3} b4) 10...a5, seeking the initiative.

\textbf{d) 9} a3 f6 (9...a5 is more common, although it is not in the least obligatory to impede the advance b4) 10 b4 cxd4 (10...fxe5?!) 11 \textit{\textbf{d}exd4} (11 cxd4 can be met by 11...b5?! 12 \textit{\textbf{c}c3} a6 or 11...\textit{\textbf{b}b6}, as considered in note 'c' to White's 11th move in Section 6.2.1) 11...\textit{\textbf{d}xd4} 12 cxd4 (12 \textit{\textbf{d}exd4} \textit{\textbf{b}b6}) 12...f5 with good prospects for Black on the queenside.

\textbf{9...\textit{\textbf{f}6}}

The traditional approach. 9...f5 10 \textit{\textbf{g}g1} b5 11 a3 \textit{\textbf{b}b6} 12 \textit{\textbf{f}2} c4 deserves attention, as it leads to double-edged wing play, Negi-Nguyen Ngoc, World Junior Ch, Gaziantep 2008.

\textbf{10} g3

After 10 exf6 \textit{\textbf{d}xf6} 11 dxc5 \textit{\textbf{g}g4} 12 \textit{\textbf{g}g1} (12 \textit{\textbf{d}4} b6 13 cxb6 \textit{\textbf{d}xd4}) 12...e5 Black seizes the initiative.

\textbf{10...\textit{\textbf{b}b6}}

Nevertheless! It is also quite good (and in the spirit of the ideas behind 7...\textit{\textbf{e}e7}) to play 10...fxe5 11 dxe5 b5, advancing the pawn-mass.

\textbf{11} \textit{\textbf{d}d2} fxe5

11...cxd4 12 \textit{\textbf{d}exd4} fxe5 13 \textit{\textbf{d}xe6} d4 14 \textit{\textbf{f}2} \textit{\textbf{e}e8} (Negi) leads to complications.

\textbf{12} dxe5 \textit{\textbf{d}d8}!?

Black intends the pawn-break ...d4. Kamsky-Ding Liren, Moscow 2011 went 13 \textit{\textbf{h}h3} d4 14 \textit{\textbf{f}2} (14 cxd4 cxd4 15 \textit{\textbf{d}fxd4} \textit{\textbf{d}xe5}) 14...d3 (14...dxc3 15 \textit{\textbf{w}xc3} \textit{\textbf{f}8}) 15 \textit{\textbf{c}c1} with unclear play. 13 \textit{\textbf{g}g2} d4 14 cxd4 cxd4 15 \textit{\textbf{d}fxd4} \textit{\textbf{b}4}! 16 \textit{\textbf{c}c3} \textit{\textbf{d}xe5} 17 \textit{\textbf{d}xc6} \textit{\textbf{d}d2}, with equality, is also interesting.
6.3

5 f4 (D)

This is the most popular and promising move.

5...c5 6 ∆f3

The pawn exchange 6 dxc5 assists Black’s development: 6...∆c6 7 a3 (7 ∆f3 does not allow White to play ∇g4, and 7 ∆d3 is met by 7...∆xc5) 7...∆xc5 8 ∇g4 0-0 9 ∆d3 (9 ∆f3 can be met by the solid 9...f5 10 ∇h3 ∆c7 or 9...∆b6! 10 ∆d1 a5, with the initiative) and now 9...∆e7!? 10 ∇b5 f6 11 ∇h4 h6 12 exf6 ∇xf6 13 0-0-0 e5 14 fxe5 ∆xe5 15 ∆f3 ∆xd3+ 16 ∇xd3 b5 (an improvement over the century older Spielmann-Alapin, Munich 1909) 17 ∇he1 ∇b7 gave Black the initiative in Short-Morozevich, Reggio Emilia 2010. 9...∆xg1!? 10 ∇h3 h6 11 ∇xg1 ∆c5 is worth considering too, while there is another good historical example: 9...f5 10 ∇h3 ∆b6 (10...∆e7!?) 11 g4?! ∆c5 12 gxf5 ∆xd3+ 13 ∇xd3 ∇xf5 and Black had the advantage in the game Tartakower-P.Johner, Nuremberg 1906.

White’s piece deployment was proposed by Boleslavsky: the e5-point receives pawn support, while d4 is protected by pieces. Black has several possibilities to seek counterplay. We consider the following:

6.3.1: 7...cxd4 8 ∆xd4 ∆c5 74

6.3.2: 7...cxd4 8 ∆xd4 ∇b6 76

6.3.3: 7...∆e7 78

6.3.1

7...cxd4 8 ∆xd4 ∆c5

Now the pieces come into close contact, and pawn-play takes a back seat.

9 ∇d2

Other moves give White little hope of an advantage:

a) 9 ∇b5 can be met by 9...∆c7 10 ∇d2 (10 0-0 a6) 10...a6 or 9...0-0!? 10 ∇d2 ∆xd4 11 ∇xd4 a6.

b) 9 ∇e2 ∇b6 10 ∇a4 ∇a5+ 11 c3 (11 ∇c3 invites a repetition) 11...∆xd4 12 ∇xd4 (12 ∇xc5 ∇xe2 13 ∇xe2 ∇xc5 14 b4 ∇a4) 12...∆xd4 13 ∇xd4 b6 with equal chances.
c) 9 a3 \( \textit{b}6 \) 10 \( \textit{a}4 \) (after 10 \( \textit{c}b5 \) \( \textit{c}xd4 \) 11 \( \textit{c}xd4 \) 0-0, 12 \( b4 \) \( \textit{c}xd4 \) 13 \( \textit{w}xd4 \) a5 leads to equality, while in the case of 12 \( \textit{c}xc5 \) \( \textit{w}xc5 \)?! 13 \( \textit{e}2 \) f6 Black takes over the initiative) 10...\( \textit{w}a5+ \) 11 \( c3 \) (or 11 \( b4 \) \( \textit{w}xa4 \) 12 \( \textit{c}b5 \) \( \textit{c}xd4 \) 13 \( \textit{c}xa4 \) \( \textit{c}xe3 \) 11...\( \textit{c}xd4 \) 12 \( \textit{c}xd4 \) \( \textit{c}xd4 \) 13 \( \textit{w}xd4 \) (13 \( b4 \) \( \textit{f}3+ \) 13...0-0!? (13...b6 is possible too) 14 \( \textit{d}d3 \) b6 leads to equality.

9...0-0 (D)

Now White’s decision about where to castle will define the nature of the middlegame struggle.

10 0-0-0

This is the usual choice. After other moves, Black doesn’t run into particular difficulties:

a) 10 \( \textit{e}2 \) a6 11 0-0 \( \textit{c}xd4 \) 12 \( \textit{c}xd4 \) \( \textit{w}b6 \) 13 \( \textit{c}xc5 \) \( \textit{c}xc5 \) (13...\( \textit{w}xc5+!?) 14 \( \textit{w}d4 \) \( \textit{a}6 \).

b) The immediate 10 \( \textit{ce}2 \) is premature due to 10...\( \textit{w}e7 \) and 11...\( f6 \).

c) 10 \( g3\)!? (reserving the e2-square for the c3-knight) 10...a6 11 \( \textit{g}2 \) (11 \( \textit{ce}2 \) \( \textit{w}b6 \) 11...\( \textit{c}xd4 \) 12 \( \textit{c}xd4 \) \( \textit{c}xd4 \) 13 \( \textit{w}xd4 \) b5 14 0-0 \( \textit{b}8 \).

d) 10 \( \textit{w}f2\)!? a6 11 \( \textit{c}e2 \) (11 0-0-0 transposes to note ‘d’ to White’s 11th move; 11 \( \textit{d}3\)?! is poor in view of 11...\( \textit{w}b6 \), while 11 \( \textit{c}xc6 \) \( \textit{c}xe3 \) 12 \( \textit{c}xd8 \) \( \textit{xf}2+ \) 13 \( \textit{w}f2 \) \( \textit{c}xd8 \) leads to a level position) 11...\( \textit{c}xd4 \) 12 \( \textit{c}xd4 \) \( \textit{w}c7 \) 13 0-0 b5.

After the text-move (10 0-0-0), an interesting battle lies ahead: White retains control of the centre, and both players will attack the enemy king.

10...\( a6 \)

This is the standard way to seek counterplay: Black plans to exchange on d4 and then advance his b-pawn.

Zviagintsev’s 10...\( \textit{c}xd4 \) 11 \( \textit{c}xd4 \) \( \textit{w}a5\)!? is well worth considering: Black avoids spending a tempo on \(...a6\), seeking to act in a more economical way. Then:

a) After 12 \( \textit{c}e3 \) \( \textit{b}8 \) 13 \( \textit{b}1 \) b5 14 \( \textit{c}e2 \) b4! (exchanging queens with 14...\( \textit{w}xd2\)!! 15 \( \textit{c}xd2 \) is not in Black’s interest) 15 \( \textit{d}d4 \) \( \textit{c}xd4 \) 16 \( \textit{w}xd4 \) \( \textit{a}6 \) 17 \( f5 \) \( \textit{f}c8 \) 18 \( fxe6 \) \( fxe6 \) an unclear position arose in Svidler-Zviagintsev, Moscow 2010.

b) 12 \( h4 \) \( \textit{b}8 \) 13 \( \textit{h}3 \) b5 led to an even sharper battle in Shirov-Grachev, Lublin 2011: 14 \( f5 \)! (White is willing to make major sacrifices to break through to the black king, but it is only enough to draw) 14...\( \textit{c}xd4 \) (14...b4 15 \( f6 \) \( \textit{c}xd4 \) may be more accurate) 15 \( f6 \) b4 16 \( \textit{w}g5 \) \( \textit{f}5 \) 17 \( \textit{d}3 \) \( h6 \) 18 \( \textit{w}xf5 \) \( \textit{hxg}5 \) 19 \( \textit{hxg}5 \) \( \textit{bxc}3 \) and the game ended with perpetual check.

c) 12 \( \textit{b}1 \) \( \textit{b}8 \) 13 \( \textit{b}5\)!? appears tame by comparison with the lines we have just seen, but might promise a little more. 13...\( \textit{w}xd2 \) 14 \( \textit{c}xd2 \) a6 15
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\[ \text{Q}d6 \text{Qxd4} 16 \text{Zxd4} f6 17 \text{exf6} \text{Qxf6} 18 \text{A}d3! \] (18 \text{Qxc8} \text{Qxc8} permits Black easier equality, Zelčič-Zviagintsev, Rijeka 2010) 18...b5 (18...\text{A}d7 19 c4) 19 \text{Qxc8} \text{Qxc8} 20 a4 looks like tedious prose, in which Black must (alas!) defend himself in a slightly worse ending.

11 \text{Q}b3

This move leads to the most complicated struggle. However, other moves also have their points of interest:

a) 11 \text{b}b1 \text{Qxd4} 12 \text{Qxd4} b5 13 \text{W}e3 \text{W}c7 14 \text{A}d3 \text{Qxd4} 15 \text{W}xd4 \text{Q}b8 gives Black counterplay.

b) 11 \text{Q}ce2 \text{Qa}5!? (11...\text{W}e7 12 \text{Q}b3 \text{Q}xe3 13 \text{W}xe3 f6 is another possibility) 12 \text{Q}g3 (12 b3 \text{W}b6) 12...b5 13 b3 \text{Q}b8 and Black holds the initiative.

c) 11 h4 \text{Qxd4} 12 \text{Q}xd4 b5 13 \text{h}3 (13 h5 b4 14 \text{Q}a4 \text{Q}xd4 15 \text{W}xd4 \text{Q}a5) 13...b4 14 \text{Q}a4 \text{Q}xd4 15 \text{W}xd4 a5 16 \text{Q}b5 (16 h5 \text{Q}a6 and 16 c4 \text{Q}b7 are also OK for Black) 16...\text{Q}b8 17 \text{A}d3 \text{Q}b6 (17...\text{Q}b7??) 18 \text{Q}c5 \text{Q}d7 is equal.

d) 11 \text{W}f2 (planning an advantageous regrouping by \text{A}d3 and \text{Q}ce2) 11...\text{Q}xd4 (11...\text{Q}xd4 12 \text{Q}xd4 b6!?, with the idea 13 \text{A}d3?! f6!, also deserves attention) 12 \text{Q}xd4 b5 13 \text{h}3 (or 13 \text{A}d3 b4 14 \text{Q}e2 a5) 13...\text{W}a5!? 14 \text{Q}bl b4 15 \text{Q}e2 \text{W}c7 16 \text{Q}d4 \text{Q}xd4 17 \text{Q}xd4 a5 is unclear, Szelag-Lamprecht, Germany (team event) 2007/8.

11...\text{Q}b4 12 \text{A}d3

After 12 a3 \text{Q}e7 13 \text{A}d3 b5 the a-pawn is a target for Black’s counterattack.

12...b5 13 g4

13 \text{H}f1 \text{Q}a5 is also unclear, Hou Yifan-Nepomniashchy, Wijk aan Zee 2008.

13...\text{b}7 14 \text{H}gl \text{Q}c8 15 \text{A}g3 \text{Q}e8

Both sides have chances, Nijboer-Glek, French Team Ch 2003.

6.3.2

7...\text{cxd4} 8 \text{Q}xd4 \text{W}b6 (D)

[Diagram]

Black is willing to complicate the game immediately.

9 \text{W}d2

To keep the initiative, White needs to sacrifice the pawn. We already know from Section 6.3.1 that 9 \text{A}e2 \text{Q}c5 and 9 a3 \text{Q}c5 are safe for Black, which leaves us with just a few other continuations that we need to know about:

a) 9 \text{Q}a4 \text{W}a5+ and now 10 \text{Q}c3 maintains equality, while White should avoid 10 c3? \text{Q}xd4.

b) 9 \text{Q}bl?! \text{Q}c5 10 \text{Q}a4 \text{W}a5+ 11 c3 \text{Q}xd4! 12 \text{Q}xd4 \text{Q}xd4 13 \text{W}xd4 (13 b4 \text{Q}f3+) 13...b6 gives Black the initiative.

c) 9 \text{Q}c5 a6 (9...\text{Q}c5!? can also be tried) 10 \text{Q}f5 \text{Q}c5 11 \text{Q}bd6+ \text{W}f8 12
STEINITZ VARIATION

\[ Wh5 \Box d8 13 \Box xg7 \Box xe3 14 \Box xe6+ (or 14 Wh6 \Box e7 15 \Box gf5+) 14...fxe6 15 \Box h6+ with a draw. \]

9...Wxb2 10 \Box b1 Wa3 11 \Box b5

This more attractive than 11 \Box db5 \
A5 12 \Box xd5 Wxd2+ 13 \Box xd2 exd5 14 \Box c7+ \Box d8 15 \Box xa8 b6 or 11 \Box b3 \
A5 12 \Box b5 \Box c7. White has also tried 11 \Box cb5 Wxa2 12 \Box b3, but after 12...Wa1+ 13 \Box e2 \Box b8 (13...\Box d8?) 14 \Box c7+ \Box d8 15 \Box xe6+ his attack is only enough for a 


11...\Box xd4 12 \Box xd4 a6!?

This is an interesting alternative to 

12...\Box b4 13 \Box b3 Wa5, which has been 

more extensively examined in practice.

13 \Box xd7+

After the immediate 13 \Box b3 \Box e7, 

White can offer a piece sacrifice by 14 

\Box a4 (14 \Box xd7+ can now be answered 
by 14...Wxd7, while 14 \Box d3 permits 14...Wh4+, and White should defi-

nitely avoid 14 0-0? axb5 15 \Box xb5 \
Wd8 16 \Box c3 \Box a5 17 \Box c7+ \Box d8 18 
\Box xa8 Wxa8 19 f5 b6, as in Chepa-

rinov-Vallejo Pons, Dresden Olympi-
adiad 2008), when the obliging 14...b5?! 

15 \Box xb5 axb5 16 \Box xb5 \Box d8 17 \Box c3 
\Box a5 18 \Box c7+ \Box d8 19 \Box xa8 Wxa8 20 
0-0 \Box a4 was unclear in Topalov-Naka-
mura, Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 2011. 

Black should consider declining the 
sacrifice with the calm 14...Wd8, which 
looks good for him.

13...\Box xd7 (D)

14 \Box b3

The weaker 14 \Box xb7 can be met by 

14...\Box b4.

14...\Box e7

Black has no choice as 14...Wa5?? 
fails to 15 \Box b6.

15 \Box xb7 Wh4+!?

It is useful to divert the white bishop 

from the centre.

16 \Box f2

16 g3 Wh3 is unclear, and 16 \Box f2 is 

answered by 16...\Box e7, when 17 \Box xh4 
\Box xh4+ 18 \Box d2 \Box d8 19 \Box h1 \Box c6 20 
\Box b8 \Box xb8 21 \Box xb8 0-0 was level in 
Shirov-Morozevich, Biel 2011.

16...Wd8 17 \Box b6

White cannot make progress after 

17 0-0 \Box c8 18 \Box b3 (18 \Box fb1 \Box c5) 
18...Wc4.

17...Wc8 18 \Box c7 Wd8!

Black is perilously close to the 

abyss, but his resources appear suffi-


cient. Now:

a) The careless 19 0-0? \Box a7 20 
\Box xa7 Wxc7 21 \Box d4 \Box c5 leads to 

hardship for White.

b) 19 \Box d4 and here:

b1) 19...\Box a3 is an interesting idea, 
although in the variation 20 \Box b1 \Box e7 
21 c4! \Box c8 22 \Box b7 \Box b4+ 23 \Box f2 
\Box xb6 24 \Box xb6 \Box c5 25 \Box d1! Black 
stands slightly worse.
b2) After 19...Ec8 it is more difficult for White to prove an advantage:
20 Ec6 Wh4+ 21 g3 We7 and 20 a7 We7!? both yield unclear prospects.

6.3.3
7...Ec7 (D)

This somewhat nonchalant-looking move has recently become rather fashionable.
Black has no objection to the bishop reaching c5 in two moves (after 8 dxc5 Ec5),
given that the white knight remains on f3 rather than being centralized on d4.

8 Fd2
The attempt to economize on the queen move by 8 Fc2 0-0 9 0-0 gives
Black a good game after 9...f6!? 10 exf6 Fxf6 11 Fh1 (11 Fd5 Fxd4 12
Fxd4 cxd4 13 Fxd4 Fd7 led to equality in Pacher-Prusikin, Chur 2010)
11...Fd6!? (11...Ff4 is equal) 12 g3 (12 dxc5 Fg4) 12...cxd4 13 Fxd4 (13
Fxd4 e5) 13...Fxd4 14 Fxd4 a6, as in Kokarev-Maslak, Serpukhov 2008.

The variations 8 g3 0-0 9 Fg2!? (9
Ff2 Fb8!??) 9...b5, 8 Fd3 Fb6 and 8
Fc2 Fb6 look even less attractive for
White.

8...0-0 9 Fc2
The plan with queenside castling is less effective:
a) The immediate 9 0-0-0?! allows
Black to begin a very promising attack
on the white king by 9...c4! 10 Fb1 (or
10 f5 b5 11 Fxe6 Fxe6 12 Fxb5 Fb8
13 Fd6 Fxd6 14 exd6 Ff6, Szela-
Gurevich, Warsaw 2007) 10...b5
(10...Fb8?!) 11 Fxb5 Fb8 12 Fd6
Fxd6 13 cxd6 Ff6 14 Fc1 Fc7 15
Fxe5 Fd7 16 a3 Fxc2!, as in M. Petrov-A. David, Kavala 2008.

b) After 9 dxc5 Fxc5 (9...Fxc5?!
10 0-0-0 b6) 10 0-0-0 Fb5, White
should avoid 11 Fd4?! Fxd4 12 Fxd4
Fb8 as it leaves Black a tempo up in
comparison with Zviagintsev’s line in
Section 6.3.1 (note to Black’s 10th
move), but 11 Fxc5! Fxc5 leads to
sharp play with chances for both sides.
For example: 12 h4 (12 Fb1 Fd7)
12...Fb8! 13 Fc3 (13 h5 b5) 13...Fd7
14 h5 Ffc8 15 h6 g6 16 Fb1 Fb4! 17
a3 Fxc2 18 Fxc2 b5 19 Fd4 Fd4
f4 gives Black the initiative, Kurnosov-
Kotsur, Moscow 2011.

c) With the text-move, White pre-
presses to castle kingside. A more active
bishop development by 9 Fd3 again
allows an immediate assault upon the
centre: 9...f6 (9...a6!?) 10 0-0 f6) 10
exf6 Fxf6 11 Fc2 cxd4 12 Fxd4
Fxd4 13 Fxd4 e5 with an equal position,
Efimenko-Goloshchapov, Bun-
desliga 2006/7.

d) It remains to add that the tempo-
rizing move 9 a3 makes no particular
sense: 9...a6 10 Fc2 (10 dxc5 can be
answered by 10...:\texttt{xc5} or 10...:\texttt{xc5} 10...b5 11 0-0 \texttt{b7} is unclear, while Black can also play by analogy with our main line: 9...b6!? 10 \texttt{d3} f6 11 exf6 \texttt{xf6} with equality, Macieja-Morozevich, St Petersburg 1997.

9...b6!? (D)

It is this move that gives 7...:\texttt{e7} independent importance. Instead 9...a6 10 0-0 b5 leads to a more standard formation.

\textbf{10 \texttt{d1}}

It is still not safe for White to play 10 0-0-0? c4, while 10 0-0 gives Black a wider choice:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) 10...f6 11 dxc5 (or 11 \texttt{d1}?! cxd4 12 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 13 \texttt{xd4} fxe5) 11...\texttt{xc5} (not 11...bxc5? 12 \texttt{xd5}, while 11...fxe5 12 \texttt{xd5} \texttt{xc5} 13 \texttt{ad1} offers White the initiative) 12 \texttt{b5} \texttt{b7} 13 exf6 \texttt{xf6} 14 \texttt{xc6} \texttt{xc6} 15 \texttt{d4} leaves White's position preferable (T.Kosintseva).
  \item b) 10...f5!? 11 exf6 (11 \texttt{d1} cxd4 12 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 13 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{c5} is unclear) 11...\texttt{xf6} 12 \texttt{b5} (12 \texttt{h1} \texttt{b7} 12...\texttt{c7} with chances for both sides, who each have their trumps in the forthcoming battle.
  \item c) 10...\texttt{b7} 11 \texttt{d1} (11 \texttt{ad1} f5?!?) 11...cxd4 12 \texttt{xd4} transposes to the main line below.
\end{itemize}

The immediate knight retreat to d1 somewhat restricts Black's possibilities – but that is all.

\textbf{10...cxd4}

Otherwise White will play 11 c3.

\textbf{11 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{b7} (D)}

\textbf{12 0-0}

Now 12...\texttt{c5} 13 \texttt{f2} \texttt{d7} led to approximate equality in Koepke-Dizardar, Austrian Team Ch 2010/11, while Black could also consider 12...\texttt{xd4}?! 13 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{b8} 14 \texttt{e3} \texttt{c6} 15 c3 \texttt{c8} 16 \texttt{b5} \texttt{xd4}, as in Zherebukh-Sethuraman, Kirishi 2010.
7 Classical French

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 c6 4 g5 a7

Black unpins his knight, giving White little choice but to advance the e-pawn, since 5 d3? fails to 5...dxe4 6 xxe4 cxd4 7 xxe7 cxf2.

5 e5

There are two minor alternatives. Firstly, 5 exd5 exd5 (5...xld5!? is possible too) transposes to the Exchange Variation (Section 3.3). Anderssen’s 5 xf6 xf6 6 f3 promises nothing. After 6...c5 7 b5+ (7 exd5 0-0!?) 7...d7!! 8 exd5 (8 xd7+ xd7 9 exd5 cxd4 10 xd4 b6) 8...xb5 9 xb5 0-0 White cannot hope for an advantage, while 6...0-0!? looks even more promising for Black; he meets 7 d2 with 7...c5, while after 7 e5 e7 8 d3 c5 9 h4 cxd4! 10 xh7+ xh7 11 g5+ h6 he parries White’s threats without great difficulty.

5...fd7 (D)

Now 6 e3 makes no sense, while the gambit 6 h4!? is discussed at the end of the chapter in Section 7.3.

The main line is 6 x7 7xe7. This leads to a position that is somewhat similar to the Steinitz Variation (Chapter 6), but the exchange of the dark-squared bishops changes matters significantly. From a good vs bad bishop perspective, it appears to benefit White, but on the other hand Black is immediately ready to castle and to carry out the freeing move...f6.

- In Section 7.1 we discuss alternatives to 7 f4. None of them poses any real danger to Black.
- Section 7.2 is devoted to the main continuation, 7 f4. While White can choose to castle on either wing, the kingside offers him better chances of maintaining a slight edge.

7.1

6 x7 7xe7 (D)

This is the basic position for the Classical French. The first point to note is that Black will not be able to play 7...c5 next move in view of the unpleasant reply 8 b5 (a consequence of the exchange of dark-squared bishops). So, for one move at least, White does not have to worry about an attack
on his pawn-centre, and so has a wide choice of moves at this point. We examine the main line, 7 f4, in Section 7.2. Here we discuss the following:

7.1.1: 7 \( \text{d}f3 \) 81
7.1.2: 7 \( \text{w}d2 \) 81
7.1.3: 7 \( \text{d}b5 \) 82
7.1.4: 7 \( \text{w}h5 \) 83

7.1.1

7 \( \text{d}f3 \)

White simply develops his pieces, intending \( \text{d}d3 \) and an exchange of pawns when Black eventually plays \( ...c5 \). 7 \( \text{d}d3 \) is a less accurate move-order because Black can then consider playing \( 7...\text{w}b4 \) 8 \( \text{e}e2 \) \( \text{w}xb2 \) 9 0-0 a6.

\( 7...0-0 \) 8 \( \text{d}d3 \) c5 9 dxc5

9 \( \text{b}5 \)! is bad in view of 9...c4, while after 9 0-0 cxd4!? (9...\( \text{c}6 \) is also possible) 10 \( \text{b}5 \) (10 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \)) 10...\( \text{c}6 \) 11 \( \text{e}e1 \) f6 12 exf6 \( \text{x}f6 \) 13 \( \text{w}e2 \) (or 13 \( \text{b}xd4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 14 \( \text{xd}4 \) e5) 13...\( \text{e}8 \) White does not succeed in keeping a grip on the e5-square, since 14 \( \text{e}5 \) is met by 14...a6.

\( 9...\text{c}6 \) 10 0-0

10 \( \text{w}e2 \) is less accurate because after 10...\( \text{xc}5 \) he has little choice but to play 11 0-0 in any case, as 11 0-0-0?! a6 gives Black the initiative. Black can also play the unclear 10...f6!? 11 exf6 \( \text{x}f6 \) 12 0-0-0 \( \text{w}xc5 \).

10...\( \text{xc}5 \) 11 \( \text{e}e1 \) a6

Black takes control of the important b5-square and is ready for further action with ...b5 and/or ...f6. The game is approximately level.

7.1.2

7 \( \text{w}d2 \) (D)

This move can transpose to Section 7.2.2 after 7...0-0 8 f4 c5 9 \( \text{f}3 \) (or 9 dxc5). Here we shall discuss it in connection with another idea.

\( 7...0-0 \) 8 \( \text{d}1 \)!

This attempt to maintain the pawn-centre is artificial and unsuccessful.

8...f6!?

Black's position is already slightly preferable; the only question is which sequence of moves is most profitable for him.

9 f4
It is entirely illogical to play 9 exf6 \( \text{exf6} 10 \text{gxf3} \) (or 10 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{c6} \)), when both 10...c5 and 10...\( \text{c6} \) are promising.

9...c5 10 c3 cxd4 11 cxd4 fxe5 12 fxe5

12 dxe5 can be answered by 12...g5, continuing to dismantle White’s centre.  
12...\( \text{c6} \) 13 h4

Black threatened 13...\( \text{wh4}+ \), and White should not allow the obvious exchange sacrifice 13 \( \text{f3}?! \) \( \text{xf3} \) 14 gxf3 \( \text{wh4}+ \), as in Von Gottschall-Tarrasch, Frankfurt 1887.  
13...\( \text{b6} \) 14 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d7} \)

Black has the initiative.

7.1.3
7 \( \text{b5} \) (D)

This is known as the Alapin Variation. By threatening to invade on c7, White gains a tempo for the move c3. Several other forms of this idea are possible, as we shall see in Section 7.2.

7...\( \text{b6} \) 8 c3

The queenside skirmish 8 a4 a6 9 a5 axb6 10 axb6 \( \text{xa1} \) 11 \( \text{xa1} \) c6! 12 \( \text{a8} \) \( \text{b4}+ \) 13 c3 \( \text{xb2} \) (13...\( \text{a4} \) also leads to equality) 14 \( \text{e2} \) b4 15 \( \text{xb8} \) 0-0 must in the long run end in a draw.

Other moves fail to derive much benefit from the knight manoeuvre: 8 \( \text{d3} \) a6 9 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 10 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{b4} \) and 8 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{b4}+ \) 9 c3 (9 \( \text{d1}?! \) 0-0) 9...\( \text{xb2} \) 10 \( \text{d1} \) 0-0 11 \( \text{d3} \) (11 \( \text{d2} \) can lead to a repetition) 11...a6 are unclear, while 8 \( \text{f3} \) a6 9 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{c6} \) (9...\( \text{d6} \)?! 10 \( \text{d3} \) c5) 10 \( \text{d2} \) f6 leads to equal chances.

8...a6 9 \( \text{a3} \)

White has reached his goal, but the knight moves have also cost him time.  
9...f6!?

This attack on the spearhead of White’s pawn-centre looks more effective here than the standard 9...c5, as White has already invested considerable resources in supporting his d4-pawn.  
10 \( \text{d3} \)

The exchange 10 exf6 gxf6 (or 10...\( \text{xf6} \)) suits Black fine, and 10 \( \text{f3} \) is rather well met by 10...\( \text{c6} \). After 10 f4, besides transposing to our main line by 10...0-0 11 \( \text{f3} \) fxe5 12 fxe5 c5 13 \( \text{d3} \), Black can also initiate complications with 10...fxe5 11 \( \text{h5}+ \) (11 fxe5?! \( \text{h4}+ \)) 11...\( \text{d8} \) followed by 12...\( \text{a4} \).

10...0-0

Here the gambit line 10...fxe5 11 \( \text{h5}+ \) \( \text{d8} \) 12 dxe5 \( \text{a4} \) 13 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 14 \( \text{x} \text{b2} \) \( \text{xa3} \) (Thomas-Spielmann, Marienbad 1925) is riskier for Black.
11 f4 fxe5 12 fxe5 c5 13 Qf3 Qc6 14 0-0
14 Qc2 cxd4 (14...d7!? 15 0-0 Qe8) 15 cxd4 Qb4 16 Qxb4 Qxb4+ 17 Qd2 Qxd2+ 18 Qxd2 Qc4+ leads to an equal ending.

14...cxd4 15 cxd4 Qb4

The game is approximately level.

7.1.4
7 Wh5

White places his queen aggressively, but greatly weakens his control of the centre. After the analogous move 7 Wg4!!, the play can take on an almost forced character: 7...0-0 8 Qf3 (8 Qd3 may be met by 8...c5 9 Qf3 or 8...f5!? 9 exf6 Qxf6 10 Wh4 h6) 8...c5 9 Qd3 and now 9...cxd4 10 Qh7+ (10 Qb5 gives Black a choice between 10...f5 11 Wg5 Qc5 and 10...f6 11 Wh4 h6 12 0-0 Qc6 13 exf6 Qxf6, with equal play) 10...Qxh7 11 Wh5+ Qg8 12 Qg5 Wxg5 13 Wxg5 dxc3 14 bxc3 Qc6 15 f4 f6 leads to a double-edged position with unbalanced material. If he wishes, Black can avoid these complications by continuing 9...h6 10 0-0 (10 0-0-0?! Qc6 11 Qhe1 c4 12 Qf1 b5 gives Black the initiative) 10...Qc6 or 9...f6 10 exf6 (10 Wh4 h6) 10...Qxf6 11 Wh4 Qc6 with a level game.

7...0-0 8 f4 (D)
The same position may be achieved via the move-order 7 f4 0-0 8 Wh5.

The adventurous 8 Qf3?! (8 Qd3?! g6 9 Wh6 c5 10 Qf3 is the same) 8...c5 9 Qd3 (9 dxc5 is more circumspect, but inconsistent with White’s last few moves) 9...g6 10 Wh6 cxd4 11 Qb5 Qc6 12 Qg5 (12 Qc7 Qb8 13 Qg5 f6

14 Qgxe6 Qf7) 12...f6 13 exf6 Qxf6 led to an opening catastrophe for White in Duras-Spielmann, San Sebastian 1911. His attack must be built on a more reliable foundation.

8...c5 9 Qf3
9 Qd3 g6 10 Wh6 cxd4 (10...f6!? 11 Qb5 Qc6 is possible too) 11 Qb5 f6 (or 11...Qc6 12 Qf3 f6) again promises White nothing good. The line 9 0-0-0-0!? cxd4 (9...Qc6 10 dxc5) 10 Qb5 Qc6 might appear to offer White more prospects, although in this case too Black stands somewhat better.

9...cxd4 10 Qxd4 Qc6 11 0-0-0 f6

Now it becomes obvious that the journey of White’s queen to h5 was simply a waste of time.

12 exf6 Wxf6 13 Qde2 Qb6

Black has the initiative, Vasvari-Suez Panama, Gibraltar 2008.

7.2
6 Qxe7 Wxe7 7 f4 (D)

This is the main continuation. First of all White fortifies his centre.
8.0-0 8.\( \text{c}f3 \)

An idea akin to Alapin’s from Section 7.1.3 is unsuccessful here: \( 8.\text{d}2 \text{c}5 \) \( 9.\text{c}b5? \) \( \text{a}6 \) \( 10.\text{d}6 \text{cxd}4 \) \( 11.\text{f}3 \text{c}6 \) 0-0-0 (12 \( \text{d}3 \) is met by 12...\( \text{f}6 \) and 12...\( \text{d}xe5 \) with 12...\( \text{d}xe5 \) 13 \( \text{f}xe5 \) \( \text{h}4 \)+) 12...\( \text{f}6 \), with an advantage for Black.

8...\( \text{c}5 \)

Now the play splits into two main directions, depending on where White wishes to castle: \( 9.\text{d}3 \) followed by 0-0 or \( 9.\text{d}2 \), preparing to castle queenside:

7.2.1: \( 9.\text{d}3 \) 84

7.2.2: \( 9.\text{d}2 \) 85

Other moves:
a) The preliminary pawn exchange \( 9.\text{dxc}5 \text{c}6 \) changes nothing: \( 10.\text{d}2 \) or \( 10.\text{d}3 \text{f}6 \) (or \( 10.\text{xc}5 \) 11 0-0 \( \text{h}6 \)) will lead to our main lines.

b) \( 9.\text{g}3 \text{c}6 \) \( 10.\text{d}2 \) (10 \( \text{g}2 \)?! \( \text{cxd}4 \) \( 11.\text{d}4 \text{b}4 \)) 10...\( \text{a}6 \) \( 11.\text{g}2 \) \( \text{b}5 \) (11...\( \text{cxd}4 \) 12 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 13 \( \text{cxd}3 \) \( \text{b}4 \) is equal) 12 0-0 \( \text{b}7 \) (or 12...\( \text{b}6 \)) is of independent importance, but Black’s position is no worse.

c) The Alapin-type \( 9.\text{c}b5 \) is a more serious attempt here, although it only leads to unclear play after \( 9...\text{c}6 \) \( 10.\text{c}3 \text{f}6 \) \( 11.\text{h}4 \)? (11 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 12 \( \text{d}6 \text{cxd}4 \) 13 \( \text{cxd}4 \) \( \text{g}5 \)? – Stetsko) \( 11...\text{b}6 \) or \( 9...\text{cxd}4 \)? (Bronstein) \( 10.\text{c}7 \text{xe}5 \) \( 11.\text{xa}8 \text{xf}3+ \) 12 \( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \).

7.2.1

9 \( \text{d}3 \) (D)

9...\text{f}6

The most logical move: Black parries the threat of \( \text{hxh}7+ \) and attacks White’s pawn-centre.

9...\( \text{cxd}4 \) is condemned by opening theory due to \( 10.\text{h}7+ \), but is not so bad as it seems at first glance; e.g., \( 10...\text{h}8 \) \( 11.\text{g}5 \text{g}6 \) 12 \( \text{xd}4 \text{g}7 \) 13 \( \text{h}4 \text{c}6 \) 14 \( \text{d}2 \text{f}6 \) 15 \( \text{d}3 \text{c}xe5 \).

Nevertheless it is better to refrain from it. On the other hand, 9...\text{h}6 \( 10.\text{h}0 \) (10 \( \text{dxc}5 \text{c}6 \) \( 11.\text{d}2 \text{xc}5 \)) \( 10...\text{c}6 \) \( 11.\text{dxc}5 \text{c}5 \) 12 \( \text{d}2 \text{d}8 \) looks like an acceptable alternative.

10 \( \text{exf}6 \text{xf}6 \) \( 11.\text{g}3 \)

\( 11.\text{g}5 \text{xf}4 \) 12 \( \text{hxh}7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 13 \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{f}6 \) does not end well for White,
so he must defend the f4-pawn. However, the move g3 seriously weakens the light squares and this helps Black create counterplay.

11...\( \text{c6} \) 12 dxc5 \( \text{xc5} \)

The activity of Black’s pieces compensates for the defects of his pawn-structure. His light-squared bishop can be brought into play via the manoeuvre ...\( \text{d7-e8} \) or after the central pawn-break ...\( e5 \).

13 0-0

13 \( \text{g5} \) amounts to a loss of time, since there is no good reason to move the knight away from the e5-square: 13...g6 14 0-0 (14 h4?! h6 15 \( \text{f3} \) e5 gives Black the initiative, while 14 \( \text{f3} \) can be met by 14...e5?! 15 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{g7} \) 16 \( \text{c4 h8} \) ) 14...\( \text{d4} \) 15 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d7} \) with equal chances.

13 \( \text{d2} \) can also be answered with 13...e5?! (13...\( \text{d7} \) maintains the tension) 14 \( \text{xd5} \) (14 0-0-0 \( \text{xd3+} \) 15 \( \text{xd3} \) d4 16 \( \text{e4 h6} \) ) 14...\( \text{xd3+} \) 15 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{f5} \), although here Black is only seeking equality: both 16 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 17 \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 18 \( \text{e7+ h8} \) 19 fxe5 \( \text{xc2} \) and 16 0-0 \( \text{xd3} \) 17 cxd3 exf4 18 \( \text{xf4 g4} \) 19 \( \text{g5} \) (19 \( \text{g2 e8} \) 19...h6 20 \( \text{g6 e6} \) 21 \( \text{xe6 xf1+} \) 22 \( \text{xf1} \) (22 \( \text{xf1 e8} \) 22...\( \text{e8} \) give him enough compensation for the pawn.

Finally, 13 \( \text{w2} \) \( \text{d7} \) 14 0-0-0 (14 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{xd3+} \) 15 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{f5} \) 16 \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 17 0-0-0 d4 18 \( \text{c4 h6} \) 19 \( \text{f3} \) e5 is equal) 14...\( \text{e8} \) 15 \( \text{he1} \) (15 \( \text{g5?! xd3+} \) 16 \( \text{xd3 g6} \) ) 15...\( \text{h5} \) is quite satisfactory for Black.

13...\( \text{a6} \) 14 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d7} \) 15 \( \text{ae1 e8} \) 16 \( \text{e5} \)

16 f5 may be parried by 16...\( \text{xd3} \) 17 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{b4} \) 18 \( \text{d2 exf5} \).

16...\( \text{e8} \)

Black succeeds in maintaining the dynamic equilibrium as White’s control of the centre is not solid enough. In order to secure an advantage, White needs to make his c3-knight more active, but it is not simple to do so.

7.2.2

9 \( \text{d2} \) (D)

As in many other lines of the French Defence, White’s plan of queenside castling sharpens the battle and pushes purely positional factors into the background.

9...\( \text{c6} \) 10 dxc5

This is not an obligatory exchange, but there is little reason to avoid it. After 10 0-0-0 Black can simply play 10...a6, when White has nothing better than 11 dxc5. But he can also reply 10...c4?! , which gives him rather serious counterplay; for example:

a) 11 h4 a6 12 h5 b5 13 h6 g6, and Black’s threats come first.
b) 11 Qb5 Qb6 12 Qd6 Bb8 followed by 13...Axd7 and 14...Ac8.

c) 11 g4!? a6 12 f5 b5 13 Qb1 (13 Wf4 f6 and 13 Ag2 b4 14 Qa4 c3 also illustrate Black's ideas) 13...b4 14 Qa4 a5 15 Wf4 f6 with a double-edged game.

d) 11 f5 Bb8 12 fxe6 (White should avoid both 12 Wg5?! f6 and 12 h4?! b5, when Black has the initiative) 12...fxe6 13 Qb5 (13 Wg5 b5) 13...Qb6 14 Ae2 Ad7 with equal chances.

10...Qxc5 11 0-0-0 a6 (D)

12 Wc3

12 Ad3 is more straightforward:

a) 12...b5 13 Wf2 (threatening to play Axb7; 13 Wc3 transposes to note 'b' to White's 13th move) 13...f6 (both 13...Qxd3+ and 13...h6 are possible) 14 exf6 Qxf6 15 Wc3 (after 15 Ahe1 Wf8!? 16 g3 b4 Black seizes the initiative) 15...b4 (or 15...Qxd3+!? 16 Qxd3 Wc7 17 g3 Ad7) 16 Ae2 a5 17 Ab5 Ad7 18 Ahe1 a4 is unclear, Motylev-Ulybin, Tomsk 2004.

b) 12...Ad7!? 13 Wc3 (13 Ae2 Ac8 14 Ab1 Qxd3 15 cxd3 f6 led to equality in Dolmatov-Bareev, Sochi 1988) 13...Qxd3+ 14 cxd3 (14 Wxd3 h6 is unclear) 14...f6 15 Ab1 (15 Qe2 fxe5 16 Qxe5 Qxe5 17 Wxe5 Wc5+ 18 Ab1 Af5) 15...fxe5 16 Qxe5 d4 with unclear play.

The text-move is more cunning, as it avoids for the time being counterplay of the type we have just seen in line 'b'.

12...b5

12...Ad8 13 Aa4 (not 13 Ad3? d4, but the knight exchange 13 Qd4!? Qxd4 14 Qxd4 is unclear) 13...Ad7 14 Qd4 Mac8 deserves attention, as tried in the game Aseev-Bareev, Lvov Zonal 1990.

13 Ab1

Again White has a choice, but he already runs the risk of finding himself on the defending side:

a) 13 f5?! (premature) 13...Wa7! 14 Qd4 (14 Wg5 h6 and 14 Wf4 exf5 15 Qxd5 Ae6 are also pleasant for Black) 14...Qxd4 15 Qxd4 (or 15 Wxd4 Qd7 16 Wf4 Wb8 17 Ae1 f6) 15...exf5 16 Qxd5 Ae6 (16...Ae8?!) 17 Ad2 Wxe3 18 Axe3 Ac5, Wang Hao-Riazantsev, Dubai 2005.

b) 13 Ad3 Qxd3+ 14 cxd3?! (this is dubious so White should try 14 Qxd3!? or the unclear 14 Wxd3 b4 15 Qa4 Ab8) 14...Ab7 15 Ae2 (not 15 Qd4?? Ac5, while 15 d4 Qa5 16 Wd3 Ac6 gives Black the initiative) 15...d4! 16 Qxd4 Ab4, Almasi-Gleizerov, Geneva 2004.

c) 13 Ae2 b4 14 Qd4 Qxd4 15 Qxd4 Ac7 and Black can be happy, Goloshchapov-Govedarica, Yugoslav Team Ch 2000.
ClASSICAL FRENCH

13...b4 14 Qe2 a5 15 Qed4

The pawn-break 15 f5 is still not effective: 15...exf5 (or 15...Qe4!? 16 f6 gxf6 17 exf6 Qxf6 18 Qg3 a4) 16 Qxd5 Qe4, Martin Gonzalez-Fluvia Poyatos, Benasque 1999.

15...Qxd4 16 Qxd4 c7

Black is no worse.

practical choice, and fruitful ground for serious investigation. White can reply:

7.3.1: 7 Qe3 87
7.3.2: 7 Qxe7 88

Another retreat, 7 Qf4, is very rarely seen in practice; then 7...c5 8 Qg4 (8 dxc5 Qc6 9 Qg4 Qxe5 10 Qxg7 Qg6) 8...Qf6 9 Qf3 Qc6 10 dxc5 a6 11 0-0-0 Qxc5 leads to unclear play.

7 Wh5 is much too artificial, and after 7...a6 8 0-0-0 (Stetsko gives 8 Qd3 c5 9 Qxd5?! exd5 10 e6 Qe5, while 8 Qf3 can be met by 8...c5 9 dxc5 Qc6) 8...c5 9 dxc5 Qc6 10 f4 Qxc5 White's pieces interact badly with each other.

7.3.1

7 Qe3

Now Black has time to attack the centre.

7...c5 8 Qg4 g6 (D)

For the time being Black retains his castling rights, although the variation 8...Qf8?! 9 Qf3 (9 f4 cxd4 10 Qxd4 Qc6 11 Qf3 h5) 9...cxd4 10 Qxd4 Qc6 11 0-0-0 Qxd4 12 Qxd4 (12 Qxd4 a6) 12...c5 13 Qf4 Qxf2 14 Qd1 (Em.Lasker-Kipke, Berlin simul 1920) 14...Qb6!? 15 Qd3 Qc7 is also rather interesting for him.

9 Qf3

9 Qd3?! is well met by 9...cxd4, while an immediate kingside assault by 9 h5 does not represent a danger to Black in view of 9...cxd4 10 Qxd4 g5 11 f4 Qc6. White also achieves nothing by 9 f4 cxd4 (9...h5?! 10 Qg3 Qc6

Opening theory disapproves of this move, but more due to general considerations than specific analysis. This fact makes it an especially interesting
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11  \( \texttt{Qf3} \texttt{wa}5 \) is unclear) 10  \( \texttt{Axd4} \texttt{cc}6 
11  \( \texttt{Qf3} \texttt{wa}5 \).

9 dxc5!?  \( \texttt{Qxe}5 \) 10  \( \texttt{Wg}3 \) appears strongest, as White opens lines in the centre. A sample line is 10... \( \texttt{Qbc6} \) 11  \( \texttt{Qf4} \) (11 0-0-0 \( \texttt{h}5 \) 12  \( \texttt{Qb}5 \) 0-0 13  \( \texttt{Qe}2 \texttt{wa}5 \) is unclear) 11... \( \texttt{Qf6} \) 12  \( \texttt{Qb}5 \texttt{f}8 \), when White keeps some initiative in an unclear position.

9...cxd4 10  \( \texttt{Axd4} \texttt{cc}6 
11  \( \texttt{Qd}3 

11...  \( \texttt{Qxd4} \)

11...a6 is also possible, since \( \texttt{Qxg}6 \) is not yet a threat.

12  \( \texttt{Wxd4} \texttt{wb}6 
13  \( \texttt{Qb}5 

Now there is no need for Black to get involved in complications like 13... \( \texttt{c}5 \) 14  \( \texttt{Wf}4 \texttt{xf}2+ \) 15  \( \texttt{Qe}2 \texttt{c}5 \), since in the ending after 13... \( \texttt{Wxd4} \) 14  \( \texttt{Qf}x\texttt{d}4 \) 0-0 he stands at least no worse.

7.3.2

7  \( \texttt{Sh}xe7 \texttt{Wxe}7 \) \( \texttt{D} \)

We now have the standard main line of the Classical French, but with the addition of h4 and ...h6. These moves lead to some significant differences in the variations and introduce new possibilities for both players.

8 f4

It is much too optimistic for White to play 8  \( \texttt{Qf}3 \) 0-0-0 9  \( \texttt{g}4 \) (trying to make direct use of the move h4) 9...c5 10  \( \texttt{g}5 \texttt{h}5 \), as nothing comes of White’s attack.

8  \( \texttt{Wg}4 \) 0-0-0 9  \( \texttt{f}4 \) (or 9  \( \texttt{Qf}3 \) c5 10 dxc5  \( \texttt{Qc}6 \) 11  \( \texttt{Wg}3 \texttt{xc}5 \), as in Sandu-Gleizerov, Bucharest 2008) 9...c5 10  \( \texttt{Qf}3 \) (10 0-0-0 \( \texttt{c}xd4 \) 11  \( \texttt{Qb}5 \texttt{c}6 
12  \( \texttt{Qf}3 \texttt{c}5 \) ) 10... \( \texttt{Qc}6 \) 11 0-0-0 a6 leads to a complicated game where it is not completely clear what the queen is doing on g4.

The variation 8  \( \texttt{Qb}5 \texttt{b}6 \) deserves attention:

a) 9 a4 a6 10 a5 axb5 11 axb6  \( \texttt{Qx}a1 
12  \( \texttt{Wxa}1 \texttt{c}6 
13  \( \texttt{Wa}8 \texttt{wb}4+ \) 14 c3  \( \texttt{wa}4 \) is equal, just as it is with the h-pawns unmoved.

b) 9 c3 a6 10  \( \texttt{Qa}3 \texttt{c}5 
11  \( \texttt{Qc}2 \) (11  \( \texttt{f}4 \texttt{c}6 
12  \( \texttt{Qf}3 \) 0-0-0 13  \( \texttt{Qd}3 \texttt{c}xd4 
14 cxd4  \( \texttt{Wb}4+ \) 15  \( \texttt{Wd}2 \texttt{a}4 \) ) 11... \( \texttt{Qc}6 \) 12  \( \texttt{Qf}3 \) 0-0-0 13  \( \texttt{Qd}3 \texttt{d}7 \)!! and Black intends to attack White’s centre with ...f6.
c) 9 \textit{g}4 0-0 (9...\textit{b}4+ 10 \textit{c}3 \textit{xb}2 is equal) 10 0-0-0 (10 \textit{h}3 \textit{f}6 11 \textit{xf}3 \textit{xc}6) 10...\textit{a}6 11 \textit{c}3 \textit{c}5 12 dxc5 (Mammadov-R.Bagirov, Azerbaijan Ch, Baku 2011) and now Black should play 12...\textit{d}6d7 13 \textit{f}4 \textit{xc}6.

8...0-0 9 \textit{f}3 \textit{c}5 (D)

10 \textit{b}5!?

Here this knight move is somewhat stronger than in the standard Classical. On the other hand, the following continuations do not provide any benefit for White:

a) 10 dxc5 \textit{xc}6 11 \textit{d}2 \textit{f}6 12 \textit{xf}6 gives Black a choice between the lines 12...\textit{xf}6 13 0-0-0 \textit{xc}5 and 12...\textit{xf}6!? 13 \textit{g}3 \textit{xc}5 14 0-0-0 \textit{e}4, with equality.

b) 10 \textit{d}2 \textit{f}6!? (without delay; Stetsko's 10...\textit{c}6 11 0-0-0 \textit{f}6 12 \textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 is not bad either) 11 0-0-0 (11 \textit{exf}6 can be answered by 11...\textit{xf}6 and 11 \textit{b}5 with 11...\textit{a}6 12 \textit{d}6 \textit{cxd}4 11...\textit{cxd}4 12 \textit{xd}4 \textit{fxe}5 13 \textit{fxe}5 \textit{c}6 (13...\textit{xe}5!? 14 \textit{e}1 \textit{xd}4 15 \textit{xd}4 \textit{c}5 with a good game for Black, Abasov-Bajarani, Baku 2011.

10...\textit{c}6 (D)

This allows White to fortify his centre, but 10...\textit{cxd}4 11 \textit{c}7 \textit{xe}5 12 \textit{xa}8 \textit{xf}3+ offers White the new possibility of 13 \textit{gxf}3!? (the line 13 \textit{xf}3 \textit{b}4+ 14 \textit{f}2 \textit{d}7 is still rather safe; for example, 15 \textit{b}3 \textit{d}2+ 16 \textit{g}1 \textit{d}3).

11 \textit{c}3 \textit{cxd}4 12 \textit{cxd}4 \textit{b}6 13 \textit{d}6

White does not have to hurry with this incursion; the line 13 \textit{d}2 \textit{d}7 14 \textit{e}2 \textit{a}6 15 \textit{d}6 \textit{ab}8 is of approximately equal value.

13...\textit{b}8 14 \textit{d}2 \textit{d}7 15 \textit{b}4 \textit{a}6

By playing ...\textit{c}8, Black will evict the intruder from its advanced post on \textit{d}6, with good chances of equality.
Part 2: 1 d4 e6

The first part of the book discussed a rather well-explored area of opening theory – the French Defence. While some of the individual lines that we examined may have had a somewhat innovative character, this was within the framework of a very sound and popular opening.

In Part 2, the task of constructing an opening repertoire moves onto a more experimental plane. On a simple level, some practical advantages for Black of 1 d4 e6 are immediately clear. Such lines as 1 d4 əf3 2 əg5 (Trompowsky Attack) and 1 d4 f5 2 əg5 (or 2 əc3) are immediately avoided, so, e.g., adherents of the Dutch Defence may use this move-order as a way to reach their favourite opening after 2 c4 f5 or 2 əf3 f5 without needing to worry about these troublesome sidelines. Those who play the Queen’s/Nimzo-Indian complex will find similar advantages, also provided of course that they are willing to play the French Defence.

However, our aim here is to provide an independent repertoire based on 1...e6, while noting that some readers may prefer to use only parts of this repertoire, woven together with other openings that they are happy to play.

The best-known independent line after 1 d4 e6 2 c4 is the English Defence, 2...b6. However, we shall borrow only one variation from it and follow other directions, with the following two positions as our foundation stones:

2 c4 əb4+ (D)
The aim of the bishop check is to lure White into little-explored territory. The play can either return to normal theoretical variations (normally of the Nimzo-Indian or Bogo-Indian), or take an original direction. White needs to reckon with both possibilities, making his decisions more difficult, both practically and objectively.

2 \( \triangle f3 \) c5 (D)

Black strikes at the d4-pawn before its neighbour has arrived on c4 to support an advance to d5. The game can now move in a very different strategic direction from normal queen's pawn openings. White's best chance of advantage lies in 3 e4 or 3 c4, transposing to lines of the Sicilian Defence or the English Opening respectively. We will be ready for these transpositions – but how many of our opponents will be, given that they have already avoided e4 and c4 on moves 1 and 2?

It remains only to add that after 1 d4 e6 White's other continuations besides 2 c4 and 2 \( \triangle f3 \) (not counting 2 e4, of course) do not create serious opening problems for Black.

Let us summarize our coverage of 1 d4 e6:
- 2 c4 \( \triangle b4+ \) 3 \( \triangle c3 \) (Chapter 8) is likely to be chosen by those who enjoy playing the white side of the Nimzo-Indian Defence. However, he gets not a Nimzo-Indian, but a significantly modified version, in which some standard ideas are unavailable to him. He must also be wary of Black transposing to a favourable form of Dutch Defence.
- 2 c4 \( \triangle b4+ \) 3 \( \triangle d2 \) (Chapter 9) has much in common with the Bogo-Indian line 1 d4 \( \triangle f6 \) 2 c4 e6 3 \( \triangle f3 \) \( \triangle b4+ \) 4 \( \triangle d2 \).
- Chapter 10 deals with the most problematic variation for Black after 2 c4 \( \triangle b4+ \), namely 3 \( \triangle d2 \). He can choose to complete the transposition to a respectable branch of the Bogo-Indian Defence, or continue to pursue an independent path – which is strategically riskier, but also more interesting.
- The transposition to the Sicilian Defence by 1 d4 e6 2 \( \triangle f3 \) c5 3 e4 cxd4 is covered in Chapter 11. However unlikely this sequence is to occur, it is obviously very important that we are fully ready for it. I present a simplified repertoire based on the Sicilian Four Knights – a line in which there is intricate piece-play, making it difficult for White to find the right moves if he is unprepared.
• The line 2 \( \text{f3} \) c5 3 c4 (Chapter 12) 3...cxd4 4 \( \text{xd4} \) transposes to one of the varieties of the Symmetrical English with an early d4 advance by White. After 4...\( \text{f6} \) 5 \( \text{c3} \), we examine both 5...\( \text{b4} \) (usually transposing to a g3 Nimzo-Indian) and 5...\( \text{c6} \).

• Chapter 13 is devoted to the move-order 2 \( \text{f3} \) c5 3 e3. This modest and rather old-fashioned continuation should not present a great threat to Black, but it needs to be taken seriously. We shall reply with 3...d5, reaching positions of the Queen’s Gambit type, happy that White cannot actively develop his queen’s bishop.

• Finally, in Chapter 14 we study some of the more interesting sidelines that arise when White chooses a rarer option on move 2 or 3, such as the currently rather popular London System, with an early \( \text{f4} \).
8 The Nimzo-like 2 c4  
\[ \text{b4} + 3 \text{c3} \]

1 d4 e6 2 c4 \text{b4}+ 3 \text{c3} (D)

In the standard Nimzo-Indian, after 1 d4 \text{f6} 2 c4 e6 3 \text{c3} \text{b4}, White has a very wide choice of continuations, some of them with enormous bodies of complex theory. Naturally, from our move-order, you may opt to play the Nimzo by continuing 3...\text{f6}, secure in the knowledge that you are entering a very highly respected opening. Likewise, fans of the Dutch can certainly consider playing 3...f5.

In the current chapter, we shall focus on two more independent paths: 3...c5 and 3...b6. While Black seeks to benefit from the new possibilities afforded by his move-order, it goes without saying that White also has some additional possibilities, so both players need to be willing to enter interesting and little-explored positions. Here is an overview of the lines in this chapter:

3...c5 is covered as follows:
- In the case of 4 dxc5 \text{xc3}+ (Section 8.1) the game immediately takes an unusual direction.
- 4 a3 \text{xc3}+ 5 bxc3 (Section 8.2) is analogous to the Sämisch Nimzo-Indian, but here Black can solve his opening problems more easily.
- 4 d5 (Section 8.3) gives us a choice: play for blockade by 4...\text{xc3}+ or simply switch back to Nimzo theory after 4...\text{f6} as Black need not fear 5 \text{g5} or 5 f3.
- 4 e3 (Section 8.4) is similar to the Rubinstein Nimzo-Indian, but Black has additional options here to restrict White’s expansion plans in the centre, and the game may very soon enter unexplored territory.
- 4 \text{f3} cxd4 5 \text{xd4} \text{f6} brings us to a position we consider via a different move-order in Section 12.2.
- We need not consider 4 \text{c2}? (a main line in the Nimzo) since the d4-pawn is already attacked, while
4 \texttt{wb3 cxd4!?} (4...\texttt{dc6} 5 \texttt{dxc5 \texttt{gf6}} is a comfortable Nimzo line for Black) 5 \texttt{wbxb4 \texttt{dc6} 6 \texttt{wa3 dxc3} 7 \texttt{wc3 \texttt{gf6}} followed by ...d5 gives Black active play.

3...\texttt{b6} has different consequences:
- Section 8.5 covers 4 \texttt{wc2}, when we do enter Nimzo-Indian territory, but in a form that is quite comfortable for Black.
- 4 \texttt{e4} (Section 8.6) transposes to a sharp line of the English Defence. Black has ready-made counterplay and scores well in practice.

8.1
3...\texttt{c5} 4 \texttt{dxc5} (D)

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

This line is seldom encountered, though rather interesting. At the cost of allowing severe damage to his pawn-structure, White hopes to make use of the weakness of the dark squares in his opponent’s camp. If Black turns down the proposal by 4...\texttt{gf6}, then 5 \texttt{wc2} and 5 \texttt{wb3} lead to well-known theoretical variations of the Nimzo-Indian.

4...\texttt{xc3+} 5 \texttt{bxc3} \texttt{wa5} 6 \texttt{gf3}

The lines 6 \texttt{e4 \texttt{gf6} 7 \texttt{f3 \texttt{dc6}, 6 \texttt{wc2 \texttt{da6}} and 6 \texttt{wb3 \texttt{da6} 7 \texttt{e3} (7 \texttt{gf4 \texttt{gf6} 8 \texttt{f3 \texttt{xc5}) 7...\texttt{e7} 8 \texttt{gf3 \texttt{dc6}}}} followed by 9...\texttt{dc5} are insufficiently vigorous and permit Black a good position.

6...\texttt{gf6} 7 \texttt{wb3}

7 \texttt{fd2} also deserves attention, although after 7...\texttt{da6} or 7...\texttt{b6}!? Black has no serious problems.

7...\texttt{da6} 8 \texttt{fd4}!

The knight is heading for b5, where it will occupy a menacing position. White achieves nothing in the variation 8 \texttt{gf4} (8 \texttt{e3 \texttt{c7}} is equal) 8...\texttt{xc5} 9 \texttt{wb4} b6 10 \texttt{fd4} (or 10 \texttt{wa5 bxa5}) 10...\texttt{da6} 11 \texttt{wa5 bxa5} 12 \texttt{db5} (12 \texttt{db3 \texttt{db7}}) 12...\texttt{xb5} 13 \texttt{xb5} \texttt{dc5}.

8...\texttt{0-0} 9 \texttt{db5} b6!?

Black should avoid 9...\texttt{dc5} 10 \texttt{wb4} or 9...\texttt{e4} 10 \texttt{wa3}, but one way or another the hostile c5-pawn must be eliminated. An interesting situation has arisen, since White (in his turn) also does not hurry with the capture xb6.

10 \texttt{gf4}

Chasing the black queen by 10 a4 \texttt{xc5} 11 \texttt{wa2} (11 \texttt{wb4 \texttt{xb4} 12 \texttt{xb4 \texttt{db3}}) 11...\texttt{b7} 12 \texttt{a3} \texttt{fc8} looks like a waste of time. And after 10 \texttt{xb6 axb6} the activity of the black pieces must be sufficient for him to achieve equality; for example, 11 \texttt{wa3 \texttt{dc5} 12 \texttt{xa5 \texttt{xa5} 13 \texttt{gf4 \texttt{db7} 14 \texttt{c7} \texttt{a6}} (or 14...\texttt{fa8}), 11 \texttt{a3 \texttt{dc5} 12 \texttt{wd1 \texttt{wa4} 13 \texttt{e3} (13 \texttt{wa4 \texttt{xa4} 14 \texttt{db4 \texttt{a6}) 13...\texttt{wd1+ 14 \texttt{xd1} \texttt{b7} or 11 \texttt{f3 \texttt{dc5} 12 \texttt{wb4 \texttt{xb4} (12...d5!?)} 13 \texttt{xb4 \texttt{db3} 14 \texttt{wb1 \texttt{xc1} 15 \texttt{xc1} d5.}}

\textbf{A ROCK-SOLID CHESS OPENING REPertoire FOR BLACK}
THE NIMZO-LIKE 2  

10...\textit{b7} 11 f3 \textit{c6}

The final preparations are made. White lacks time to secure an advantage; the following variations are all roughly equal:

a) 12 cxb6 axb6 13 e4 (13 \textit{d6} is answered by 13...\textit{c5} 14 \textit{wb4 fc8}) and now Black can choose 13...d5 or 13...\textit{xb5} 14 cxb5 \textit{c5} 15 \textit{wb4 d5}.

b) 12 \textit{d6} \textit{xb5} 13 cxb5 \textit{xc5} 14 \textit{wb4 fc8} 15 \textit{xa5 bxa5} 16 e4 \textit{b7} 17 \textit{xe5 d6}.

c) 12 e4 \textit{xb5} 13 cxb5 \textit{xc5} 14 \textit{wb4 b7}.

8.2

3...c5 4 a3 \textit{xc3+} 5 bxc3 (D)

White shows he is prepared to play a Sämisc Nimzo-Indian, to which 5...\textit{f6} would now transpose. The Sämisc is a highly double-edged line, where White hopes his strong centre and kingside attacking chances will compensate for his pawn weaknesses. One of the main themes is an attack or pin on the f6-knight by e4-e5 or \textit{g5}. This suggests that Black might profit from delaying or avoiding altogether the move ...\textit{f6}. The corollary though is that White can play the e4 advance without additional preparation. Let's see how these factors work out in practice.

5...\textit{d6}

The blockading continuation 5...d6, intending ...e5, is also quite acceptable. Then 6 dxc5 dxc5 7 \textit{xd8+ xd8} 8 \textit{xc4} \textit{d7} is not dangerous – White's initiative will gradually become exhausted, but his pawn weaknesses will remain.

We should note that 5...f5?! fails to prevent 6 e4, since 6...fxe4 7 \textit{h5+ g6} 8 \textit{xc5} gives White the initiative.

6 e4

It is not logical for White to play 6 \textit{f3 \textit{f6}}, because it runs counter to his opening strategy declared by the move 4 a3. Instead, 6 d5 enters unexplored territory: 6...\textit{e5}!? (6...\textit{a5} and 6...\textit{e7} are also possible) 7 \textit{f3} (7 e4 \textit{h4}!) 7...\textit{xc4} (or 7...\textit{f6}) 8 e4 \textit{a5}, with chances for both sides.

6...\textit{cx4}

6...d6 7 d5 (7 \textit{e2}?) 7...\textit{a5} is an alternative plan:

a) The careless 8 f4? exd5 9 exd5 (9 cxd5 \textit{f6}) 9...\textit{f6} 10 \textit{d3} 0-0 led rapidly to serious hardship for White in Moskalenko-Goossens, Barcelona 2005.

b) 8 \textit{d3} can be met by 8...e5 9 f4 \textit{f6}!? (a slightly risky experiment; simpler is 9...\textit{xf4} 10 \textit{xf4 e7} with equality) 10 \textit{h5+} (10 f5 \textit{d7}; 10 \textit{e2 e7}) 10...\textit{f8} 11 \textit{xe5 dxe5} 12 \textit{a2 \textit{e8} 13 d1 e7} with an unclear game, Kacheishvili-Eingorn, Berlin
1995. A more flexible approach is 8...\(\text{dxe7}\), when 9 f4 exd5 10 cxd5 f5 is unclear, or 8...\(\text{dxf6}\)?, intending ...b6 and ...\(\text{a6}\) with an attack on the weak c4-pawn.

The text-move, 6...cxd4, represents a more concrete approach: instead of blockading the white pawn-centre, Black immediately attacks it.

7 cxd4 d5

Simple and good. 7...\(\text{dxf6}\) 8 e5 (8 d5? is met by 8...\(\text{dxe4}\), and 8 f3 with 8...d5 9 cxd5 exd5 10 e5 \(\text{d}g8!?)\).

8...\(\text{dxe4}\) 9 \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{a}5\)+ 10 \(\text{f}1\) f5 (or 10...d5) 11 exf6 \(\text{xf6}\) looks slightly extravagant, but it is also interesting.

8 cxd5 exd5 9 e5

As we see in this variation, the absence of the knight from f6 has turned out to be useful for Black.

9...\(\text{d}e7\) 10 \(\text{f}3\) 0-0

The game is approximately level.

8.3

3...c5 4 d5 (D)

The advance of the d-pawn presents Black with a choice. 4...\(\text{xc3+}\)? 5 bxc3 gives the play an original feel. Then:

a) The blockading strategy 5...d6 has a natural appeal, as it uses Nimzo themes while avoiding a direct transposition to well-worn lines. Then 6 e4 (6 dxe6?! \(\text{xe6}\) 7 e4 \(\text{a}5\) 8 \(\text{b}3\) \(\text{d}f6\) 6...e5 7 \(\text{d}3\) (7 f4 exf4 8 \(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{h}4!?)\) 9 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{e}7\), Natsidis-Steinbacher, Leutersdorf 2005) 7...\(\text{d}e7\) 8 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{g}6\) 9 0-0 (9 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{f}4\) 9...\(\text{d}7\), intending ...h6, ...\(\text{f}6\)-h7 etc., leads to a long manoeuvring struggle with a very solid but slightly passive position for Black.

b) 5...\(\text{a}5\) 6 e4 \(\text{d}f6\) has been examined, intending piece-play after 7 \(\text{d}2\) (7 \(\text{c}2\) \(\text{xe4}\) is unclear) 7...d6 8 \(\text{d}3\) 0-0 9 \(\text{e}2\) \(\text{e}8\) (Flear-Dorfman, Polanica Zdroj 1992). However, if White continues 7 f3!?, the variation 7...\(\text{xc3}\)+ 8 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{e}5\) 9 \(\text{e}2\) exd5 10 cxd5 d6 11 \(\text{c}3\) \(\text{e}7\) looks dubious for Black.

Overall, in this case it makes sense for Black to transpose to the Nimzo-Indian:

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

The good news for Black is that this is a line without a great deal of complex theory, and where he has good counterplay.

Now the lines 5 \(\text{d}2\) 0-0, 5 \(\text{f}3\) d6 and 5 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{e}4\) do not leave White any chance of an advantage. He has only two continuations that demand detailed coverage, but by the highest standards neither gives Black opening difficulties:

8.3.1: 5 \(\text{g}5\) 97
8.3.2: 5 \(\text{f}3\) 97
8.3.1

5 \( \text{ Ng5 } \) \( \text{ d6 } \) (D)

\[
\text{ W }
\]

6 \( \text{ e3 } \)

We have reached a line of the Lenin­grad Nimzo-Indian. This and White’s next few moves are sensible, as it is risky for him to remain behind in development in lines such as 6 \( f3?! \) \( \text{ h6 7 Nh4 0-0 8 e4 Ne8 9 Ne2 (not 9 Nd3? exd5 10 cxd5 Nxe4!) 9...exd5 10 cxd5 Nb7.} \)

6...\text{exd5 7 cxd5 Nb7 8 Nd3}

After 8 \( \text{ Nb5 } \) \( \text{ h6 9 Nh4 a6 (or 9...Nxc3+?! 10 bxc3 0-0) 10 Nxd7+ (10 Nd3?!?) 10...Nxd7 11 Ne2 g5 12 Ng3 Ne4 (or 12...Ne7!?, when 13 a3 Na5 14 0-0 0-0 is unclear, and White should avoid 13 0-0?! h5 14 h4 Nh7, Bouwmeester-Momo, Moscow Olympiad 1956) 13 0-0 Nxc3 14 Nxc3 Nxe3 15 hxe3 Ne7 Black is no worse, Moiseenko-Landa, Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2010.} \)

8...\text{Na5 9 Ne2 Nxd5 10 0-0 Nxc3} 11 bxc3

11 Nxc3? Nxc3 12 bxc3 c4 is of no use to White.

11...c4

Again using the same motif: now 12 Nxc4? is bad in view of 12...N5b6.

12 Nc2

The evidently weaker 12 \( \text{ Na5 0-0 13 e4 (13 Nd2?! Nxc3 14 Ng3 Nb6) 13...Nxc3 14 Nxc3 Nxc3 15 Nxc1 Ne5 16 Nxc4 Nxb6 gave Black the advantage in Jacob-Luther, Austrian Team Ch 2004/5.} \)

12...0-0 13 Nh4

Black repulses attempts to attack his king without particular difficulty: 13 \( \text{ Nxe5 Nxc3 14 Wh5 g6 (14...f5!?) or 13 Nxb4 Nxc3 14 Wh5 f6 15 Wh4 Nce4 16 Nxe4 Nxe4 17 Nh7 Ne8 18 Nxe4 Ne5, keeping the extra material.} \)

13...Nxc3 14 Nxc3

After 14 \( \text{ Nh7+ Nh7 15 Nc2+ Ng8 16 Nxe5 Nh7 17 Nh7 Ne8 18 Nxd6 Nh7 the number of pawns becomes equal, but White has to switch to defence.} \)

14...Nxc3 15 Nxc1 Na5 16 Nxd6 Ne8 17 Nf1 Nf8

Both sides have chances, as White has sufficient compensation for the pawn.

8.3.2

5 f3

Now we have a position more often reached via the move-order 1 d4 \( \text{ Nh6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nh4 4 f3 c5 5 d5.} \)

5...0-0 6 e4 b5!?

White’s delay in development gives Black reason to sharpen the struggle. If Black is not so bellicose, then the somewhat calmer 6...d6 (D) can be recommended:
The dubious line 7 \(\text{g5}\)?! \(h6\) 8 \(\text{h4}\)?? has been already covered in the note to White’s 6th move in Section 8.3.1.

b) 7 \(\text{d2}\)?! \(\text{exd5}\) 8 \(\text{cxd5}\) \(\text{h5}\) 9 \(g4\)?? (9 \(g3\) \(f5\)) 9...\(\text{wh4}\)++ 10 \(\text{e2}\) \(\text{g3}+\) 11 \(\text{hxg3}\) \(\text{wh1}\) 12 \(\text{f2}\) (Aronian-Efimenko, European Ch, Warsaw 2005) 12...\(\text{c4}\) 13 \(\text{e3}\) \(\text{d7}\) gives Black an advantage.

c) 7 \(\text{d3}\) \(b5\)?? (after 7...\(\text{bd7}\) 8 \(\text{e2}\) \(\text{e5}\) 9 0-0 Black can choose between 9...\(\text{e8}\) and 9...\(\text{exd5}\) 10 \(\text{cxd5}\) \(\text{c4}\) 11 \(\text{c2}\) \(\text{c5}+\) 12 \(\text{h1}\) \(\text{d7}\), with unclear play) 8 \(\text{e2}\) \(\text{bxc4}\) 9 \(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{exd5}\) 10 \(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 11 \(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{b6}\) 12 0-0 (12 \(\text{f2}\) \(\text{b7}\) gives Black the initiative) 12...\(\text{c6}\) is equal.

d) 7 \(\text{e2}\)?? \(\text{e8}\) offers Black good play after both 8 \(\text{g3}\) \(b5\)?? 9 \(\text{f4}\) (Black takes over the initiative in the event of 9 \(\text{dxe6}\) \(\text{xe6}\) 10 \(\text{cxb5}\) \(d5\) 11 \(\text{d2}\) \(a6\) 12 \(\text{bxa6}\) \(d4\) or 9 \(\text{e2}\) \(\text{bxc4}\) 10 \(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{xc3}+\) 11 \(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{wa5}\)) 9...\(\text{wb6}\) 10 \(\text{dxe6}\) \(\text{xe6}\) 11 \(\text{xd6}\) \(\text{bxc4}\) 12 \(\text{xb6}\) \(\text{axb6}\) and 8 \(\text{d2}\) \(a6\)?? 9 \(\text{g3}\) (9 \(a4\)??\(\text{exd5}\) 10 \(\text{cxd5}\) \(\text{h5}\) 11 \(\text{g3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 12 \(\text{g2}\) \(\text{e5}\) 13 0-0 \(\text{f6}\) gives Black the initiative) 9...\(\text{exd5}\) 10 \(\text{cxd5}\) \(\text{bd7}\) 11 \(\text{e2}\) \(\text{a5}\)?? 12 0-0 \(b5\).

\(7\text{ e5}\)

7 \(\text{d2}\) is unattractive in view of 7...\(\text{bxc4}\) 8 \(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{a6}\)?? (8...\(\text{b7}\) is equal) 9 \(\text{xa6}\) \(\text{xa6}\) 10 \(\text{ge2}\) \(\text{exd5}\) 11 \(\text{e5}\) \(\text{e8}\) 12 \(\text{xd5}\) \(d6\), as in Vokač-Štocek, Havlíčkuv Brod 2008.

After 7 \(\text{h3}\) the game becomes highly tactical: 7...\(\text{bxc4}\) 8 \(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 9 \(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{exd5}\) 10 \(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{a6}\) 11 \(\text{g5}\) (not 11 \(\text{xa8}\)?? \(\text{h4}\)+ 12 \(\text{f1}\) \(\text{c6}\)) 11...\(\text{wb6}\) 12 \(\text{f2}\) \(\text{c6}\) gave Black the initiative in Hammer-R.Hess, Moscow 2011.

\(7\text{ g5}\) \(\text{exd5}\) (it looks more logical to insert 7...\(\text{h6}\)?? 8 \(\text{h4}\) before playing 8...\(\text{exd5}\) 9 \(\text{cxd5}\) \(\text{e8}\)?) 8 \(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{e8}\) 9 \(\text{d2}\) \(a6\) 10 \(\text{ge2}\) \(d6\) 11 \(\text{g3}\) \(\text{bd7}\) (11...\(\text{c4}\)??) 12 \(\text{e2}\) \(c4\) 13 0-0 \(\text{c5}+\) 14 \(\text{h1}\) \(h6\) also does not promise White the advantage, Mamedyarov-Fressinet, European Clubs Cup, Ohrid 2009.

\(7\text{ e8}\) (\(D\))

\(8\text{ f4}\)

White supports his far-advanced e-pawn. Black seizes the initiative after
8 cxb5 a6 (8...d6!? or 8 dxe6 fxe6 9 cxb5 a6 10 f4 axb5 11 d3 (11 xb5 d5 gives Black the initiative) 11...c4 12 c2 d5, as in Radjabov-Istratescu, European Ch, Antalya 2004.

8...exd5 9 cxd5 d6 10 0-3

After 10 xb5 dxe5 Black’s position deserves preference; for example, 11 fxe5?! 0-7.

10...c7 11 a4!?

It’s a fine balancing act between attack and development. If White delays active play, then Black can be happy, as the lines 11 e2 b7 12 0-0 c4 and 11 d3 c4 12 c2 (12 e4 f5) 12...dxe5 demonstrate.

11...b7 12 d3 g6

Blunting the threat of 13 xh7+.

13 0-0 c4 14 e4 d7!??

In this rather unusual and sharp position, Black has enough counterplay.

8.4

3...c5 4 e3 (D)

Now instead of 4...f6 (transposing to a normal Rubinstein Nimzo-Indian) Black develops the other knight:

4...c2

Those familiar with the Hübner Variation of the Nimzo-Indian will immediately understand Black’s potential blockading ideas. But by using this move-order, Black puts pressure on d4 that limits White’s options to a much smaller set than in the regular Nimzo-Indian.

Note that the immediate 4...xc3+ 5 bxc3 d6 is less reliable. Before adopting a blockade strategy, it is useful for Black to wait until White has played f3, hindering the advance of the f-pawn.

5 0-3

White has no time to develop by d3 and e2, since 5 d3? would leave the d4-pawn undefended for a moment. The other popular set-up in the Nimzo, 5 e2, promises little here due to 5...xd4 6 exd4 d5, and now:

a) 7 c5?! 0-7 gave Black the initiative in Sadler-Davies, London 1992.

b) 7 a3 xc3+ 8 xc3 dxc4 (after 8...0-7? the position is also equal) 9 e3 (9 xc4 xd4) 9...0-7 10 xc4 0-5 11 0-0 0-0 with equality.

c) 7 cxd5 exd5 (the more dynamic 7...xd5! 8 e3 0-6 9 a3 xc3+ 10 xc3 0-7 also leads to a level game) 8 a3 (8 g3 0-4 9 0-2 0-7 with equality, Dumitrache-B.Kovačević, Zagreb 1997) 8...xc3+ 9 xc3 0-7 10 d3 0-5 yields equal chances.

The line 5 d5? 0-5 (5...0-7 6 e4 can be met by 6...d6 or 6...xc3+ 7 bxc3 d6, with unclear play) 6 d2 (6 f4 is answered with 6...0-6 and 6 e4 by 6...0-4) 6...f6 leads to a double-edged game.
5...xc3+
Black borrows ideas from the Hübner Variation, the standard form of which could arise after 5...f6 6 d3 xc3+ 7 bxc3 d6, when a typical line runs 8 e4 e5 9 d5 e7.

6 bxc3 d6 7 d3
In our case it is less accurate for White to play 7 e4 e5 8 d5 ce7, when Black has excellent play, but a more interesting line is 7 d5 ce7 (7...a5 8 e4 e5 9 d3 h6 is unclear) 8 dxe6 xe6 9 g5 f6 10 xe6 fxe6 11 d3 0-0 12 e4 c6, reaching a non-standard position where the black knights are well-placed to counter the enemy bishops; e.g., 13 f4?! e5 14 f5 xe4.

7...e5 (D)
Black continues to refrain from 7...f6.

8 e4!?
In his turn, White takes advantage of a difference from standard Nimzo lines: Black is not controlling the e4-square. The bishop manoeuvre itself is not totally unknown in this structure, but normally follows an exchange of knights.

We should of course consider what happens if White sticks to more standard patterns of development. 8 e4 exd4 (or 8...cxd4) 9 cxd4 g4 leads to equality, and after 8 0-0 we can sidestep the standard Nimzo lines in two ways:

a) 8...f5 looks like it ought to be slightly questionable, although there is no obvious refutation. 9 e4 f4 10 d5 ce7 (10...a5? 11 xe5) 11 g3 fxg3 12 fxg3 f6 13 g5 0-0 (13...g6 could be tried) 14 h4 g6 15 f5 h6 16 e3 (16 d2 is also possible) 16...xf5 17 exf5 h8 is unclear.

b) 8...ge7 9 d5 (9 e4 0-0 is unclear) 9...a5 (9...b8!?) 10 e4 and now 10...g6 or 10...h6! with the idea 11 h4 g5. The remoteness of the a5-knight from the kingside here is of no vital importance, since White cannot start an attack immediately (see the note to Black’s 4th move).

8...e7!?
Black should avoid 8...ge7?! 9 dxc5 dxc5 10 xd8+ xd8 11 a3, but 8...c7 9 dxc5 dxc5 10 d5 (10 xc6+ bxc6 is unclear) 10...f6 looks acceptable, as White’s advantage is insignificant.

9 d5
9 dxc5 dxc5 10 xc6+ bxc6 11 a4 (11 e4 f6) 11...d7 leads to interesting complications:

a) White achieves nothing after 12 e4 f6 13 g5 h6 14 xf6 xf6 15 a5 (15 0-0 0-0 16 a5 g4 17 d2 g5) 15...h3 16 0-0 xg2 17 xg2 g6+ 18 h3 h5+.
b) 12 \( \text{b1} \) can be met by 12...\( \text{f6} \),
13 \( \text{b7} \) e4 14 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{w5} \).

c) 12 \( \text{a3} \) begins a queenside attack. After 12...
\( \text{f6} \), 13 \( \text{d2} \) (13 \( \text{a5} \) \( \text{e4} \)),
13...a5! 14 0-0 (14 \( \text{d1} \) 0-0 15
\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{e4} \)), 16 \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xc5} \), 17 \( \text{xc5} \)
\( \text{wxc5} \), 18 \( \text{xd7} \) \( \text{ad8} \) is equal) 14...0-0,
the move 15 f3 is useless in view of
15...\( \text{e6} \) or 15...e4!?, and after 15
\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{e4} \) the lack of defenders on
White's kingside becomes a problem for him:

c1) 16 \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{g5} \), 17 \( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xc3} \)
and now 18 \( \text{wa3} \) \( \text{h3} \), 19 g3 \( \text{w5} \), 20
\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e4} \) leads to a crushing defeat
for White, but the following variation
saves him: 18 f4! \( \text{wh4} \), 19 \( \text{wa3} \) \( \text{e2} \)+
20 \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{g3} \)+, etc.

c2) 16 \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{g5} \), 17 \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{h3} \)! 18
gxh3 \( \text{w5} \), 19 f3 \( \text{f8} \)? (the immediate
19...\( \text{g3} \)+ is also viable) and White's
most prudent option is to accept a
draw by perpetual check.

9...\( \text{e4} \) (D)

\[
\text{W}
\]

This blockading move is possible
thanks to the queen's position on e7.
One of the white bishops has gained
freedom, but the other one is for the
time being imprisoned by its own
pawns.

10 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{f6} \), 11 \( \text{wc2} \)

The attempt to exert pressure on the
queenside by 11 \( \text{b1} \) 0-0 12 \( \text{a4} \) is
parried with 12...\( \text{d8} \).

The text-move immediately attacks
the e4-pawn, restricting Black's options.
After 11 0-0 0-0 he enjoys a
wider choice of plans:

a) 12 a4?! is well met by 12...\( \text{xd4} \).

b) After 12 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{g4} \)?, two possible
lines are 13 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{e2} \), 14 \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{d3} \)
15 \( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \), 16 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{c7} \). 17
\( \text{xe8} \) \( \text{xa8} \) and 13 \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{e2} \), 14 \( \text{xe4} \)
\( \text{xd5} \), 15 \( \text{cxd5} \) \( \text{xfl} \), 16 \( \text{xf1} \) \( \text{a5} \), 17
\( \text{dxc5} \).

c) 12 \( \text{wc2} \) \( \text{e8} \)? (12...\( \text{f5} \) transposes
to our main line below) 13 \( \text{b1} \)
\( \text{a5} \), 14 \( \text{a4} \) and here Black should
avoid 14...\( \text{c7} \)? 15 \( \text{xe4} \) and choose
the equalizing 14...\( \text{xd5} \), 15 \( \text{cxd5} \) b6
or the more adventurous continuation
14...\( \text{wd8} \)?.

d) 12 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{e8} \), 13 a4 (13 \( \text{a3} \)
\( \text{d7} \) 13...\( \text{a5} \), 14 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{d8} \).

e) 12 f3?! \( \text{xf3} \), 13 \( \text{xf3} \) (13 \( \text{xf3} \)
\( \text{e6} \) 13...\( \text{a5} \), 14 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{e6} \), 15 \( \text{g5} \)
\( \text{h6} \), 16 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{hxg5} \).

In none of these lines is any advan-
tage for White apparent.

11...\( \text{f5} \) 12 0-0 0-0 13 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{ac8} \)

Black has to give up the e4-pawn,
but he obtains enough counterplay be-
cause of his active pieces.

8.5

3...\( \text{b6} \) (D)

This flexible continuation is offered
as an alternative to 3...c5.
Black does not immediately attack White’s centre, giving him a brief respite to set up a broad pawn-front by playing 4 e4; we examine in Section 8.6 how Black then uses all his resources to blow that centre apart. If White does not take up the challenge, then the play tends to resemble the Queen’s Indian or the Nimzo-Indian, with direct transpositions possible, though Black has some important ideas with ...f5 and/or ...\( \text{t}h4 \). In the current section we examine how best for Black to steer his way through these variations.

4 \( \text{w}c2 \)

White prevents the doubling of his queenside pawns. He also has the following possibilities:

a) 4 \( \text{w}b3 \) a5 5 a3 (5 e3 \( \text{b}7 \) 6 \( \text{f}3 \) f5 is equal) 5...a4 6 \( \text{w}c2 \) (6 \( \text{xb}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 7 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{a}5 \)) 6...\( \text{xc}3+ \) 7 \( \text{bxc}3 \) 8 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{c}6! \)? 9 \( \text{f}3 \) 7...f5 is unclear.

b) 4 g3 (the fianchetto offers White little here; 4 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 5 g3 comes to the same thing) 4...\( \text{b}7 \) 5 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{xc}3+ \) 6 \( \text{bxc}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 7 \( \text{g}2 \) and now 7...d6 keeps the game level, while 7...\( \text{c}6 \) is more ambitious, targeting the weak c4-pawn.

c) After 4 e3 \( \text{xc}3+!? \) 5 \( \text{bxc}3 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 6 \( \text{f}3 \) (6 f3 \( \text{h}4+!? \) 7 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 8 e4 \( \text{e}7 \) is unclear, while 6 \( \text{e}2 \) is similarly met by 6...\( \text{h}4! \)? 7 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \)) Black has a choice between the comparatively simple Nimzo-line 6...\( \text{f}6 \) 7 \( \text{d}3 \) 0-0 8 0-0 \( \text{d}6 \) 9 \( \text{d}2 \) (9 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 10 \( \text{d}2 \) f5; 9 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{e}4 \)) 9...e5 10 e4 \( \text{c}6 \), planning ...\( \text{e}7-g6 \), and the more ambitious 6...f5 7 \( \text{a}3 \) (7 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 8 0-0 c5 is unclear) 7...\( \text{f}6 \) 8 \( \text{e}2 \) (8 \( \text{d}3 \) c5!? 9 dxc5 \( \text{c}7 \) is also unclear) 8...\( \text{e}4 \).

4...\( \text{b}7 \) 5 a3

After 5 e3 \( \text{f}6 \) 6 \( \text{f}3 \) 0-0 7 \( \text{d}3 \) (7 \( \text{e}2 \) fails to control e4 and can be met by 7...\( \text{e}4 \) 8 0-0 f5 or 7...\( \text{e}4 \)) 7...c5 White achieves nothing because he has mixed two different development schemes.

Much the same can be said of 5 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 6 \( \text{g}5 \) h6 7 \( \text{h}4 \) c5 (7...\( \text{e}4! \)? 8 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 9 0-0 \( \text{xc}3 \) 10 \( \text{xc}3 \) a5 11 a3 a4 is unclear, Dreev-Markos, Montcada 2009) 8 a3 (8 0-0-0 cxd4)? 8...\( \text{xc}3+ \) 9 \( \text{xc}3 \) g5 10 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 11 \( \text{d}3 \) (11 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{xg}3 \) 12 hxg3 \( \text{xf}3 \) 13 gxf3 cxd4) 11...d6 with chances for both sides, I.Sokolov-Stefansson, Reykjavik 2003.

5...\( \text{xc}3+ \) 6 \( \text{xc}3 \) d6 7 \( \text{f}3 \)

Other continuations allow Black more rapid counterplay:

a) After 7 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 8 \( \text{f}3 \) 0-0 (8...\( \text{g}8! \)) 9 \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{e}8 \) Black parries White’s superficial threats without difficulty; e.g., 10 e3 \( \text{h}8 \) 11 \( \text{g}5 \) f6 12 \( \text{d}3 \) e5.
THE NIMZO-LIKE

b) 7 f3!? \( \text{\textit{w}}h4+ \) (7...\( \text{\textit{d}}e7!\) 8 e4 0-0 9 \( \text{\textit{d}}h3 \text{\textit{d}g6} \) 8 g3 \( \text{\textit{d}e7} \) 9 e4 \( \text{\textit{d}f6} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{d}e2} \) (10 \( \text{\textit{d}d3} \text{\textit{c}5} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{d}e2} \text{\textit{c}6} \) 10...c5 11 \( \text{\textit{d}g2} \text{0-0} \) 12 0-0 \( \text{\textit{d}c6} \) 13 d5 (13 \( \text{\textit{d}e3} \text{\textit{e}5} \) 13...exd5 14 cxd5 \( \text{\textit{a}6}!? \) 15 dxc6 \( \text{\textit{d}xe2} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{f}2} \) \( \text{\textit{b}5} \) is unclear.

8 e3

8 \( \text{\textit{g}5} \) is rather dubious as Black can reply actively with 8...h6 9 \( \text{\textit{h}4} \) g5 10 \( \text{\textit{g}3} \text{\textit{d}e4} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{c}2} \) (11 \( \text{\textit{d}3} \text{\textit{f}5} \) 11...h5 12 d5 (12 h4 \( \text{\textit{x}g3} \) 13 fxg3 gxh4) 12...exd5 13 cxd5 \( \text{\textit{x}d5} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{d}d2} \text{\textit{e}7} \).

8 g3 a5 (Black can also try 8...c5!? 9 dxc5 bxc5 10 \( \text{\textit{d}g2} \text{a}5 \) 11 0-0 0-0 9 b3 \( \text{\textit{d}d7} \) (9...\( \text{\textit{d}c6}!? \) 10 \( \text{\textit{g}2} \) \( \text{\textit{d}7} \) 11 0-0 0-0 looks more interesting) 10 \( \text{\textit{g}2} \text{0-0} \) 11 0-0 \( \text{\textit{w}e7} \) leads to a long manoeuvring game with approximately equal chances.

8...0-0 9 \( \text{\textit{d}e2} \)

White's plan includes the moves \( \text{\textit{b}4} \) and \( \text{\textit{b}2} \), but the immediate 9 \( \text{\textit{b}4} \) is somewhat premature in view of 9...a5. Then 10 \( \text{\textit{b}2} \text{\textit{d}e4} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{c}2} \) (11 \( \text{\textit{b}3} \text{\textit{a}xb4} \) 12 axb4 \( \text{\textit{x}al+} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{x}al} \text{\textit{w}6} \) gives Black the initiative) 11...\( \text{\textit{a}xb4} \) 12 axb4 \( \text{\textit{x}al+} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{x}al} \text{\textit{d}a6} \) leaves White with problems on the queenside, and the advance 10 b5 is not desirable for him since after 10...\( \text{\textit{d}d7} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{e}2} \) (11 \( \text{\textit{d}d3} \text{\textit{e}5} \) 11...\( \text{\textit{d}e4} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{w}c2} \) 13 0-0 \( \text{\textit{f}6} \) the thematic pawnbreak 14 d5 decreases in value.

Another nuance relates to the development of the f1-bishop: after 9 \( \text{\textit{d}d3} \text{\textit{d}d7} \) (9...c5!? 10 0-0 (10 b4 a5 11 b5 e5) 10...c5 11 b4 (11 b3 \( \text{\textit{c}8} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{b}2} \text{\textit{c}xd4} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{x}d4} \text{\textit{c}5} \), Yudasin-Psakhis, Ramat Aviv 1999) 11...\( \text{\textit{x}d4} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{x}d4} \text{\textit{e}5} \) Black obtained good counterplay in Kožul-Jukić, Yugoslav Team Ch, Cetinje 1990.

9...\( \text{\textit{d}d7} \) 10 0-0

Again the line 10 b4 \( \text{\textit{d}e4} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{c}2} \) (11 \( \text{\textit{w}b3} \text{\textit{g}5}!? \) 11...a5 is not advantageous for White.

10...\( \text{\textit{d}e4} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{c}2} \)

11 \( \text{\textit{w}d3} \) f5 12 b4 (12 \( \text{\textit{d}d2} \text{\textit{h}4} \) 12...\( \text{\textit{f}6} \) 13 d5 \( \text{\textit{g}6} \) is also possible, and similar to our main line below.

11...f5 (D)

This is the critical position for the whole variation.
12 b4
12 Qe1!? Wh4 13 f3 Qg5 14 Qd1 (14 f4?! Qe4 15 Qf3 Wh6 gave Black the initiative in Karpov-Yusupov, Candidates (2), London 1989; 14 c5!?) and now both 14...e5 and 14...Qf6 15 Wf2 Wxf2+ 16 Wxf2 e5 lead to a position with chances for both sides.

12...Qf6 13 d5
The line 13 Qb2 Qg6 (13...Qh6!?)
14 d5 We7 15 Qad1 c5 16 dxc6 Qxc6, as in Van Wely-S.Zhigalko, Sestao 2010, is of approximately equal value.

13...Qg6 14 Qd4!?
White fails to achieve an advantage after 14 Qb2 c5! 15 dxc6 (15 dxe6 Qf8) 15...Qxc6 16 Wfd1 We7. Then the careless 17 Qe1? Wh4 left him in a difficult situation in Ki.Georgiev-Gri-shchuk, European Team Ch, Kher-sonissos 2007.

14...Wg5 15 g3 Qe5!
Black's attacking threats are more important than White's material gains. After 16 Qxe6 Qxe6 17 dxe6 Wg6 18 Qd1! (18 Wb3?! h5!) 18...Qg5 19 Qd5 (19 Qf1 Qgf3) 19...Qef3+ White retains equality, but no more than that,

Savina-Demina, Russian Women's Ch, Voronezh 2009.

8.6
3...b6 4 e4
This principled rejoinder transposes to a line of the English Defence (1 d4 e6 2 c4 b6 3 e4 Qb7 4 Qc3 Qb4), so we now need to make a small excursion into its theory. In comparison with the main lines of that risky opening (which arise after 1 d4 e6 2 c4 b6 3 e4 Qb7 4 Qd3), Black has fewer problems in our case, although he must be ready for sharp and even irrational play.

4...Qb7 (D)

The e4-pawn can be defended in several ways:

8.6.1: 5 Wc2 105
8.6.2: 5 Qd3 105
8.6.3: 5 f3 107

5 d5?! also guards the pawn, but 5...We7 disrupts White’s game: 6 Qe3 Qf6 7 Qd3 exd5 8 exd5 c6 gives Black counterplay, while 6 Qe2 Qf6 7
\( \text{g}5 \ \text{h}6 \ 8 \ \text{h}4?! \ \text{x}c3+ \ 9 \ \text{x}c3 \text{w}a3 \ 10 \ \text{x}f6 \text{g}x6 \text{and} \ 6 \ \text{e}2 \ \text{ex}d5 \ 7 \ \text{ex}d5 \ \text{f}6 \) also leave Black with a pleasant position.

### 8.6.1

5 \text{w}c2 \text{w}h4

White’s centre must be attacked before he fortifies it.

6 \text{d}3

6 d5 is also interesting here. Black’s best reply is 6...\text{x}c3+!; for example, 7 \text{bxc}3 (7 \text{w}xc3 \text{w}xe4+ 8 \text{e}3 and now 8...\text{f}6 or 8...\text{d}e7) 7...\text{w}e7 (7...f5 8 \text{ex}f5 \text{ex}d5 is unclear) 8 \text{d}3 (8 \text{e}2 \text{d}6) 8...\text{a}6 (8...\text{ex}d5?! 9 \text{cxd}5 \text{f}5) 9 \text{f}3 \text{e}5, as in Flores-A. Kovalyov, Bogota 2010.

6...f5 7 \text{f}3

7 g3?! is clearly weaker: 7...\text{w}h5 8 \text{e}2 (8 \text{e}2?! \text{w}f7; 8 \text{f}3? \text{fx}e4 9 \text{fx}e4 \text{f}6 10 \text{e}2 \text{c}6 11 \text{a}3 0-0 with an attack) 8...\text{w}f3 9 0-0 \text{x}c3 10 \text{xc}3 \text{c}6 11 \text{e}3 \text{b}4 12 \text{w}e2 \text{fx}e4.

7...\text{x}c3+ 8 \text{f}1

Otherwise White will have to give up the e4-pawn. White should avoid playing 8 \text{bxc}3? \text{g}4 9 0-0? \text{fx}e4 10 \text{e}5 \text{w}xg2+, but 8 \text{xc}3 \text{g}4 9 0-0 \text{fx}e4 10 \text{e}5 is an interesting alternative. Then 10...\text{w}h4 11 \text{e}2 (not 11 \text{c}2? \text{d}6 12 \text{a}4+ c6 13 \text{d}5 \text{dx}e5) 11...\text{d}6 (11...\text{h}6!?) 12 \text{g}4 \text{f}6 13 \text{g}3 \text{w}h3 14 \text{xf}6+ \text{gx}f6 15 \text{c}5 0-0 and 10...\text{f}5?! 11 \text{c}2 \text{d}6 12 \text{a}4+ (12 \text{g}3 \text{e}7 13 \text{f}3 \text{d}7) 12...\text{c}6 13 \text{g}3 \text{e}7 14 \text{g}4 \text{g}6 both give White enough of an initiative to compensate for the pawn, but he has no advantage.

8...\text{w}e7

The queen retreats precisely here in order to cover the e-file.

9 \text{bxc}3 \text{fxe}4 10 \text{xe}4 \text{xe}4 11 \text{w}xe4 \text{c}6 12 \text{g}5

The point of this bishop move is to force Black to castle queenside. If he can calmly finish his development, then White’s pawn weaknesses will tell.

12...\text{f}6 13 \text{xf}6 \text{gx}f6 14 \text{g}3

Or 14 \text{e}1 0-0-0 15 \text{d}5 \text{f}5 16 \text{w}d3 \text{a}5.

14...0-0-0 15 \text{g}2 \text{w}a3

Both sides have chances.

### 8.6.2

5 \text{d}3 (D)

\[
\text{B}
\]

An uncompromising plan: White supports his pawn-centre with an active developing move. Black has no choice but to strike back vigorously.

5...\text{f}5 6 \text{f}3!

Nothing else gives Black any difficulties:

a) 6 \text{ex}f5? is completely unsound because after 6...\text{x}g2 7 \text{w}h5+, Black can simply reply 7...\text{f}8.
b) 6 d5 fxe4 7 ∆xe4 ♞h4 8 ♞e2 ∆f6 9 ∆f3 0-0 leaves Black with the initiative.

c) 6 ♞c2 ∆f6 (6...♗h4 transposes to Section 8.6.1) 7 f3 ♞c6 8 ∆e2 (Odessky points out that White should avoid 8 ∆e3?! fxe4 and 8 e5? ∆xd4 9 ♗a4 {9 ♗f2 ♛h5!} 9...♕g4! 8...fxe4 9 fxe4 e5 10 d5 ∆d4 11 ∆xd4 (not 11 ♞d1?! 0-0, when 12 0-0? ♕g4 is entirely bad for White) 11...exd4 12 e5 dxc3 13 bxc3 ∆c5 14 exf6 ♕xf6 and again Black is in charge of events.

d) 6 ♗e2 ∆f6 7 ∆g5 (7 f3 ♞c6! and now 8 ∆e3 fxe4 9 fxe4 e5 is pleasant for Black, while White should definitely avoid 8 e5? ∆xd4 9 ♗f2 ♛h5!) offers Black a choice between the equal 7...fxe4 8 ∆xe4 ♖xe4 9 ♕xf6 ♗xf6 10 ♞xe4 0-0 and the more adventurous 7...0-0!? , pursuing the initiative.

e) 6 ♘h5+ g6 7 ♗e2 ∆f6 8 ∆g5 (8 f3 ♞c6 9 ∆e3) 8...fxe4 (8...0-0?!) 9 ∆xe4 (9 ♘xf6? exd3) 9...∆xe4 10 ∆xf6 ♕xf6 11 ♕xe4 0-0 12 ♓f3 ♞c6 with an equal game, Uribe-Buhmann, Bridgetown 2009.

6...♕h4+

The queen check is a standard idea in positions such as this – by provoking a weakening of the h1-a8 diagonal, Black noticeably increases the strength of his b7-bishop.

6...♗c6!? is another interesting possibility: 7 ♖e2 (7 a3 ♖xc3+ 8 bxc3 ♕h4+ 9 g3 ♕h5) 7...fxe4 8 ♖xe4 (8 fxe4 ♕h4+ 9 g3 ♕h5 10 0-0 ♗f6) 8...♕h4+ 9 g3 ♕e7 10 0-0 (10 d5 is met by 10...♖a5 and 10 a3 ♖xc3+ 11 ♖xc3 with 11...♗f6 12 ♗g5 0-0-0) 10...♗f6 11 ♗g5 (11 ♖b5 0-0 leads to unclear play) 11...♖xc3 (11...0-0-0!?) 12 ♖xc3 0-0-0. So far this line has not been tested in tournament practice.

7 g3 ♕h5 (D)

8 exf5

A highly complex situation arises after 8 ♖d2 ♖c6 (8...♕e7 is possible too) 9 d5 (9 a3 ♖d6 10 e5 ♕e7; 9 ♖b5 ♖xd2+ 10 ♕xd2 0-0-0) 9...♕e5; for example, 10 ♖e2 ♖f6 (10...0-0-0?!) 11 f4 ♖e4 12 h3 ♖xc3 13 ♖xc3 ♕h6.

8...♖c6!? 9 ♖xe6

9 ♖xe2 ♖xf3 10 ♖f1 ♕h5 11 fxe6 dxe6 leaves the game unclear.

9...dxe6 10 a3

The reason for provoking the exchange on c3 is to fortify the d4-pawn.

10 d5 is more forcing. Then 10...♖xd5 11 cxd5 ♖e5 12 ♖b5+ (or 12 ♕a4+ ♖f7 13 ♖e2 ♖xc3+ 14 bxc3 ♖xd5) 12...c6 (12...♖f7 is another idea) 13 ♖e2 (13 dxc6 ♖xc6 14 ♕a4 ♖xc3+ 15 bxc3 ♖e7 is unclear, Tremblay-Noritsyn, Canadian Ch, Guelph 2011) 13...♖f6 14 f4 ♖e4 15 h3 ♕xd5 leads to equality.
10...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}c3}}}+) 11 \text{bxc3}

Now Black can choose between 11...0-0-0 and 11...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}f6}}})\), intending to castle kingside. Black has quite good attacking prospects in return for the sacrificed pawn.

8.6.3

5 f3 (D)

The main continuation: White immediately cements the vulnerable point e4.

5...f5

This move is fully in the spirit of the English Defence, though there are other viable moves, e.g., 5...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}}}4+\) 6 g3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}c3}}}+\) 7 bxc3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}}}7\) and 5...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}}}e7\) 6 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}}}e2\) (6 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}}}d3\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}}}6\) 7 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}}}e2\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}}}4+)\) 6...f5 7 a3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{xc}}}3+}\) 8 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{xc}}}3\) 0-0 9 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}3\) (9 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d3?!}\) fxe4) 9...fxe4 10 fxe4 d5 11 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}}}g4\) dxe4, which led to an unclear position in Moberg-Langrock, Gothenburg 2006.

6 exf5

6 e5?! is dubious in view of 6...c5 7 a3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}c3}}}+\) 8 bxc3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}c6}\) 6...d6?! is also possible, when 7 exd6 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}d6}}\) should follow rather than 7 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}}}a4+}\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}c6}\) 8 d5 exd5 9 cxd5 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}4+}\).

6...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}h6}}) 7 fxe6

More relaxed play does not promise White any advantage: 7 a3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}c3}}}+\) (7...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d6?!}\) 8 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}h6\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}4+}\) g3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}h6}\) 8 bxc3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}f5}\) 9 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}h3\) 0-0 10 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}g5\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e8}\) 11 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d3\) h6, Simantsev-Khamitsky, Saratov 2008. It is even worse for him to choose 7 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}3?!\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}x5}\) 8 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f2}\) 0-0 or 7 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}h6\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}4+}\) g3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}h6\) 9 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d2\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}d2+}\) 10 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}d2\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}c6}\) with an unpleasant initiative for Black in both cases.

7...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}f5}}) (D)

8 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f4}})

If White grabs more material, the exposure of his king and Black's lead in development may become critical factors:

a) 8 exd7+ \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}d7}\) 9 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f4}\) (9 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e2\) 0-0 is unclear) 9...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}4+}\) (9...0-0 10 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d2}\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e8+}\) 10 g3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e7+}\) 11 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e2!}\) (11 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e2?!}\) g5 12 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d3\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f8}, Hager-Lempert, Welfen 1992) 11...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}e2+}\) 12 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}e2\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}d4+}\) 13 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f2\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}c3}\) (13...0-0) 14 bxc3 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}c6}\) 15 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e1\) \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}c5}\) 16 \(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}c7\) 0-0 17
A ROCK-SOLID CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

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Rock-Solid Chess Opening Repertoire for Black

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ROCK-SOLID CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

with approximate equality despite White's two extra pawns.

b) 8 â³d3 ²h4+ 9 ²f1 0-0 10
²xf5 (10 ²vb5!? is more consistent; then 10...²c6 11 a3 ²e7 12 ²xf5
²xf5 13 exd7 ²d8 leads to unclear play) 10...²xf5 11 ²e3 dxe6 12 ²f2
²f6 13 ²a4 (after 13 ²ge2 ²xc3!? White should avoid 14 ²xc3? ²xf3 in
favour of 14 bxc3 ²f8) 13...²f8 14
²d1 ²c6, Krizsany-Mihalko, Hungarian Team Ch 1995/6.

With the text-move, White aspires to castle queenside as quickly as possible. 8 ²e2 leads to unclear play after
8...dxe6 or 8...0-0.

8...dxe6 9 ²a4+

Slower play with 9 ²e2 0-0 10 ²d2 allows Black enough counterchances after 10...²h4+ 11 g3 (11 ²g3 ²e7!)
11...²h5 12 ²g2 ²xf3 13 ²xf3 ²xf3 14 0-0-0 ²a6, but returning the pawn straight away by 9 ²d2!? is interesting: 9...²xd4 10 0-0-0 ²bc6 11
²ge2 ²f5!? (11...²xe2+ 12 ²xe2 ²e7 is slightly weaker, D.Pedersen-
S.Williams, Århus 1998) 12 ²e4+
²fe7 The initiative has passed to White, but Black can maintain the equilib-
rium.

10...²e4

10 d5

In the case of 10 0-0-0 ²xd4, Black defends successfully:

a) Not 11 ²h3? a6.

b) 11 ²e5?! is dubious in view of 11...²c5, as Kengis indicated.

c) 11 ²b5 0-0 12 ²xc7 (or 12
²xd4 ²xd4 13 ²xb4 ²xf4 14 ²e2
c5) 12...²g5+ 13 f4 ²h6! 14 ²xd4
²xf4 15 ²xf4 ²xf4+ 16 ²bl ²xd4
17 ²f3 (17 ²h3 ²e3) 17...²xf3 18
²xb4 ²e4+ 19 ²a1 ²d4 20 ²d2
²c2+ with a draw (Odessky).

d) 11 ²ge2 ²xc3 12 bxc3 ²xe2+ 13
²xe2 ²f6 14 ²xc7 ²xc3+ 15
²bl 0-0 and Black is OK.

e) 11 ²ce2!? ²xe2+ 12 ²xe2 ²f6
13 ²xc7 0-0 14 ²d4 ²xd4 15 ²xb4
²ac8 again leaves Black with a satisfact-
ory game.

10...²xc3+ 11 bxc3 exd5 12 cxd5

The alternative 12 0-0-0 ²f6 13
cxd5 ²xc3+ (Odessky) leads to equal

12...²xd5 13 ²d1 ²c5 14 ²e4+
²fe7

The initiative has passed to White, but Black can maintain the equilib-
rium.
9 The Bogo-like 2 c4 b4+ 3 d2

1 d4 e6 2 c4 b4+ 3 d2 (D)

With this modest-looking knight move, White wants to gain the bishop-pair without weakening his pawn-structure or spending more than one tempo on the process (compare Section 8.5). Black can either acquiesce, relying on his rapid development, or prepare to retreat his dark-squared bishop when it becomes necessary. In the latter case he usually wastes a tempo himself, although the tempo granted to White may not prove too valuable, as the knight is not very effectively placed on d2. We examine these two fundamentally different approaches in the following sections of this chapter:

- In Section 9.1 we study 3...c5 4 a3 xd2+. Compared to the regular Bogo-Indian, Black has derived some benefit from his initial move-order as now White must take on d2 with his queen, since the d4-pawn is under attack.
- With 3...f6 (Section 9.2) Black is willing to transpose to a line of the Bogo-Indian Defence (viz. 1 d4 f6 2 c4 e6 3 f3 b4+ 4 bd2, having avoided the 4 d2 main lines). We shall focus on lines where he prepares to retreat his bishop to e7, and provokes White to occupy the centre. The central pawn-structure can take many forms resembling the French Defence, Czech Benoni or even the Steinitz Defence to the Ruy Lopez!

9.1

3...c5 (D)

The immediate attack upon the centre is a logical but weighty decision since White can force the exchange of the b4-bishop, leaving Black’s dark squares glaringly weak.

4 a3

If White has serious hopes of an advantage, then he has no real choice. 4 f3 cxd4 5 xd4 f6 6 a3 e7 is
inoffensive, while 4 e3 cxd4 5 exd4 d5!? 6 c5 (6 a3 \(\text{\textit{e}}7\)) 6...\(\text{\textit{c}}6\) 7 \(\text{\textit{f}}3\) \(\text{e}5\) leads to unclear play. After 4 dxc5 \(\text{\textit{f}}6\) Black also has no difficulties:

a) 5 \(\text{\textit{f}}3\) \(\text{\textit{x}}c5\) 6 e3 \(\text{b}6\) (6...\(\text{\textit{c}}6\)!? 7 a3 a5) 7 \(\text{\textit{e}}2\) \(\text{\textit{b}}7\) 8 b3 0-0 9 \(\text{\textit{b}}2\) \(\text{\textit{e}}7\) is equal, Dziuba-Riff, Cappelle la Grande 2010.

b) 5 g3 \(\text{\textit{x}}c5\) 6 \(\text{\textit{g}}2\) 0-0 7 \(\text{\textit{gf}}3\) \(\text{\textit{c}}6\) 8 0-0 d5 9 cxd5 (9 a3 a5 10 \(\text{\textit{c}}2\) d4 11 \(\text{\textit{b}}3\) \(\text{\textit{e}}7\) 12 \(\text{\textit{g}}5\) \(\text{e}5\) gave Black the initiative in the game Papaioannou-Elianov, Novi Sad 2009; 9 e3!? is equal) 9...\(\text{\textit{xd}}5\) 10 \(\text{\textit{b}}3\) \(\text{\textit{b}}6\) 11 \(\text{\textit{bd}}4\) \(\text{\textit{e}}8\) 12 b3 \(\text{\textit{g}}4\) 13 \(\text{\textit{g}}2\) \(\text{\textit{g}}4\). The initiative already belongs to Black and White must be careful to avoid serious trouble; e.g., 14 h3? \(\text{\textit{xf}}3\) 15 \(\text{\textit{xf}}3\) \(\text{\textit{wf}}6\) 16 e3 \(\text{\textit{xg}}3\), G.Kuzmin-Eingorn, Berlin 1997, or 14 \(\text{\textit{xc}}6\) \(\text{\textit{xc}}6\) 15 \(\text{\textit{e}}5\)? \(\text{\textit{xf}}2\), as in Hanisch-M.Müller, Germany (team event) 2005/6.

4...\(\text{\textit{xd}}2\)+ 5 \(\text{\textit{xd}}2\) \(\text{\textit{cxd}}4\) (D)

An unbalanced position has arisen: White hopes to use his obvious advantage on the dark squares but for the time being he is behind in development. Besides, his queenside is to some degree loosened, since the move a3 has weakened the b3-square, making the c4-pawn vulnerable. Now:

9.1.1: 6 \(\text{\textit{xd}}4\)?? 110
9.1.2: 6 \(\text{\textit{f}}3\) 111

9.1.1

6 \(\text{\textit{xd}}4\)??

The white queen will soon have to move again, but the relocation is no bad thing, as it was poorly placed on d2.

6...\(\text{\textit{f}}6\) 7 \(\text{\textit{f}}3\)

This developing move is the main continuation.

The game Kožul-Leventić, Croatia Cup, Pula 2002 serves as a curious example of underestimating the opponent’s possibilities: 7 b4 \(\text{\textit{c}}6\) 8 \(\text{\textit{c}}3\) (8 \(\text{\textit{h}}4\) can be met by 8...d6 9 \(\text{\textit{g}}5\) a5 10 b5 \(\text{\textit{e}}5\) or 8...a5 9 b5 \(\text{\textit{e}}7\) 10 \(\text{\textit{b}}2\) \(\text{\textit{f}}5\) 11 \(\text{\textit{xf}}6\) {11 \(\text{\textit{f}}4\) d6} 11...\(\text{\textit{c}}7\) with highly unclear play) 8...d5 (Black could also consider 8...0-0!? or 8...d6, with unclear play) 9 e3 (9 \(\text{\textit{f}}3\) is an alternative) 9...e5 10 cxd5 (10 \(\text{\textit{f}}3\)?? d4 11 \(\text{\textit{b}}2\) 0-0 is unclear) 10...\(\text{\textit{xd}}5\) 11 \(\text{\textit{c}}5\)? (White should play 11 \(\text{\textit{d}}3\))
Almost all the possible moves by the white queen have been examined in practice.

8 \text{\textit{Wd3}!}\?

This move looks like the strongest one but these other variations also deserve attention:

a) 8 \text{\textit{Wf4}?! e5} (8...0-0 is possible too) 9 \text{\textit{Wg3} e4} 10 \text{\textit{Qd2} 0-0} 11 e3 d5 12 \text{\textit{Ae2} d4} gave Black the initiative in Quinn-Miezis, Cork 2005.

b) 8 \text{\textit{Wh4} d6?!} 9 \text{\textit{Ag5}} (9 g4 \text{\textit{Wa5+ 10 Ad2} Wb6 is unclear}) 9...\text{\textit{Wa5+ 10 Ad2} (10 Ad2 Wf5) 10...\text{\textit{Be4} 11 Wxe4}} (or 11 \text{\textit{Ae3} d5}) 11...\text{\textit{Wxg5}} with equal play.

c) 8 \text{\textit{Wc3} 0-0} (8...d6?!?) 9 \text{\textit{Ag5} d6} (9...h6 10 \text{\textit{xf6} Wxf6} 11 Wxf6 gxf6 12 0-0-0) 10 c5 (10 \text{\textit{xf6} Wxf6} 11 Wxf6 gxf6 is equal, while 10 b4 is met by 10...e5 and 10 \text{\textit{Ad1} by 10...\text{\textit{Be4}}}) 10...dxc5 11 \text{\textit{Wxc5} \text{\textit{Dxe4}}} 12 \text{\textit{Axd8} \text{\textit{Dxc5}}} 13 \text{\textit{Ac7} b6} leads to equality.

d) 8 \text{\textit{Wd1} 0-0} (8...d5 9 cxd5 exd5!? 9 e3 e5 10 b4 d6 11 \text{\textit{Ae2}} (or 11 \text{\textit{Ab2} b6 12 \text{\textit{Be2} a5}) 11...a5 12 b5 \text{\textit{Be7}} 13 a4 \text{\textit{Wc7}} with counterplay, I.Sokolov-Dor­fman, Burgas 1992.

e) 8 \text{\textit{Wd6}} has the idea of luring the black knight to e4 so as to attack it later. After 8...\text{\textit{Be4} 9 \text{\textit{Wd3} d5} 10 e3 (10 b4? \text{\textit{Wf6} 11 \text{\textit{Aa2} Be5}) 10...0-0} 11 \text{\textit{Wc2}} (11 b4 \text{\textit{Wf6}} 12 \text{\textit{Aa2} Ad8 is unclear}) 11...\text{\textit{Wxa5+ 12 Ad2 Bd6}} there are chances for both sides (M.Gure­vich).

8...d5

Since the move ...d6 re-establishes some control over the dark squares, it is an idea to bear in mind in many variations. For instance, 8...d6 9 b4 0-0 10 \text{\textit{Ab2} e5} is worth examining here.

9 cxd5 exd5 10 g3 0-0 11 \text{\textit{Ag2} Ae8} 12 0-0 \text{\textit{Ag4}}

Black’s position is acceptable, although he may be a little worse.

9.1.2

6 \text{\textit{Af3}}

White is going to take on d4 with the knight, but now the advance of Black’s e-pawn is a way to generate activity.

6...\text{\textit{Af6} 7 \text{\textit{Xd4}}}

7 \text{\textit{Wxd4}} transposes to Section 9.1.1.

White must not delay taking on d4 any longer: 7 g3?! \text{\textit{Cc6}} 8 \text{\textit{Xd4} \text{\textit{Wb6}} 9 \text{\textit{Bb5} d5}! is advantageous for Black, Kuzubov-Zubarev, Kharkov 2007.

7...0-0 8 e3

This calm developing move is the most common, but 8 f3?! is very interesting. Then 8...d5 9 cxd5 exd5 10 e3 appears to give Black insufficient
counterplay, but 8...e5 9 GNUC2 (9 GNUC5 
Gc6 is unclear) 9...d6 10 e4 GNUC6 11 
GNUC2 WC7 (or 11...a5) leads to a com-
plicated struggle. On the other hand, 8 
g3 d5 9 cxd5 (9 GNUCg2?! dxc4 10 0-0 e5 
11 GNUC5 Gc6) 9...Wxd5 10 GNUCf3 WCf5 
(10...GNUCe4 is possible too) 11 GNUCg2 
Gc6 12 WCf4 WCc2 13 GNUCd4 WCxd4 14 
Wxd4 e5 15 WCf2 WCc7 produces a 
rather simple and roughly level game.

8...d5 (D)

We have another critical decision-
point. It is desirable for White to ex-
change queens, but the attempt to do 
so simply after 9 cxd5 WCxd5 does not 
promise any significant advantage:

a) After 10 GNUCf3 b6 11 WCxd5 (11 b4 
is met by 11...GNUCa6) 11...WCxd5 12 WCd4 
(or 12 b4 GNUCa6 13 b5 GNUCb7 14 GNUCb2 
GNUCd7 15 WCc1镛c5) 12...WCd8 Black 
succeeds in neutralizing White’s posi-
tional trumps in timely fashion. After 
13 GNUCc4 (13 b4 a5 14 b5 GNUCb7 15 GNUCb2 
GNUCd7 16 e4 GNUCf4) 13...GNUCa6 14 GNUCxa6 
GNUCxa6 it is already time for White to 
worry about maintaining an equal po-

b) 10 GNUCb5?! is more dangerous. 
After 10...WCc6 11 WCxd5, Black should 
avoid 11...WCxd5? 12 e4 GNUCf6 13 f3 a6 
14 WCc7!, when White’s dark-squared 
bishop is master of the board. Black 
can defend by 11...exd5, but it is better 
for him to resort to tactical methods 
even earlier: 10...GNUCb3!? 11 WCc3 (11 
GNUCc7 is met by 11...WCc6 12 WCxa8? 
WCd8, while 11 WCd3 WCxd3 12 GNUCd3 
GNUCc6 13 0-0 WCd8 14 WCd1 e5 leads to 
equality) 11...WCxc3+ 12 WCxc3 WCd8 13 
GNUCe2 (13 b4 a5 14 GNUCb2 axb4 15 axb4 
GNUCxal+ 16 WCxal WCa6 17 b5 WCb4 is 
equal) 13...WCc6 14 b4 (14 0-0 can be 
met by 14...e5 or 14...GNUCa5) 14...WCe5 
and Black will gradually equalize.

Therefore White usually advances 
his b-pawn, preparing to develop his 
quesside pieces.

9 b3!?

The more aggressive 9 b4 allows 
Black to engage in close combat with 
unclear consequences: 9...a5 10 b5 
(10 GNUCb2 axb4 11 axb4 WCc2 
GNUCxal+ 13 GNUCxal WCe7 14 WCb2 e5 15 
GNUCf3 WCc6 is unclear, while 10 cxd5!? 
can be met by 10...WCxd5 11 b5 WCbd7) 
10...e5 11 WCf3 WCbd7 12 cxd5 (or 12 
GNUCb2 e4) 12...e4 13 WCd4 WCe5, Flear-
Eingorn, Berne 1993.

The prudent advance of the white 
pawn by only one square forces Black 
either to seek complications in another 
way or else to settle for a slightly 
worser position. Naturally, we shall fa-
vour the active approach.

9...GNUCe4?!

9...b6 10 GNUCb2 WCb7 11 WCd1 is an ex-
ample of Black settling for a slight dis-
advantage.
10 \textit{Wc2} e5 11 cxd5
11 \textit{Qf3} is met by 11...\textit{Af5} 12 \textit{Ad3} \textit{Ad7}.
11...\textit{Ad6}
Black must gambit a pawn, since 11...\textit{Axf2}?! 12 \textit{Wxf2} is not in his favour.
12 \textit{Af3}
12 \textit{Ab5??} \textit{Ax}b5 13 \textit{Ax}b5 \textit{Wa5+} costs White a piece, while after 12 \textit{Ae2} \textit{Af5} 13 \textit{Wd1} (13 \textit{Wb}2 \textit{Cd}7 14 \textit{Ad2} \textit{Cc}8 15 \textit{Cc1} \textit{Xc}1+ 16 \textit{Wx}c1 \textit{Wf6}) 13...\textit{Axd7} 14 \textit{Ab2} \textit{Cc}8 15 \textit{Cc1} \textit{Wb}6 16 \textit{Cc}3 a5 Black is targeting the weak b3-pawn.
12...\textit{Af5} 13 \textit{Wd1}
13 \textit{Wb}2 \textit{Cd}7 14 \textit{Ax}e5 (14 \textit{Ad2} \textit{Cc}8 15 \textit{Cc1} \textit{Xc}1+ 16 \textit{Wx}c1 \textit{Wb}6) 14...\textit{Ax}e5 15 \textit{Wx}e5 \textit{Cc}8 16 \textit{Wd}4 \textit{Be}4 also affords Black enough compensation.
13...\textit{Ad7} 14 \textit{Ab2} \textit{Cc}8
The calmer 14...\textit{We7} 15 \textit{Ad2} \textit{Xf}c8 is also good enough.
15 \textit{Ax}e5 \textit{Cc}2
Black’s initiative is worth the sacrificed pawns.

9.2
3...\textit{Af6} (D)
Black wishes to preserve his bishop. Another line with this aim, 3...d5, allows the unpleasant 4 \textit{Wa4+} \textit{Cc}6 5 e3, which has scored well for White in practice.
After the text-move (3...Nf6), let’s note that 4 g3 is ineffective due to 4...c5!. Therefore, we consider two main moves for White. With 4 \textit{Af3} he transposes directly to a line of the Bogo-Indian Defence, while with 4 a3, he drives back the b4-bishop and can then occupy the centre with his pawns right away. We divide our coverage as follows:

9.2.1: 4 a3
113
9.2.2: 4 Af3 0-0 misc.
114
9.2.3: 4 Af3 0-0 5 a3 \textit{He7} 6 e4
116

9.2.1
4 a3 \textit{He7} 5 e4
5 \textit{Af}g3 0-0 is considered in Sections 9.2.2 and 9.2.3.
5...d5
5...d6 6 \textit{Af}g3 0-0 transposes to the note to Black’s 6th move in Section 9.2.3.
6 e5 \textit{Fd}d7
We see a similar sequence in Section 9.2.3, to which 7 \textit{Af}g3 0-0 would now transpose. Here we shall examine other variations, and see what differences there are.
7 cxd5
White achieves nothing by 7 \textit{Wh}5 c5 (7...0-0!?!) 8 cxd5 g6 9 \textit{Wh}6 \textit{Af}8 10 \textit{Wf}4 exd5 11 b4!? (11 \textit{Ae}5 \textit{Ag}7 gives Black the initiative) 11...cxd4 12 \textit{Wxd}4 \textit{Ag}7 13 f4 \textit{Af}8.
Besides exchanging on d5, the other thematic continuation is 7 b4 a5 8 b5 c5:

a) 9 f4 (this move is more logical after the preliminary exchange cxd5) 9...b6 10 g3 (10 cxd5 xd5) 10...8d7 with good play for Black.

b) 9 cxd5 exd5 10 w3 (10 f4 cxd4 11 g3 c5 12 xd4 f6 13 c5 fxe5 is also equal) 10...cxd4 11 xd5 0-0 12 b2 (12 c4 is answered by 12...c5 13 wd8 xd8 14 b6 a7) and now Black can choose between 12...e8, 12...g5 and 12...c5, with equality in all cases.

c) 9 g3 cxd4 (9...0-0 transposes to Section 9.2.3) 10 cxd5 (or 10 b2 0-0) 10...xd5 11 b3 c5 12 xc5 xc5 13 d3 g4 14 0-0 d7 is again equal.

7...xd5 (D)

8 f4

After 8 b4 a5 9 b5 c5 10 bxc6 (other moves are discussed in line ‘b’ of the previous note) 10...xc6 11 g3 (or 11 df3) 11...f6 Black secures counterplay, and 8 g3 is well answered with 8...c5 (8...0-0 transposes to note ‘b’ to White’s 8th move in Section 9.2.3) 9 dxc5 c6 10 b4 a5 (10...dxe5!? 11 xe5 xe5 12 b2 f6 13 b5 d7 11 a4 0-0 12 b2 w c7, which was equal in Gladkysz-Kogan, Tarragona 2007.

With the text-move, White makes use of the absence of his knight from f3, but it does not provide any real benefit for him.

8...c5 9 df3

9 dxc5 is answered by 9...a5, while after 9 g3 c6 10 d3 (10 dxc5 a5) 10...wb6 11 0-0 a5 (11...c4 12 xc4 is unclear), the mistaken 12 f5? c4 13 f6 gxf6 14 exf6 xf6 left White with a bad position in S.Mohr-King, Dortmund 1989.

9...c6 10 d3 cxd4 11 b4

White is starting to overreach. 11 e2 c5 12 b4 xd3+ 13 wd3 0-0 14 0-0 f6 is approximately equal.

11...b6 12 b5 a5

The game is complicated, but favourable for Black. After 13 f5, instead of 13...bc4 (as played in Erdos-Kosic, Hungarian Team Ch 2010/11) the line 13...ac4 14 e2 d7 deserves attention.

9.2.2

4 df3 0-0 (D)

5 a3

White frequently decides to do without this pawn move. Without delving deeply into details, let us quote two continuations that are acceptable for Black:

a) 5 e3 d5 6 d3 c5 7 a3!? (7 0-0 d6 8 dxc5 xc5 9 a3 a5) 7...xd2+
THE BOGO-LIKE 2 c4 $b4+$ 3 $d2

b5 c5 8 bxc6 (8 e3 d5 transposes to the main line below) 8...bxc6 9 c5 d6 10 cxd6 $xd6 11 e4 $c7 12 $b2 c5, as in Moiseenko-Vitiugov, Hangzhou 2011.

6...d5 (D)

b) 5 g3 b6 6 $g2 $b7 7 0-0 $e7.

The black bishop voluntarily retreats, rather than waiting to be forced. White’s ‘free’ move, $bd2 hinders his control of the centre, and after both 8 b3 c5 9 $b2 (9 dxc5 bxc5 is equal) 9...d6 (or 9...a6) and 8 $e1 d5 9 cxd5 exd5 Black gets a pleasant game, albeit with widely differing strategic themes. Only 8 $c2 poses some problems for Black; after 8...c5 (8...d5 leads to a more complicated struggle) 9 e4 d5 10 exd5 (Black equalizes more easily after 10 cxd5 exd5 11 e5 $fd7) 10...exd5 11 dxc5 $xc5 12 $b3 $a6 (or 12...$e7) accurate defence is required for him to equalize.

5...$e7 6 e3

Now the line 6 g3 b6 7 $g2 $b7 8 b4 (8 0-0 c5) 8...c5 9 dxc5 bxc5 offers White no prospects for an advantage. He also achieves little after 6 b4 a5 7

7 b4

This advance is a logical follow-up to the move 5 a3. It is also possible to play 7 $c2 $bd7 8 b4 a5 9 b5 (9 $b1 is met by 9...axb4 10 axb4 $b6 11 $d3 $b7 12 0-0 dxc4, while 9 cxd5!? exd5 10 b5 $d6 11 a4 $e7 12 $d3 b6 is unclear) 9...c5 10 bxc6 bxc6.

If White does not make the b4 advance, then the tempo he has gained plays little role. For instance, 7 b3 b6 8 $b2 $b7 9 $d3 $bd7 (or 9...c5) 10 0-0 c5 can lead to a standard type of position with hanging pawns. 7 $d3 is the most common move in practice, but after 7...c5 8 dxc5 (8 b3 can be met by 8...b6 or the unclear 8...cxd4!? 9 exd4 dxc4 10 bxc4 e5 11 d5 b5) 8...a5 9 b3 (after 9 cxd5 both 9...exd5 10 b3 $bd7 11 $b2 $xc5 and 9...$xd5 give Black equal play) 9...$bd7 10 0-0 (10 $b2 is weaker in view of
10...\( \text{cxc5} \) 11 \( \text{a2} \) dxc4 10...\( \text{cxc5} \) Black has nothing to worry about.

7...a5 8 b5 c5 9 bxc6

Black safely defends himself after 9 dxc5 \( \text{bd7} \)?? 10 cxd5 (10 c6 bxc6 11 bxc6 \( \text{c5} \)) 10...\( \text{xd5} \) (10...\( \text{cxc5} \)?? 11 dxe6 \( \text{xe6} \) 12 \( \text{d}d4 \) \( \text{d5} \) is unclear) or 9 \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 10 \( \text{e2} \) (10 \( \text{d}d3 \) \( \text{b6} \) 11 \( \text{d}d4 \) \( \text{d5} \) is unclear) or 9 \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{d7} \) 10...\( \text{bxc6} \) 11 \( \text{dxc6} \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 12 \( \text{dxe6} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 13 \( \text{dxe6} \) \( \text{cxd5} \) with good play for Black.

9...\( \text{bxc6} \) 10 c5 \( \text{f7} \) 11 \( \text{e2} \) (D)

Or 11 \( \text{b2} \) e5 12 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 13 dxe5 \( \text{d7} \). It is of dubious value for White to play 11 \( \text{a4} \) e5 12 \( \text{a3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 13 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{e8} \) 14 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d8} \) 15 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{c7} \), Janković-Palac, Rijeka 2009.

11...\( \text{e5} \) 12 0-0 \( \text{e4} \)

White is playing a kind of French Defence. Both sides have prospects.

9.2.3

4 \( \text{f3} \) 0-0 5 \( \text{a3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 6 \( \text{e4} \) (D)

This is White’s most aggressive continuation, although here Black can get counterplay more easily.

6...\( \text{d5} \)

6...\( \text{d6} \)? is an experimental but interesting idea. Black intends a subsequent ...\( \text{e5} \) and argues that the d2-knight is poorly placed in the types of structure that arise:

a) 7 \( \text{d3} \) e5?? 8 0-0 (8 dxe5 dxe5 9 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{e8} \) is unclear; 8 d5 a5) 8...\( \text{exd4} \) 9 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{f7} \) (or 9...\( \text{c6} \)) is in the spirit of the Steinitz Defence to the Ruy Lopez.

b) 7 \( \text{e2} \) c5 (7...\( \text{bd7} \) 8 0-0 e5 is similar to a standard position of the Old Indian Defence, where the knight would normally be on c3) 8 d5 e5 (8...\( \text{bd7} \) and 8...\( \text{c6} \) are also possible) 9 \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 10 0-0 (Christiansen-Vidarsson, Reykjavik 1988) and now 10...\( \text{a5} \)?? is a useful move, forcing White to stabilize the position on the queenside.

7 \( \text{e5} \)

7 cxd5 exd5 8 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{f7} \) transposes to note ‘b’ to White’s 8th move, but some other moves are of independent importance:

a) 7 \( \text{d3} \) dxe4 8 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 9 \( \text{xe4} \) c5 10 dxc5 (other lines are 10
\( \text{The Bogo-like} \ 2 \ c4 \ \text{b4} + \ 3 \ \text{d2} \)

\( \text{\&e3 f5, 10} \ 0-0 \ f5 \ 11 \ \text{\&c2 cxd4} \text{ and } 10 \ \text{d5 exd5} \ 11 \ \text{\&xd5 \d7) 10} \ldots \text{\&xd1} + 11 \ \text{\&xd1 \text{\&xc5} (11 \ldots \text{f5}?) 12 \ \text{\&c2 \text{\&xc5}, Shankland-Fodor, Budapest 2009) 12} \ b4 \ (12 \ \text{\&e2} \text{ can be met by } 12 \ldots \text{f5}, \text{while} 12 \ \text{\&e3 \text{\&xe3} is equal} 12 \ldots \text{\&xf2} 13 \ c5 \ f5 \ 14 \ \text{\&b1} \ (14 \ \text{\&c2 \text{\&c6} 15 \ \text{\&b2 \&d8+}) 14 \ldots \text{\&c6} 15 \ \text{\&a2 \&d8+} \text{ and it is not clear to what extent White's initiative compensates for the pawn, I. Khenkin-Ulybin, Borzhomi (junior event) 1988.}

b) \ 7 \ \text{\&c2 dxe4} 8 \ \text{\&xe4 \text{\&xe4} 9 \ \text{\&xe4 f5} 10 \ \text{\&c2} \text{ (or } 10 \ \text{\&e3 c5} 11 \ \text{dxc5 \&f6} 12 \ \text{\&e2 e5) 10} \ldots \text{c5} 11 \ \text{dxc5 \&c6} 12 \ \text{\&f4 \&f6 (or } 12 \ldots \text{\&a5+) gives Black counterplay.}

7 \ldots \text{\&fd7 (D)}

\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}

8 b4
Or:

a) \ 8 \ \text{\&d3} \text{?} \ c5 \ 9 \ 0-0 \ \text{\&c6} 10 \ \text{\&e1} \text{ (White maintains the central tension, reckoning that it is hard for Black to find a good way to release it) 10} \ldots \text{a5} 11 \ \text{\&b3 dxc4} 12 \ \text{\&xc4 a4} 13 \ \text{\&xc5 \text{\&xc5} 14 \ \text{dxc5} \text{\&xdl} 15 \ \text{\&xd1 \&a5} 16 \ \text{\&b5 \&b3} 17 \ \text{\&b1 \text{\&xc5} and Black will have a slightly worse, but quite defensible ending.}

b) Making the pawn exchange 8 \ \text{cxd5 exd5} \text{ before playing } 9 \ b4 \text{ (here the line } 9 \ \text{\&d3 c5} \ 10 \ 0-0 \ \text{\&c6} 11 \ \text{\&e1 a5 leads to equality and in the case of } 12 \ \text{\&f1?} \text{ cxd4 Black's position even becomes preferable) } 9 \ldots \text{a5} 10 \ b5 \text{ is the main alternative to our main line. Instead of the standard } 10 \ldots \text{c5, Black has an interesting alternative in } 10 \ldots \text{f6?} 11 \ \text{\&b3 \&h8} 12 \ \text{\&xd5 (Miljkovic-Badev, Niš 2008), when } 12 \ldots \text{\&xe5} 13 \ \text{\&xd8 \&xf3+} 14 \ \text{\&xf3 \&xd8 leads to equality.}

8 \ldots \text{a5} 9 \text{ b5 c5} 10 \text{ cxd5}
10 \ \text{\&d3 cxd4} 11 \ \text{cxd5} (11 \ \text{\&c2 h6} 12 \ \text{\&b3 a4} 13 \ \text{\&xd4 \&c5) 11} \ldots \text{exd5 is of equal value. After } 10 \ \text{\&b2 cxd4} 11 \ \text{\&xd4 (11} \ \text{cxd5 exd5 and } 11 \ \text{\&e2 \&c5 12 \ \text{\&xd4 \&bd7 are also possible) 11} \ldots \text{\&c5 12 \ &e2 \&bd7 13} \ 0-0 \ \text{b6 the black pieces take up useful squares.}

10 \ldots \text{exd5} 11 \ \text{\&d3 cxd4} 12 \ \text{\&b3 \&c7?!} 13 \ 0-0

Weaker is 13 \ \text{\&c2?} \text{!} \ \text{\&c3+} 14 \ \text{\&d2 \text{\&xc2} 15 \ \text{\&xc2 f6 (15} \ldots \text{\&b6?) 16 } \text{exf6} \ \text{\&xf6, as in Bartels-Kahlert, Hamburg 1992.}

13 \ldots \text{\&xe5} 14 \ \text{\&xe5 \text{\&xe5} 15 \ \text{\&e1 \&d6} 16 \ a4 \ \text{\&d8}

Little by little Black neutralizes his opponent's initiative.
10 The Bogo-like 2 c4
\( \textbf{\&b4+ 3 \text{\&d2}} \) (D)

1 d4 e6 2 c4 \( \textbf{\textbf{\&b4+ 3 \text{\&d2}} \) (D)

This is White’s most common response to the bishop check. We shall investigate two natural continuations for Black (3...\textbf{\&}xd2+ and 3...a5), which can lead to sharply differing strategies.

The immediate exchange 3...\textbf{\&}xd2+ often transposes to lines of the Bogo-Indian, though both sides have some independent options. Our coverage is divided up as follows:

- Section 10.1 covers 4 \textbf{\&}xd2, which creates no difficulties for Black as long as he adopts the most appropriate central structure.
- The recapture with the queen, 4 \textbf{\&}xd2 (Section 10.2), gives White better chances of establishing an advantage. He can continue with either \textbf{\textbf{\&}}f3 and g3 or \textbf{\&}c3 and e4 (or e3). Black may respond with two wholly different development schemes.

3...a5 is somewhat riskier, but leads to more original play, with a transposition to standard theory less likely. Black seeks to complicate the game and obtain counterplay. Then:

- 4 e4 and 4 a3 are the subject of Section 10.3.
- Section 10.4 covers 4 \textbf{\&}f3. We focus on a standard Bogo-Indian plan, but where Black starts with 4...d6 instead of 4...\textbf{\&}f6. This brings some interesting new ideas and nuances into the play.
- 4 \textbf{\&}c3 (Section 10.5) is an immediate switch to Nimzo-Indian channels. Whose extra move (\textbf{\&}d2 vs ...a5) will prove more useful?

10.1

3...\textbf{\&}xd2+ (D)

The bishop exchange gives Black freedom to develop and manoeuvre, while the slight loss of tempo is not of vital importance, as neither the queen nor the knight will be very effectively placed on d2. On the other hand, White will connect his rooks more
rapidly, and this may play a role in the battle for the centre.

4 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xd2}}} \) 

4 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xd2}}}} \), which we examine in Section 10.2, definitely offers White more prospects. As a rule, taking with the knight is effective in this type of position only if Black plays, or has already played, ...d5. In the current situation he should therefore make full use of his flexible position and prepare the ...e5 advance.

4 ...d6 5 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{gf3}}} \) 

5 g3 e5 6 e3 exd4 7 exd4 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f6}}} \) (7 ...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e7}}}}+!?) \) 8 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{g2}}} 0-0 \) does not create any problems for Black, I.Sokolov-Short, London 2008.

5 ...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e7}}} \) 

A balanced position arises after 5 ...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f6}}} 6 e4 (6 g3 0-0 7 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{g2}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e7}}} 8 0-0 e5) 6...0-0 7 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d3}}} (7 e5 dxe5 8 dxe5 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{fd7}}} 9 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c2}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c6}}} 10 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c3}}} f6) 7...e5. \) 

6 e4 

After 6 g3 e5 (threatening to attack by ...e4-e3) 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 e3? \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f6}}} 9 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{g2}}} 0-0 \) Black’s position is preferable, To Nhat-Kosić, Budapest 2009.

6...e5 7 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d3}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f6}}} 8 0-0 0-0 9 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e1}}} \) 

9 h3 is weaker, since 9 ...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{h5}}} \) seizes the initiative.

9 ...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{g4}}} 10 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b3}}} c5 11 d5 \) 

Otherwise Black’s queen’s knight will reach d4.

11 ...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{a6}}} \) 

Both sides have chances. Given the opportunity, Black will create play on the queenside by ...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c7}}} and ...b5.

10.2

3 ...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xd2+}}} 4 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{xd2}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f6}}} (D) \) 

After the exchange of dark-squared bishops, adopting a Dutch formation with 4 ...f5 seems less well-founded than in lines like 2 ...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b4+}}} 3 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c3}}} \) Having said that, it appears to be an interesting option for Black in Section 10.3.2, where the position is only slightly different.

After placing his knight on f6, Black has two fundamentally different plans in the centre: either ...d5, or else ...d6 followed by ...e5. Since we shall be referring to this choice of plans on many occasions, for convenience we shall
designate them as Plan D (...d5) and Plan E (...d6 and ...e5).

Of course, first White must choose how to develop his pieces: either 5 \( \text{Qc3} \) (with possible e4 ideas) or 5 \( \text{Qf3} \) (followed by g3, \( \text{Qg2} \), etc.) and thus one of four different opening configurations can arise on the board.

10.2.1: 5 \( \text{Qc3} \) 120
10.2.2: 5 \( \text{Qf3} \) 121

10.2.1

5 \( \text{Qc3} \) 0-0

Challenging White to occupy the centre. This move is more flexible than the immediate 5...d5, and in case of 5...d6 6 e4 0-0 (Plan E) Black needs to take the reply 7 f4 into consideration.

6 \( \text{Qf3} \) (D)

If White is tempted by 6 e4, Black creates double-edged play after 6...d5! 7 e5 \( \text{Qe4} \) 8 \( \text{We3} \) (or 8 \( \text{Qxe4} \) dxe4) 8...c5.

\[ \text{Diagram B} \]

6...d5

Black makes his choice. The alternative is Plan E, viz. 6...d6. Then:

a) 7 g3 is considered in the note to Black’s 5th move in Section 10.2.2.

b) 7 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{We7} \) 8 \( \text{Qe2} \) (8 h3!?) e5 9 g4 \( \text{Qc6} \) is unclear, while 8 \( \text{Qd1} \) e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 \( \text{Qd5} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) 11 cxd5 e4 led to an equal position in Tregubov-Asrian, French Team Ch 2007) 8...e5 (8...b6!?) 9 0-0 \( \text{Qb7} \) 10 \( \text{Wc2} \) c5) 9 \( \text{Wc2}!? \) (9 0-0 e4 10 \( \text{Qe1} \) \( \text{Qe8} \), Koziak-Liogky, Sautron 2002) 9...\( \text{Qe8} \) 10 0-0 \( \text{Qbd7} \) is unclear (and like a King’s Indian Attack with colours reversed).

c) 7 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{Qc6} \) 8 \( \text{Qd1} \) (8 \( \text{Qe2} \) e5 equalizes; castling queenside by 8 0-0-0 \( \text{We7} \) sharpens the situation, but that is all) 8...\( \text{We7} \) 9 \( \text{Qe2} \) (9 e5 dxe5 and now 10 \( \text{Qxe5} \) \( \text{Qd8} \) is equal, while 10 dxe5 \( \text{Qd7}!? \) 11 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{Qb4} \) leads to unclear play) 9...e5 10 dxe5 (or 10 0-0 \( \text{Qg4} \) 10...dxe5 11 \( \text{Qd5} \) \( \text{Qd6} \) (11...\( \text{Qd8}!? \) !) 12 \( \text{We3} \) \( \text{Qb4} \) 13 0-0 \( \text{Qbd5} \) 14 cxd5 \( \text{Qd7} \) 15 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Wb6} \) with a satisfactory position for Black.

7 \( \text{e3} \)

This position is highly reminiscent of the Queen’s Gambit Declined.

7...\( \text{We7} \) 8 cxd5

By determining the pawn-structure, White rules out the liquidation of the centre with ...dxc4 followed by ...c5. Other moves offer White little; in the following lines Black should gradually achieve equality:

a) 8 \( \text{Qd3} \) dxc4 9 \( \text{Qxc4} \) c5 (9...b6!?) 10 0-0 \( \text{Qd8} \) 11 \( \text{We2} \) \( \text{Qc6} \) 12 \( \text{Qad1} \) (or 12 \( \text{Qfd1} \) 12...\( \text{Qd7} \) (the pawn exchange 12...cxd4 13 exd4 increases the danger of the break d5) 13 a3 \( \text{Qe8} \), Almeida-Fedorchuk, Madrid 2010.

b) 8 a3 \( \text{Qd8} \) (8...\( \text{Qbd7}!? \) ) 9 \( \text{Qd1} \) (9 cxd5!?) 9...a6 10 \( \text{Wc2} \) dxc4 11 \( \text{Qxc4} \)
c5 12 dxc5 ɔxd1+ 13 Ʌ xd1 Ʌ xc5 14 Ʌ d8+ Ʌ f8 15 Ʌ c7 Ʌ bd7.

c) 8 Ʌ c2 Ʌ d8 9 Ʌ d1 (9 a3 c5 10 cxd5 exd5 11 Ʌ e2 Ʌ c6 12 dxc5 Ʌ xc5 13 0-0 d4) 9...a6 10 e4 dxe4 11 Ʌ xe4 and now Black can choose between 11...Ʌ bd7 and the unclear continuation 11...Ʌ c6.

d) 8 Ʌ c1 Ʌ d8 (8...Ʌ bd7!?) 9 a3 (or 9 cxd5 exd5 10 Ʌ d3 Ʌ c6) 9...dxc4 10 Ʌ xc4 c5 11 0-0 Ʌ c6 12 Ʌ fd1 b6.

8...exd5 9 Ʌ d3 (D)

This is a rather adventurous continuation: Black will rapidly develop his queen’s bishop, but the poorly-placed knight can become a problem. The standard 9...c6 10 0-0 Ɇ bd7 11 Ʌ c2 Ʌ e8 is quite acceptable; for example, 12 Ʌ ab1 Ʌ e4 (Black should refrain from weakening the queenside by 12...a5?) 13 b4 Ʌ df6 14 b5 (14 Ʌ e5 Ʌ xc3 15 Ʌ xc3 Ʌ e4) 14...c5 15 dxc5 Ʌ xc5.

10 h3

10 Ʌ b5 Ʌ g4 11 Ʌ xc6 Ʌ xf3 12 gxf3 bxc6 13 Ʌ c1 Ʌ e6 is unclear, while 10 0-0 is met by 10...Ʌ g4 or 10...Ʌ d8.

10...Ʌ d8 11 a3!?

Again White adopts a useful prophylactic measure. He can also play 11 0-0 Ʌ e4 12 Ʌ d1 Ʌ f5 13 Ʌ b3 Ʌ a5 14 Ʌ c2 Ʌ c6 15 a3 Ʌ d6, as in Riazantsev-Kulicov, Dubai 2005.

11...Ʌ e4 12 Ʌ c2 Ʌ f5

White’s position is preferable, but Black retains counterplay because his pieces are active, Granda-Fedorchuk, Pamplona 2010.

10.2.2

5 Ʌ f3 (D)

White can instead start with 5 g3 (which also allows a transposition to a Queen’s Indian line by 5...b6). Then if Black wishes to adopt Plan E, he needs to be on the alert: after 5...0-0 6 Ʌ g2, the line 6...d6 7 e4 e5 8 Ʌ e2 (Avrukh) 8...c5 9 d5 gives him a solid but passive position without real chances of counterplay. To avoid this scenario he should prefer 6...Ʌ c6!? 7 Ʌ f3 (7 e4 is met by 7...d5 8 e5 Ʌ e4, while 7 Ʌ c3 d5 is equal) 7...d6, etc.
Black must soon choose between Plan D and Plan E. In the latter case he can wait a little (i.e. 5...0-0 6 g3 d6), but ...d5 is most effective if played right away.

5...d5

Let us briefly consider 5...d6 6 g3 0-0 7 c3 d6:

a) 8 d1 a6 (White has hindered ...e5, so Black turns his attention to flank play; 8...e7?! is weaker due to 9 g2 e5 10 d5) 9 g2 b8. Now 10 0-0 b5 (Tregubov-G. Meier, Merida 2007) leads to equality, and after 10 d5 (Avrukh) 10...e7 11 d4 e5 12 c2 c4 there are chances for both sides; it is not entirely clear what the knight’s journey from f3 to c2 has achieved.

b) 8 g2 e5 9 0-0 (9 h3 e8 10 0-0 e4 11 d5 is unclear) 9...g4 (putting pressure on the d4-pawn to provoke its advance or exchange) 10 d5 (10 e3 e8 and 10 dxe5! dxe5 are also possible) 10...e7 11 d1 c7 12 e4 h3 13 d3 (the hasty 13 f4? exf4 14 gxf4 g6 unexpectedly led to problems for White in S.Ernst-Van den Doel, Dutch Team Ch 2010/11) 13...xg2 14 xg2 c6 with satisfactory play for Black, Kharitonov-Loginov, Russian Team Ch, Kazan 1995.

Although in these variations White does not achieve any real advantage, Black’s margin of strategic safety is small. Therefore Plan D (...d5) looks more reliable in this particular situation.

6 g3 bd7

Black prioritizes queenside development. ...c6 will come next, and if circumstances allow, then ...b6 and ...b7. For the time being, Black’s king is safe in the centre.

7 g2 c6 (D)

8 0-0

Black’s delay in castling proves useful in the case of 8 c2 b6!? 9 bd2 (or 9 c3 b7 10 e4) 9...b7 10 e4 xe4 11 xe4 dxe4 12 c7 (now everything is ready for the ...c5 advance; it is less accurate to play 12...0-0 13 0-0 c7 14 e5) 13 xe5 xe5 14 dxe5 0-0-0! with equality.

8 c3 is also of independent importance, as this is the most opportune moment for White to offer this gambit.

...dxc4 9 e4 affords White enough compensation for the pawn, so it is simpler to play 8...0-0!? 9 e5 xe5 10 dxe5 d7 11 f4 b6 12 cxd5 exd5, with equality.

8...0-0

There is nothing to be gained from delaying castling any further. So far White has played very natural and even obvious moves, but now he must clarify his intentions and decide how to develop his queen’s knight.
9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}c2

White has plenty of other possibilities:

a) The 9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}c3 gambit is less effective now since Black can reply 9...dxc4 10 e4 e5.

b) 9 b3 actually means a loss of time: 9...b6 (the more vigorous 9...b5!? leads to unclear play) 10 \textit{\textcolor{red}{Q}}e5 (10 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}c3 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{A}}a6) 10...\textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}xe5 11 dx5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}d7 12 f4 b5 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 e4 (14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}a3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}b6+ 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{H}}h1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{B}}b7 was equal in Ki.Georgiev-Parligras, Athens 2007) 14...dx4 15 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{D}}d1 (15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xe4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b7) 15...\textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}b6+ 16 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b7 with equal play.

c) The flank sortie 9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}a3 is not active enough. By playing 9...b6 10 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}ac1 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{A}}b7 11 \textit{\textcolor{red}{F}}d1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}e7, Black calmly continues to prepare ...c5. Then 12 \textit{\textcolor{red}{Q}}e5 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}ac8 13 f4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{F}}fd8 led to equal chances in the game Ilinčić-Andersson, Belgrade 2000.

d) Avrukh suggested 9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{Q}}e5, which leads to approximate equality after 9...\textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}xe5 10 dx5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}d7 11 f4 f6 12 exf6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}xf6, as in Delchev-Riff, Pamplona 2010.

e) 9 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}c1!? is a strong rejoinder to Black’s standard plan. Although 9...b6 has been tested with some success at high level, it nevertheless makes sense for Black to change the subject and free his game with central play. Should the centre become open, it may appear that the wrong rook has occupied c1. After 9...\textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}e7!? 10 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}e3 (10 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}f4 is another idea, while 10 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}a3 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}e8 11 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}f4 e5 12 dx5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}xe5 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}xe5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xe5 is equal) 10...dx4 11 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}xc4 (11 a4 e5!? 11...\textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}d5 12 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}g5 (12 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}e4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}f6 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}c2 e5 and 12 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}d2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}b6 13 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}c1 e5 both yield equal chances) 12...f6 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}d2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}5b6 and 14...e5, Black obtains satisfactory play.

9...b6 (D)

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess Diagram.png}
\caption{Chess Diagram}
\end{figure}

Step by step Black makes progress with his plan. Now in the case of 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}c1 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{A}}b7 White cannot derive any benefit from his temporary possession of the c-file.

10 \textit{\textcolor{red}{F}}bd2

The more active 10 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}c3!? \textit{\textcolor{blue}{A}}b7 is an interesting alternative. Black must defend carefully: 11 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}fd1 (the ‘other rook’, 11 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}ad1!!, can be considered; instead, 11 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}d2 c5 is unclear, while 11 e4 dx4!? 12 e5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}d5 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}e4 c5 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}d6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}b4 is equal) 11...\textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}e7 12 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}d2 (12 e4 should be met by 12...dx4, with an unclear position, since the weaker 12...dx4 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{Q}}e5 allows White the initiative) 12...c5 13 cxd5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}xd5 (not 13...exd5? 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}c4 and again White has the initiative) 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{D}}xd5 exd5 (14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xd5 15 e4) 15 dxc5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{F}}c8!? 16 \textit{\textcolor{red}{F}}f1 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}xc5 with an acceptable position for Black.

10...\textit{\textcolor{blue}{M}}b7 11 b4
White seizes space on the queenside. He can also play in the centre but with the knight on d2, it is hard for him to make progress:

a) 11 \( \text{cxd1} \) can be met by 11...c5!?

b) 11 \( \text{fbd1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 12 e4 dxe4 13 \( \text{cxe4} \) c5 leads to equality after 14 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{cxe5} \) 15 dxe5 \( \text{cxe4} \) 16 \( \text{cxe4} \) 17 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{ad8} \) or 14 \( \text{xf6+} \) \( \text{xf6} \).

c) 11 e4 c5!? 12 cxd5 (although White’s position is more pleasant after 12 exd5 exd5, in the long run everything must end with exchanges and a likely draw) 12...exd5 13 e5 \( \text{cxe4} \) 14 \( \text{xe4} \) (14 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) 15 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{e7} \) is also equal) 14...dxe4 15 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) 16 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{cxe4} \) 17 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{c5} \) 18 \( \text{g4} \) (Ju Wenjun-Ding Yixin, Olongapo City (women) 2010) 18...g6 with equality.

11...a5 12 a3 \( \text{e7} \) 13 c5

After 13 \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{fb8} \) 14 \( \text{fc1} \) (14 cxd5 can be answered with the equalizing 14...cxd5 or the more dynamic 14...exd5!?) 14...c5 15 bxc5 bxc5 the game is balanced, Psakhis-Andersson, Polanica Zdroj 1997.

13...\( \text{a6} \) 14 \( \text{fe1} \) axb4 15 axb4 \( \text{b5} \)

Black has finished his development and does not object to the exchange of rooks.

16 e4

The c6-pawn is the only weakness in Black’s position, so White tries to blast open lines towards it. The attempt to seize the a-file with 16 e3 \( \text{fb8} \) 17 \( \text{c3} \) h6 18 \( \text{a3} \) is parried by 18...\( \text{wd8} \) 19 \( \text{ea1} \) \( \text{xa3} \) 20 \( \text{xa3} \) \( \text{e8} \), as in Evdokimov-Fedorchuk, Marrakesh 2010.

16...\( \text{xe4} \) 17 \( \text{xe4} \) dxe4 18 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f6} \)

Black has enough counterplay for equality, Delorme-Stupak, Chotowa 2010.

10.3

3...a5 (D)

The advance of the rook’s pawn is risky, since White has an extra tempo to fight for the centre. At some later point, the weakening of the b5-square may prove a further defect of the pawn move. However, it is not so simple for White to make use of these shortcomings, while Black’s plan also has some major positive points, as we shall see.

The main moves are 4 \( \text{f3} \) (Section 10.4) and 4 \( \text{c3} \) (Section 10.5). Here we look at the following pawn moves:

10.3.1: 4 e4 124
10.3.2: 4 a3!? 126

10.3.1

4 e4

This is the most natural reaction, but it does not give any Black particular
trouble. He has even fewer problems in the case of the extravagant 4 \( \text{wa}4 \text{xb}4+ (4...\text{we}7!? ) 5 \text{x}d2 \text{e}7 6 \text{g}f3 0-0 7 c5 (or 7 e3 d6) 7...d6 8 cxd6 cxd6 9 e3 \text{d}7 10 \text{b}5 \text{we}8\) with equality, Vaganian-Eingorn, Moscow 1990. Of course, 4 \( \text{xb}4?! \text{axb}4\) is not to be feared, as Black has useful a-file pressure while the c3-square is denied to the white pieces.

4...d6 (D)

4...d5 is an alternative:

a) 5 e5 \( \text{e}7 6 \text{f}3 \) (6 \( \text{c}3 \text{xc}4 \) 7 a3 \( \text{xc}3 \) 8 bxc3 b5 is unclear, Marzolo-Apicella, French Team Ch 2007) 6...\text{bc}6 7 \( \text{c}3 \) (7 \( \text{c}3 \text{xc}4 \) 8 \( \text{b}5 \text{c}7 \) is equal) 7...\text{f}5 offers Black satisfactory prospects.

b) 5 cxd5 exd5 6 e5 \( \text{e}7 \) (or 6...\text{c}6!? 7 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 8 \( \text{b}5 \text{ge}7 \) 9 0-0 0-0 10 \( \text{e}3 \) f6, Cousigne-Murey, French Team Ch 2006/7) 7 \( \text{c}3 \) (7 \( \text{f}3 \) can be met by 7...c5, while 7 a3 \( \text{xd}2+ \) 8 \( \text{wd}2 \) 0-0-0 \( \text{c}3 \) c5 is equal) 7...c5 8 \( \text{b}5 \) (8 a3 \( \text{xc}3 \) 9 bxc3 \( \text{bc}6 \) and now 10 \( \text{f}3 \) is unclear, while 10 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 11 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 12 \( \text{b}1 \) 0-0 0-13 \( \text{e}2 \) ? \( \text{a}7 \) turned bad for White in Aleksandrov-Roiz, European Ch, Warsaw 2005) 8...\text{bc}6 9 a3 \( \text{xc}3 \) 10 \( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{bc}6 \) 11 a4 0-0, Brunner-Edouard, French Team Ch, Guingamp 2010.

c) 5 a3 \( \text{xd}2+ \) 6 \( \text{xd}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 7 \( \text{gf}3 \) \( \text{bc}6 \) 8 \( \text{wc}2 \) (8 \( \text{e}2 \) 0-0 0-0 dxe4 10 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 11 d5 exd5 12 cxd5 \( \text{ce}7 \) 13 \( \text{c}3 \) c6 was equal in Bagirov-Eingorn, Minsk 1983, while 8 \( \text{wa}4 \) 0-0 0-0-0 dxe4 10 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) gives Black enough chances) 8...dxe4 9 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 10 d5 \( \text{ce}7 \) 11 dxe6

5 \( \text{c}3 \)

5 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{xd}2+ \) 6 \( \text{wd}2 \) e5 leads to equality. White achieves little with the modest 5 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 6 \( \text{wc}2 \) (or 6 \( \text{d}3 \) d5...e5, while after 5 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) !? (5...e5 is equal) 6 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) White unexpectedly faces problems with the defence of his d4-pawn.

5...e5 6 a3 \( \text{xc}3 \) 7 \( \text{xc}3 \)

7 bxc3 f5 (or 7...\text{c}6 8 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) !? 9 f3, when 9...a4 and 9...\text{h}5 are both possible) 8 exf5 \( \text{xf}5 \) 9 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) also deserves attention, Zayats-I. Vasilevich, Russian Women’s Team Ch, Dagomys 2009.

7...\text{f}6 8 f3 exd4 9 \( \text{wd}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \)

White has the advantage of the bishop-pair, but lags behind in development and his queenside is weakened. The question is who can make more of his trumps.

10 \( \text{wc}2 \)

10 \( \text{wd}2 \) is less accurate, as 10...0-0 11 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 12 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \) shows. White must lose a tempo by 13 \( \text{c}2 \),
when 13...\( \text{h}g5! \)? could be tried instead of 13...\( \text{h}h4 \), as played in Tisdall-Korchnoi, European Team Ch, Haifa 1989.

10...\( \text{a}e6 \) 11 \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{e}5 \)

The game is unclear.

10.3.2

4 \( \text{a}3! \)?

A subtle positional idea: White intends to play the 3...\( \text{a}xd2+ \) line with the additional moves \( \text{a}3 \) and \( \text{a}5 \), which can be to his advantage. A slight variation on this theme is also possible: 4 \( \text{f}3 \) d6 5 \( \text{a}3! \)? \( \text{a}xd2+ \) 6 \( \text{f}xd2 \).

4...\( \text{a}xd2+ \) 5 \( \text{w}xd2 \) (D)

Now Black's only reasonable options are a Dutch formation and Plan E (...d6 and ...e5).

5...\( \text{f}6 \)

5...f5!? is an acceptable alternative, even if one may have some doubts about this plan in general. Then 6 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 7 e3 \( \text{b}6 \) and 6 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 7 g3 \( \text{b}6 \) should be OK for Black. 6 g3 \( \text{f}6 \) 7 \( \text{g}2 \) d6 8 \( \text{c}3 \) keeps him under more pressure, but the addition of the moves \( \text{a}3 \) and ...\( \text{a}5 \) renders the situation unclear. Play can continue 8...\( \text{w}e7 \) 9 \( \text{f}3 \) (9 \( \text{h}3 \) is unclear) 9...0-0 (the sharper 9...e5 is in the style of the Classical Dutch) 10 0-0 c6, setting up a Stonewall structure after 11 \( \text{h}f1 \) d5.

6 \( \text{c}3 \) d6 7 \( \text{f}3 \)

Before playing e4, White should hinder the counter-advance ...e5 as much as possible. 7 e4 is inaccurate because after 7...e5!? (7...0-0 8 \( \text{f}3 \) transposes to the main line below) 8 dxe5 (8 \( \text{f}3 \) exd4 is equal) 8...dxe5 9 \( \text{w}xd8+ \) \( \text{d}8 \) White's initiative is of a temporary nature.

7...0-0 8 e4

Playing by analogy with standard Bogo-Indian lines with 8 g3 leaves the c4-pawn without proper protection and makes Black's counterplay easier. 8...\( \text{bd}7 \) 9 \( \text{g}2 \) (9 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 10 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 11 \( \text{d}3 \) e5 12 c5 dxc5 is unclear) 9...e5 10 0-0 (10 dxe5 \( \text{e}5 \) is equal) 10...exd4 11 \( \text{xd}4 \) (11 \( \text{xd}4 \) is met by 11...\( \text{c}5 \)) 11...\( \text{b}6 \) (11...a4!? ) 12 b3 a4 led to a level game in Borovikov-Kosten, Sautron 2005.

8...\( \text{c}6 \) 9 \( \text{d}1 ! \)

9 \( \text{e}2 ! \)? is evidently weaker because Black may continue 9...e5 10 d5 (10 0-0?! \( \text{h}4 \) 10...\( \text{e}7 \) 11 0-0 (or 11 c5 \( \text{g}6 \)) 11...\( \text{g}6 \). 9...\( \text{w}e7 \) 10 \( \text{e}2 \)

After 10 e5 dxe5 11 dxe5 \( \text{d}7 \) Black finishes his development by ...\( \text{c}5 \), ...\( \text{b}6 \), ...\( \text{b}7 \) and ...\( \text{d}8 \), with a satisfactory position; for example, 12 \( \text{w}e3 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 13 \( \text{e}4 \) b6! 14 \( \text{xc5 \text{xc5} \text{e}4 \text{b7} \text{b7} \text{d}3 \text{g6} \).

10...e5 11 dxe5 (D)
Black is not endangered by 11 d5 \( \mathcal{d}b8 \) 12 b4 \( \mathcal{d}a6 \) or especially 11 \( \mathcal{d}d5 \) \( \mathcal{d}xd5 \) 12 cxd5 \( \mathcal{d}xd4 \) 13 \( \mathcal{d}xd4 \) exd4 14 \( \mathcal{w}xd4 \) f5.

10.4
3...a5 4 \( \mathcal{d}f3 \) (D)

4 g3 has no particular advantages compared to playing 4 \( \mathcal{f}3 \) followed by g3. Black can reply 4...\( \mathcal{c}6 \), meeting 5 \( \mathcal{g}2 \) with 5...d5!? , and 5 \( \mathcal{f}3 \) with 5...d6, transposing to Section 10.4.1. He can also choose 4...\( \mathcal{f}6 \) or 4...f5, which transpose to other openings.

This flexible continuation allows both sides plenty of choice in their scheme of development. For instance, Black could now switch to standard theoretical lines by 4...\( \mathcal{f}6 \) (Bogo-Indian Defence) or even 4...f5 with a form of Dutch Defence.

4...d6

But this reply is the next link in the chain that constitutes Black’s plan, and enables him to create original positions with their own subtleties.

10.4.1: 5 g3 128
10.4.2: 5 \( \mathcal{c}3 \) 129
For the alternative 5 a3!? , see Section 10.3.2.

10.4.1

5 g3

This is White’s standard reaction in the Bogo-Indian Defence. 5 e3 is too meek since 5 ...d6 6 d5 d2+ 7 dxe2 d7 equalizes without any particular difficulty.

5 ...c6 6 g2

The routine bishop development is often played automatically, but more problems for Black arise in the variation 6 c3?! d6:

a) 7 a3 dxc3 8 dx5 d4 9 c2 dxc3 10 dxc3 0-0 11 g2 d5 (11...d7! 12 0-0 e5) 12 0-0 d5 and the coming 13...e5 will leave the game level.

b) 7 c2 0-0 8 g2 (8 a3!? c3 9 d5 d5!? 10 g2 dxc4 11 0-0 d5 is unclear) 8...e5 9 dxe5 (9 d5?! d7) 9...dxe5 10 a3 (or 10 d1 d7 11 d5 dxc5 12 cxd5 b8 with equality) 10...e4!? (10...c5 and 10...x3 11 c3 12 c3 d7 are also possible) 11 g5 d5 12 0-0 (12 e3 d8) 12...d4 13 d1 c3 (13...e3) 14 c3 c5, with chances for both sides.

c) 7 g2 e5 (7...0-0!? 8 0-0 e5 is safer) 8 a3 (8 0-0 d4 9 d4 exd4 10 b5 c5 11 g5 b6) 8...dxc3 9 dxc3 d4 10 dxe5! (this remarkable combination enables White to keep up the pressure) 10...d3 11 c6 d1 12 d8 8 12 b7 a7 14 0-0! dxc4 15 f1 16 c4 d2 17 b2 18 d6 d7 19 a6 b2 20 e3 e8 21 e1 a2 22 f5 b8 23 a4 b2 24 f1 g6 25 a8 (25 g4 b4 26 a8 bxa4 27 h8 c5) 25...h5 the game must end in a draw.

6...e5! (D)

Here in a nutshell is the whole point of the 3...a5 variation: Black attacks d4 before White has had time to castle. In the standard Bogo-Indian line (1 d4 d6 2 c4 e6 3 d3 b4+ 4 d2 a5 5 g3 d6 g2 c6 6 c3 0-0 e5) White would continue 8 c5, but now he needs to decide what to do with the d4-pawn, as 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 0-0 f6 9 c3 0-0 10 a3 c3 11 c3 d5 only leads to equality.

7 0-0

The pawn sacrifice is temporary, but White will have to take on b4 in order to re-establish the material equilibrium. Besides castling, 7 d5!? is of major importance. While seizing space with gain of tempo, White releases the central tension and this is in accordance with his opponent’s wishes. The white position remains slightly
preferable, but Black obtains counterplay:

   a) 7...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}c7?! 8 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f6 9 \texttt{\texttt{e}}e1 (9 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c3 0-0 10 \texttt{\texttt{e}}e1 and now 10...\texttt{\texttt{c}}c5 was unclear in Benjamin-Eingorn, Reykjavik (team event) 1990; instead 10...\texttt{\texttt{f}}f5 is equal) 9...0-0 (9...\texttt{\texttt{d}}d2?! 10 \texttt{\texttt{w}}xd2 h5) 10 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d3 \texttt{\texttt{x}}d2 11 \texttt{\texttt{x}}d2 (L.Jakobsen-Antonsen, Danish League 1998/9) 11...h5, with chances for both sides.

   b) 7...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}xd2}+ and here:

   b1) 8 \texttt{\texttt{b}}xd2 \texttt{\texttt{b}}b8 (8...\texttt{\texttt{d}}c7?! 9 0-0 f5 10 e4 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f6 is unclear, Parker-Arkell, Hastings 1994/5) 9 0-0 (9 c5 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f6 10 0-0 0-0 11 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c4 and now both 11...b5, as played in Fedder-Ward, Copenhagen 1992, and 11...\texttt{\texttt{a}}a6 are equal) 9...\texttt{\texttt{f}}f6 (9...\texttt{\texttt{h}}h6 is another idea) 10 e4 0-0 11 \texttt{\texttt{e}}e1 \texttt{\texttt{a}}a6 12 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d3 c6 is equal.

   b2) 8 \texttt{\texttt{f}}fxd2 \texttt{\texttt{b}}b8 (8...\texttt{\texttt{d}}c7 9 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c3 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f6 is another possibility) 9 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c3 (9 c5 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f6 10 cxd6 cxd6 11 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c3 0-0 12 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c4 \texttt{\texttt{a}}a6) 9...\texttt{\texttt{d}}d7 10 a3 f5 11 b4 \texttt{\texttt{h}}h6 (11...\texttt{\texttt{g}}f6?!) 12 0-0 0-0 13 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c1 (or 13 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d3 b6) 13...b6 leads to unclear play, Sadler-Conquest, Hastings 1995/6.

   b3) 8 \texttt{\texttt{w}}xd2 \texttt{\texttt{b}}b8 9 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c3 (9 0-0 can be met by 9...\texttt{\texttt{h}}h6 10 \texttt{\texttt{e}}e1 0-0 11 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d3 \texttt{\texttt{e}}7 or 9...\texttt{\texttt{f}}6) 9...\texttt{\texttt{a}}a6 10 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{h}}h6 (10...\texttt{\texttt{g}}f6?!) 11 \texttt{\texttt{e}}e1 0-0 12 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d3 (12 e4 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d7 13 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d3 \texttt{\texttt{w}}b8) 12...\texttt{\texttt{d}}d7 13 b3 f5 with equal play, Petran-King, Budapest 1989.

   It should be added that the preliminary exchange 7 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}xb4 axb4 and only then 8 d5 does not promise White any advantage: 8...\texttt{\texttt{e}}7 9 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f6 10 \texttt{\texttt{b}}b3 (10 \texttt{\texttt{b}}bd2 0-0 11 \texttt{\texttt{e}}e1 c6) 10...c5 11 dxc6 \texttt{\texttt{e}}xc6 12 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d2 0-0, Veingold-Osnos, Sverdlovsk 1984.

   7...\texttt{\texttt{d}}d4 8 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d4

   The less accurate 8 \texttt{\texttt{x}}xb4 axb4 9 \texttt{\texttt{x}}d4 \texttt{\texttt{g}}7! allows Black immediate equality, while 8 \texttt{\texttt{g}}5?! is met by 8...f6.

   8...\texttt{\texttt{d}}d4 9 \texttt{\texttt{x}}xb4 axb4

   On the b4-square, the black pawn blocks White’s queenside play, but it can also become a target.

   10 \texttt{\texttt{w}}xd4 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f6 11 \texttt{\texttt{a}}a6

   White creates the threat of 12 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d2. The forcing variation 11 c5 dxc5 12 \texttt{\texttt{w}}xc5 \texttt{\texttt{e}}7 13 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c1 (13 \texttt{\texttt{b}}b5+ \texttt{\texttt{d}}d7) 13...\texttt{\texttt{x}}xc5 14 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c5 c6 15 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c4! (15 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c6?! is highly dubious in view of 15...\texttt{\texttt{b}}xc6 16 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c6+ \texttt{\texttt{e}}7 17 \texttt{\texttt{x}}a8 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d8 18 f3 \texttt{\texttt{a}}a6 19 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c6 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c8! 20 \texttt{\texttt{a}}a4 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c1+ 21 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f2 \texttt{\texttt{h}}h1) 15...b3 16\texttt{\texttt{d}}c3! (16 a3 is weaker: 16...\texttt{\texttt{e}}6 17 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d4 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d8, Magerramov-Eingorn, Uzhgorod 1988) 16...\texttt{\texttt{e}}7 (16...\texttt{\texttt{e}}6?!?) 17 a3 \texttt{\texttt{e}}6 leads to a roughly equal ending. The game is also level after 11 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d2 0-0 12 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f1 (or 12 \texttt{\texttt{e}}e4 \texttt{\texttt{e}}xe4 13 \texttt{\texttt{xe}}4 \texttt{\texttt{e}}8 14 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f3 \texttt{\texttt{g}}5) 12...c6 (or 12...\texttt{\texttt{w}}e7 13 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f1 \texttt{\texttt{w}}e5, as Marin suggests).

   11...\texttt{\texttt{a}}a6

   Now 12 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d2 c5 leads to chances for both sides, while 12 c5 \texttt{\texttt{w}}e7 is equal. However, 12 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d2 retains a minimal advantage for White.

10.4.2

5 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c3 (D)

This is more dangerous for Black than 5 g3.

5...\texttt{\texttt{f}}f6 6 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c2

Intending e4, when the e5 advance may become a threat.
6 \( \text{g5} \) offers White less: 6...\( \text{h6} \) 7 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 8 e3 \( \text{b7} \) 9 \( \text{d2} \) (9 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{g5} \) 10 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{h5} \) is unclear) 9...\( \text{bd7} \) 10 f3 0-0 (10...\( \text{g5} \) is an alternative) 11 a3 (11 e4 e5 12 a3 \( \text{exd4} \)) 11...\( \text{xc3} \) 12 \( \text{bxc3} \) e5 with a comfortable game for Black, Sturua-Eingorn, Geneva 2001.

6...\( \text{we7} \)

Black prepares the counter-advance ...e5 in order to halt White’s expansion in the centre at the right moment. The less confrontational 6...0-0 7 a3 (7 e4 e5 is unclear) 7...\( \text{xc3} \) 8 \( \text{xc3} \) d5 leaves Black with a position that is slightly worse but acceptable.

7 e4

Looks slightly premature, because after 7...e5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 10 cxd5 0-0 11 a3 \( \text{d6} \) White achieves nothing, Grigore-Eingorn, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

7...\( \text{xc3} \) 8 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{ec6} \)

At the cost of two tempi, Black wants to clarify the centre while retaining chances of counterplay. Instead, 8...\( \text{bd7} \) 9 e4 e5 10 \( \text{d3} \) 0-0 (10...\( \text{exd4} \) 11 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{c5} \) 12 0-0 allows White to seize the initiative) 11 0-0 \( \text{b6} \) (11...a4?! is well met by 12 c5) 12 b4 \( \text{axb4} \) 13 axb4 \( \text{b7} \) leaves Black with a passive defensive task.

9 e4

9 d5 \( \text{b8} \) 10 dxe6 \( \text{xe6} \) offers White only a minimal advantage.

9...\( \text{e5} \) 10 d5

White has to close the centre, since 10 \( \text{d3} \) is met by 10...\( \text{xe4} \)! 11 \( \text{xe4} \) exd4 with equality.

10...\( \text{b8} \) 11 \( \text{e2} \)

After 11 \( \text{d3} \) 0-0 12 0-0 Black can play 12...\( \text{h5} \). As White has a space advantage, he has a wide choice of possible plans, but it is not so easy to implement some of the more natural ones. The f4 advance would enhance the strength of the c3-bishop, but requires considerable preparation, while queenside play would work better with the dark-squared bishop on a different diagonal. We see these themes in the lines 11 b4 axb4 (11...\( \text{a6} \) is possible too) 12 axb4 \( \text{xa1} \) 13 \( \text{xa1} \) 0-0 14 g3 (14 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{h5} \) 15 g3 f5) 14...\( \text{c6} \) 15 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{a6} \) (Arlandi-Ikonnikov, Catalonia 1995) and 11 c5 0-0 (or 11...\( \text{bd7} \) 12 cxd6 cxd6 13 \( \text{d2} \) 0-0 14 \( \text{e2} \) b6) 12 \( \text{d3} \) (12 cxd6 cxd6 13 \( \text{d2} \) b6) 12...\( \text{a6} \)!? 13 cxd6 (13 \( \text{xa6} \) \( \text{xa6} \) 14 0-0 \( \text{h5} \) is unclear) 13...cxd6 14 \( \text{xa5} \) \( \text{xe4} \)!.}

11...0-0 12 0-0 \( \text{a4} \) 13 \( \text{c5} \)

Otherwise White’s play on the queenside will be blocked.

13...\( \text{g4} \) 14 \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{a6} \)! 15 \( \text{xa6} \) \( \text{xa6} \) 16 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{h5} \) 17 f3 \( \text{d7} \)

Black has secured sufficient counterplay against the white king, ‘Odirovski’-‘Heffalump’, playchess.com (freestyle rapid) 2008.
White places the knight on c3 right away, retaining the option of vigorous play in the centre.

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

Black also keeps his options open in the centre: Plans D and E are both still possible, and Black will tailor his choice depending on how White now develops. 4...d5 is less consistent, but leads to simpler positions; however, in all the following variations White's chances are preferable:

a) 5 a3 \(\text{xc}3\) 6 bxc3 (6 \(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{f}6\)) 6...b6!? (6...\(\text{f}6\) 7 \(\text{g}5\) h6 8 \(\text{x}f6\) \(\text{xf}6\)) 7 e4 (7 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{a}6\) 8 cxd5 exd5 is unclear) 7...dxe4 8 \(\text{g}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 9 \(\text{x}g7\) \(\text{g}8\) 10 \(\text{h}6\) \(\text{h}7\) 11 \(\text{e}2\) \(\text{d}6\) 12 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{e}7\) is reminiscent of lines of the Winawer French.

b) 5 e3 \(\text{f}6\) 6 \(\text{d}3\) 0-0 0 7 \(\text{f}3\) (7 cxd5 exd5 8 \(\text{g}2\) b6 9 0-0 \(\text{a}6\) was equal in Gustafsson-Fressinet, Oberhof 2011) 7...b6 8 0-0 \(\text{a}6\) (8...b7 could be tried) 9 \(\text{e}2\) (9 b3 \(\text{bd}7\) 10 a3 \(\text{xc}3\) 11 \(\text{xc}3\) a4) 9...\(\text{bd}7\) 10 cxd5 \(\text{xd}3\) 11 \(\text{xd}3\) exd5, Peralta-Ivanov, Barcelona 2006.

c) 5 \(\text{f}3\)! 6 \(\text{g}5\) (6 cxd5 exd5 7 \(\text{g}5\) h6 8 \(\text{h}4\) g5 9 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{e}4\) 10 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{g}3\) 11 hgx3 c6, Riazantsev-Maletin, Moscow 2008) 6...h6 7 \(\text{x}f6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 8 a3 (8 e3 0-0) 8...\(\text{xc}3\) 9 bxc3 0-0 10 e3 (Khalifman-Maletin, Novokuznetsk 2008) 10...b6.

d) 5 e4!

The main rejoinder. In lines ‘a’ and ‘b’ White also tries to expose the shortcomings of the move 3...a5, but without particular success:

a) 5 \(\text{c}2\) d5 (5...0-0!?) 6 cxd5 (6 e3 0-0 7 \(\text{f}3\) b6 and 6 \(\text{f}3\) 0-0 7 \(\text{g}5\) c5 are also satisfactory for Black) 6...exd5 7 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{d}6\) (or 7...h6) 8 \(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{xf}6\) 9 a3 \(\text{xc}3\) + 10 \(\text{xc}3\) c6, Roiz-Istratescu, Belgian Team Ch 2007/8.

b) 5 \(\text{g}5\) h6 6 \(\text{h}4\) b6 7 e3 (7 f3 is met by 7...d5) 7...b7 8 f3 (8 \(\text{ge}2\) \(\text{e}7\)) 8...c5 (8...\(\text{e}7\)?) 9 \(\text{d}3\) c5 10 \(\text{ge}2\) \(\text{c}6\) is another idea) 9 \(\text{d}3\) (9 a3 cxd4) 9...exd4 10 exd4 \(\text{f}6\).

c) After 5 \(\text{f}3\) b6 the play returns to the framework of the Bogo-Indian Defence, but with Black having sidestepped its main line (i.e. 1 d4 \(\text{f}6\) 2 c4 e6 3 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{b}4\)+ 4 \(\text{d}2\) a5 5 g3). Then:

   c1) 6 \(\text{c}2\) \(\text{b}7\) 7 e3 \(\text{xc}3\) 8 \(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{e}4\) is equal.

   c2) 6 \(\text{g}5\) h6 7 \(\text{h}4\) \(\text{b}7\) 8 e3 d6 transposes to the note to White’s 6th move in Section 10.4.2.

   c3) 6 g3 \(\text{a}6\)!? 7 b3 d5 8 cxd5 exd5 9 \(\text{g}2\) 0-0 with chances for both sides after 10 0-0 \(\text{e}8\) 11 \(\text{e}1\) \(\text{e}4\) or 10 a3 \(\text{xc}3\) 11 \(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{e}8\).

   c4) 6 e3 \(\text{xc}3\) (this is sufficient to equalize; 6...0-0 7 \(\text{d}3\) d5 leads to a
more complicated struggle – see note ‘b’ to Black’s 4th move above) 7  
\( \text{\&xc3 \text{\&e4} 8 \text{\&d3}} \) (8 \( \text{\&c1 \&b7} \) is equal) 8...\( \text{\&xc3} \) 9 bxc3 \&b7 10 c5  
\( \text{\&xc5} \) 11 \( \text{\&b1 \&xf3} \) 12 \( \text{\&xf3} \) \&c6 with equality.  

5...d5  
Black initiates complications while  
avoiding the wilder 5...\( \text{\&xc3} \) 6 \( \text{\&xc3} \) \&xe4 7 \( \text{\&g4} \).  

6 e5 \&e4 (D)  

7 a3  
This immediate pawn advance is  
more promising than delaying it a  
moves: 7 \( \text{\&f3} \) 0-0 8 a3 (8 \( \text{\&d3 \&xd2} \) 9 \( \text{\&xd2} \) c5 10 a3 exd4 11 axb4 dxc3 12  
\( \text{\&xc3} \) and now 9 \( \text{\&xc3} \) b6 10 \( \text{\&d3} \) \&a6 11 \( \text{\&e2 \&xc4} \) 12 \( \text{\&xc4} \) \&xc3 13  
\( \text{\&xc3} \) dxc4 14 \( \text{\&xc4} \) \&d7 is equal,  
while 9 \( \text{\&xc3} \) b6 10 \( \text{\&d3} \) (both 10 cxd5  
exd5 11 \( \text{\&d3 \&a6} \) 12 \( \text{\&xe4} \) dxe4 13  
\( \text{\&g5} \) \&d5 and 10 \( \text{\&e3} \) \&a6 11 \( \text{\&c2} \) f5  
are also unclear) 10...\( \text{\&a6} \) 11 \( \text{\&c2} \)  
\( \text{\&xc4} \) 12 \( \text{\&xc4} \) \&xd2 13 \( \text{\&xd2} \) dxc4  
14 \( \text{\&xc4} \) \&c6 gives rise to unclear play.  

Another interesting line, 7 \( \text{\&xe4} \)  
dxe4 8 a3 (White should avoid 8  
\( \text{\&xb4} \)?! axb4, when Black has the ini­  
thative) 8...\( \text{\&xd2}+ \) 9 \( \text{\&xd2} \) c5 10 \( \text{\&e2} \)  
(10 dxc5 can be met by 10...\( \text{\&xd2}+ \) 11  
\( \text{\&xd2} \) \&d7 12 f4 exf3 13 \( \text{\&xf3 \&xc5} \)  
or 10...\( \text{\&d7} \) with an equal position, as  
given by Marin) 10...\( \text{\&c6} \) 11 \( \text{\&d1} \) a4  
12 \( \text{\&c3} \) cxd4 13 \( \text{\&xe4} \) \&xe5 14 \( \text{\&xd4} \)  
\( \text{\&xd4} \) 15 \( \text{\&xd4} \) \&c6, leads to an equal  
ending. 7 \( \text{\&g4}?! \) is poor in view of  
7...\( \text{\&xd2} \).  

7...\( \text{\&h4}?! \)  
White is probably slightly better,  
but the position remains rather unclear  
and requires additional study. Here are  
some illustrative lines:  

a) Not 8 g3?! \( \text{\&xc3} \).  
b) 8 \( \text{\&xe4} \) \&xe4+ 9 \( \text{\&e2} \) \&xd2+  
10 \( \text{\&xd2} \) \&xe2 (10...\( \text{\&c6} \) 11 \( \text{\&f3} \)  
dxc4) 11 \( \text{\&f3 \&g6} \).  
c) 8 \( \text{\&e2} \) \&xc3 9 bxc3 (9 \( \text{\&xc3} \)  
0-0) 9...\( \text{\&xd2} \) 10 \( \text{\&xd2} \) \&e4+ 11  
\( \text{\&e3} \) (11 \( \text{\&e2} \) dxc4 12 \( \text{\&f3} \) \&d7)  
11...\( \text{\&xe3+} \) 12 fxe3 0-0.
Welcome to Sicily! Since we have accidentally found ourselves here, let us try to make our walk short and safe – as far as this is possible in such a complicated opening with a lot of concrete variations.

My choice of line to recommend is the Sicilian Four Knights, which has quite different positional themes from most Sicilian lines. You won’t be at a disadvantage here just because you lack years of experience with typical Sicilian sacrifices and attacking scenarios. Naturally, if there is already a variation of the Sicilian in your repertoire that you are happy to play, you may prefer to use that, provided of course that it includes the move ...e6. Note that Sveshnikov players often use the Sicilian Four Knights move-order, and this has caused some anti-Sveshnikov lines to become popular, as we shall see in Section 11.5. Depending on how scared our opponents are of the Sveshnikov, we may not even be forced to play the main lines of the Four Knights!

3...cxd4 4 Qxd4

4 c3 dxc3 5 Qxc3 is the Morra Gambit. It is not very promising for White, and Black has several good rejoinders. For example, 5...Qc6 6 Qc4 d6 7 0-0 and now:

a) 7...Qf6 8 We2 Qe7 9 Qd1 e5 10 Qe3 0-0 is a traditional main line. Now in case of 11 Qac1 Qe6 the game is approximately level, and 11 b4?! (too active) 11...Qg4 12 a3 Qc8 13 Qac1 Qxf3 14 gxf3 (14 Wxf3 Qxb4) 14...Qh5 15 Wd2 Qd4 delivers the initiative to Black.

b) 7...a6 8 We2 Qe7 9 Qd1 Qd7 is a subtle line where Black refuses to make any unnecessary concessions. If White wishes to force ...e5, then he must spend a tempo with 10 Qf4 e5 11 Qe3 Qf6, when it will be hard for White to generate much activity. If White instead chooses a waiting move
such as 10 a3 or 10 h3, Black can play the useful 10...\textit{c}8 before committing to ...\textit{f}6.

\textit{4...\textit{f}6 5 \textit{c}3}

5 \textit{d}3 \textit{c}6 6 \textit{xc}6 \textit{bxc}6 7 0-0 (7 \textit{c}4 can be met by 7...\textit{d}5 or 7...\textit{e}5) 7...\textit{d}5

8 \textit{c}3 is considered in the note to White's 7th move in Section 11.5.

\textit{5...\textit{c}6 (D)}

This is the starting position of the Sicilian Four Knights, in which Black plans the central advance ...\textit{d}5, often backed up by a pin with ...\textit{b}4. White now has several possibilities:

- By playing 6 a3 (Section 11.1) White prevents ...\textit{b}4, but spends a tempo on a move that isn't especially useful.
- 6 \textit{e}3 (Section 11.2) is not entirely appropriate in this situation.
- Section 11.3 covers 6 \textit{e}2, leading to gambit play.
- On the contrary, 6 g3 (Section 11.4) heads for relatively calm and balanced play.
- 6 \textit{xc}6 (Section 11.5) is mostly used to avoid the Sveshnikov, but of course our opponents may well play it too!

- Section 11.6 deals with 6 \textit{db}5, which is the main continuation. Note that 6 \textit{f}4 \textit{b}4 7 \textit{db}5 comes to the same thing.

\textbf{11.1}

\textit{6 a3}

This is not a very common move in the Sicilian Defence. Those who are willing to play more standard Sicilian set-ups can happily choose the Scheveningen-style ...\textit{d}6 (now or later), but we shall adhere to the ...\textit{d}5 plan.

\textit{6...\textit{e}7 7 \textit{e}2}

7 \textit{xc}6 \textit{bxc}6 8 \textit{e}5 \textit{d}5 9 \textit{d}4 is less potent than a move earlier (see Section 11.5) since White is behind in development. Nevertheless, the position remains unclear; e.g., 9...\textit{c}7 (9...\textit{wa}5+!? 10 \textit{c}3 \textit{c}7) 10 \textit{f}4 \textit{f}5 11 \textit{d}6+ (11 \textit{f}2?! 0-0 12 \textit{c}4 \textit{b}6 13 \textit{c}2 \textit{c}5 14 \textit{e}2 \textit{b}7 15 0-0 \textit{d}6) 11...\textit{xd}6 12 \textit{exd}6 \textit{b}6 13 \textit{h}5+? \textit{g}6 14 \textit{e}2 0-0.

\textit{7...0-0 8 0-0}

Or 8 \textit{e}3 \textit{d}5 9 \textit{exd}5 \textit{xb}5 10 \textit{xb}5 \textit{xd}5 11 \textit{f}3 \textit{a}5 12 \textit{b}4 \textit{c}7 13 \textit{xc}6 \textit{bxc}6 14 0-0 \textit{a}6 with enough counterplay for Black.

\textit{8...\textit{d}5 9 \textit{exd}5 \textit{xd}5 (D)}

\textit{10 \textit{xd}5}

It is not advantageous for White to play 10 \textit{xc}6?! \textit{bxc}6, which strengthens Black's central control.

\textit{10...\textit{xd}5 11 \textit{e}3 \textit{d}8}

Black can also choose 11...\textit{xd}4

12 \textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 13 \textit{xd}4 \textit{d}8! (Black needs to play accurately to maintain the equilibrium) 14 \textit{fd}1 \textit{d}7 15 \textit{f}3
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16 b3 (16 axb7 axc2 17 axa8 axd1 18 axd1 ac5 is also equal) 16...ac6, achieving equality.

12 af3 wc4 13 bxc6!? bxc6

After 13...axd1?! 14 aexe7+ af8 15 afxd1 aexe7 16 b4 (Tyomkin-Krapivin, Ashdod 2003) White’s attack on the black king is rather unpleasant, so it is more reasonable to decline the queen sacrifice.

14 ef2

14 wc1 e5 does not give White any advantage.

14...ea6 15 axc4 axc4 16 dfd1
d5 17 ed2 ef6

The activity of Black’s pieces compensates for the weakness of his pawns, so there are chances for both sides.

11.2

6 a3 (D)

This move’s surprising popularity is presumably an echo of the aggressive scheme with a3, f3 and wd2 that is used against the Najdorf and Scheveningen. Here it is somewhat out of place since Black is fully ready to play in the centre. 6 f3?! is an even less appropriate move, since Black replies 6...d5.

6...ab4

Black scores very well with this natural move.

7 db3

In the variation 7 a3 axc3+ 8 bxc3 wa5 (8...aexd4 9 wg4 af6 is equal) 9 ab5 0-0 10 ac5 aexe4!? (10...wd8 is possible too) 11 axf8 axf8 Black obtains good compensation for the exchange.

White can also play 7 axc6 bxc6 before 8 db3. Then:

a) 8 d5 e5 (9 exd5 can be met by 9...exd5 10 ad4 0-0 11 0-0 ad6 or 9...cxed5?!) 9 ad7 10 wg4 af8 gives Black a pleasant form of French. After 11 wg3 vb8 12 vb1 wc7 13 af4 (13 f4 c5) 13...g6 or 11 f4 vb8 12 ad1 (12 ab1 c5 13 af2 h5 gives Black the initiative) 12...wa5+ 13 ad2 wb6, as in Mitkov-Iglesias, Spanish Team Ch, Ponferrada 1997, he has nothing to complain about.

b) 8...e5 9 0-0 0-0 fits better with the Sicilian ethos, and leads to an
equal game. Inappropriate activity with 10 f4 d6 11 h3 exf4 12 axf4 (12 axf4 ac5+ 13 ah1 ad4) 12...a5 could even leave White with the worse position.

7...e5
This may be simpler than 7...d5 8 exd5 (8 axc6 bxc6 transposes to line ‘a’ of the previous note) 8...axd5 9 axc6 bxc6 10 ad2 0-0 11 0-0 ab8, which is also quite satisfactory for Black.

8 d5
8 axc6 is a safer choice, with approximate equality after any recapture on c6.

8...0-0 9 f3
This active approach is practically forced. After 9 0-0 axc3 10 bxc3 d5 (10...d6!? ) 11 exd5 axd5 12 ac5 axf5 13 axf5 ae8 White must switch to defence.

9...d5
There now follows a ‘storm in a teacup’, the main line of which ends in a draw. By playing instead 9...h6!? 10 axf6 (10 ah4 d5) 10...ac3+ 11 bxc3 af6 12 ad3 d6, Black can continue the struggle.

10 exd5 af6 11 axf6 axf5 12
af5 ag2
Black forces events. 12...ad1+ 13 axd1 gxf6 14 0-0 axc3 15 bxc3 ad8 is sufficient for equality in the ending.

13 axh7+! ah7 14 ah5+ ag8
15 0-0-0 ag6 16 ahl
The aggressive 16 ah4 is parried by 16...ad4!.

16...axh5 17 axg7+
The game ends in perpetual check.

With this modest-looking move, White indicates his willingness to offer an interesting gambit. Unless Black is familiar with some form of the Scheveningen or Paulsen (to which he can easily transpose), he should accept the invitation to go pawn-hunting.

6...ab4 7 0-0
7 af3 is met by 7...ac5, while defending the pawn with 7 ab3 d5 8 exd5 axd5 9 ad2 (9 axc6 bxc6 10 a3 axc3+ 11 bxc3 af6) 9...axc3 (or 9...0-0) leads to an equal position.

7...axc3 8 bxc3 ae4 9 ad3
This is one of two ways to begin the attack. In the case of 9 ab3 Black should defend by 9...d5 10 ad3 (10 axc6?! bxc6 11 ad3 ab5 12 ab4 ab6 13 ab1 c5) 10...ab5 11 ab5 a6 12 ad6+ axd6 13 axd6 ae7.

9...ac3 (D)
Black is optimistic and seizes even more material. A safer approach is 9...d5 10 axc6 (after 10 ad3?! ab5 11 ac1 axc3 12 ab3 cd8 White
cannot create real threats) 10...bxc6
11  \text{\textit{\textup{\texttt{a}3}}} c5?! 12  \text{\textit{\textup{\texttt{xe}4}}} (12 c4 0-0 is equal) 12...dxe4 13  \text{\textit{\textup{\texttt{xc}5}}} (13  \text{\textit{\textup{\texttt{g}4}}} 0-0
14  \text{\textit{\textup{\texttt{xc}5}}} f5 15  \text{\textit{\textup{f}4}}  \text{\textit{\textup{f}7}} leads to unclear play) 13...a6 14  \text{\textit{\textup{e}1}} (14  \text{\textit{\textup{g}4}}
\text{\textit{\textup{d}5}}) 14...\text{\textit{\textup{x}d}1} 15  \text{\textit{\textup{ax}d}1}  \text{\textit{\textup{c}8}},
leading to approximate equality in the ending.

\textbf{10  \text{\textit{\textup{g}4}}}

10  \text{\textit{\textup{d}2}} also deserves attention. Although it is not entirely clear how White can prove a real advantage after 10...\text{\textit{\textup{d}5}} 11  \text{\textit{\textup{b}5}}
0-0 12  \text{\textit{\textup{a}3}}  \text{\textit{\textup{de}7}} 13  \text{\textit{\textup{d}6}} (or 13  \text{\textit{\textup{d}6}}), nevertheless
10...\text{\textit{\textup{f}6}}!? looks preferable, with an equal position after 11\text{\textit{\textup{xc}3}} \text{\textit{\textup{xd}4}} 12
\text{\textit{\textup{xd}4}} \text{\textit{\textup{xd}4}} 13  \text{\textit{\textup{b}2}} e5 14  \text{\textit{\textup{f}e}1} (14 f4
d6) 14...0-0 15  \text{\textit{\textup{xe}5}} d6 16  \text{\textit{\textup{d}5}}  \text{\textit{\textup{e}6}} 17  \text{\textit{\textup{xd}6}}  \text{\textit{\textup{c}5}}.

10...\text{\textit{\textup{f}6}} 11  \text{\textit{\textup{xc}6}} h5!?

This useful zwischenzug disrupts the coordination of the white pieces.

\textbf{12  \text{\textit{\textup{g}3}} bxc6}

Now 13 h4!?? reaches a position that requires careful study, but it seems
that White has enough compensation for the two pawns. Instead, 13  \text{\textit{\textup{g}5}}?!
\text{\textit{\textup{d}4}} and 13  \text{\textit{\textup{d}2}}? h4 14  \text{\textit{\textup{g}4}} h3 offer White less.

\textbf{11.4}

\textbf{6  \text{\textit{g}3} (D)}

Now Black’s standard counterplay
with 6...\text{\textit{\textup{b}4}}?! 7  \text{\textit{\textup{g}2}} d5 fails due to 8
\text{\textit{\textup{ex}d}5}  \text{\textit{\textup{xd}5}} 9 0-0!, so we shall adopt
another approach.

\textbf{6...d5 7  \text{\textit{ex}d}5}

Interesting complications begin after
7  \text{\textit{g2}}?!  \text{\textit{\textup{b}6}} 8  \text{\textit{\textup{xc}6}} (following 8
\text{\textit{\textup{b}3}} d4, 9 e5  \text{\textit{\textup{d}7}} gives White no
more than equality, and 9  \text{\textit{\textup{e}2}}? e5 10
c3 a5 11  \text{\textit{\textup{ex}d}4}  \text{\textit{\textup{b}4}}+ is advantageous
for Black) 8...bxc6 9 exd5! (9 0-0  \text{\textit{\textup{a}6}}
10  \text{\textit{\textup{e}3}}  \text{\textit{\textup{xb}2}} 11  \text{\textit{\textup{d}4}}  \text{\textit{\textup{c}5}}) 9...\text{\textit{\textup{ex}d}5}
10 0-0  \text{\textit{\textup{e}7}}! (10...\text{\textit{\textup{a}6}}?! is risky in
view of 11  \text{\textit{\textup{e}3}}  \text{\textit{\textup{xb}2}} 12  \text{\textit{\textup{xd}5}}! with
an attack for White) 11  \text{\textit{\textup{d}1}} and Black can choose between the equalizing
11...\text{\textit{\textup{b}7}} and the more adventurous
11...\text{\textit{\textup{d}7}}??.

\textbf{7...\text{\textit{\textup{ex}d}5} 8  \text{\textit{\textup{g}2}}  \text{\textit{\textup{g}4}}}

8...\text{\textit{\textup{b}6}} is an acceptable alternative:
 a) 9  \text{\textit{\textup{e}3}}  \text{\textit{\textup{c}5}} is very similar to a
variation of the French Defence. After
10 \( \texttt{c}a4 \texttt{wb}a5+ \) both 11 \( \texttt{c}c3 \texttt{wb}b6 \) and 11 \( \texttt{c}c3 \texttt{xb}d4 \) 12 \( \texttt{xb}d4 \texttt{c}cxd4 \) 13 \texttt{xd}4 0-0 14 0-0 \texttt{b}6 are equal.

b) 9 \( \texttt{xb}c6 \texttt{bx}c6 \) 10 0-0 \( \texttt{a}e7 \) 11 \( \texttt{a}e1 \texttt{a}e6 \) 12 \( \texttt{a}c4 \texttt{wb}5 \) led to a balanced game in Vasiukov-A. Panchenko, Dnepropetrovsk 1980.

c) After 9 \( \texttt{b}b3!? \texttt{d}4 \) 10 \( \texttt{c}e4 \) (10 \( \texttt{c}e2 \texttt{b}b4+ \) 11 \( \texttt{c}c3 \texttt{dxc}3 \) 12 \( \texttt{bxc}3 \texttt{e}7 \) 13 0-0 0-0 14 \( \texttt{ed}4 \texttt{d}7 \)) 10 \( \texttt{e}7 \) 11 0-0 0-0 12 \( \texttt{e}1 \) White keeps a modest initiative.

The text-move leads to a more complicated struggle.

9 \( \texttt{wd}3 \)

After 9 \( \texttt{de}2 \texttt{c}5 \) 10 0-0 0-0 11 \( \texttt{h}3 \) (11 \( \texttt{g}5 \texttt{e}8 \)) 11...\( \texttt{e}6 \) 12 \( \texttt{f}4 \texttt{d}7 \) White does not get an advantage, and in the lines 9 \( \texttt{f}3 \texttt{e}6 \) 10 \( \texttt{e}3 \texttt{b}4 \) and especially 10 \( \texttt{xc}6?! \texttt{bxc}6 \) 10 \( \texttt{d}4 \texttt{e}7 \) Black’s position is even preferable.

9...\( \texttt{c}5 \) 10 \( \texttt{e}3+! \)?

This queen check looks rather odd, but the careless 10 \( \texttt{e}3 \texttt{b}6 \) 11 \( \texttt{b}3?! \) (11 \( \texttt{h}3! \) still retains rough equality) 11...\( \texttt{b}4 \) can lead to serious hardships for White.

Black stands no worse in the case of 10 \( \texttt{b}3 \texttt{e}7+ \) 11 \( \texttt{e}3 \) 0-0!? (a small improvement over 11...\( \texttt{xe}3 \) 12 \( \texttt{xe}3 \texttt{xe}3+ \) 13 \texttt{x}e3 \( \texttt{c}8 \), which is also quite satisfactory for Black) 12 \( \texttt{xc}5 \) (12 0-0 \( \texttt{xe}3 \) 13 \( \texttt{xe}3 \texttt{xe}3 \) 14 \texttt{xe}3 \( \texttt{ad}8 \) is also equal) 12...\( \texttt{d}4 \) 13 \( \texttt{xc}6 \) (13 \( \texttt{a}a4 \) \( \texttt{dxe}3 \) 14 \( \texttt{xe}3 \texttt{xe}3 \) 15 \texttt{xe}3 \( \texttt{d}4 \)) 13...\( \texttt{xc}5 \) with equality.

10...\( \texttt{e}7 \) 11 0-0 0-0 12 \( \texttt{d}3 \texttt{h}6 \)

Both sides have chances.

11.5

6 \( \texttt{xc}6 \) (D)

The exchange of the knights followed by the advance of the e-pawn completely changes the strategic complexion of the game. We should note that this line has received considerable theoretical and practical attention as a way to avoid the transposition to the Sveshnikov that arises after 6 \( \texttt{db}5 \) \( \texttt{d}6 \) 7 \( \texttt{f}4 \texttt{e}5 \) 8 \( \texttt{g}5 \).

6...\( \texttt{xc}6 \) 7 \( \texttt{e}5 \)

White stops the ...\( \texttt{d}5 \) advance, and hopes to achieve a clear positional advantage.

7 \( \texttt{d}3 \texttt{d}5 \) 8 0-0 \( \texttt{e}7 \) leads to more standard play. The typical outcome is a complex positional struggle with no obvious advantage for either side. Here are some illustrative variations:

a) 9 \( \texttt{e}5 \texttt{d}7 \) 10 \( \texttt{g}4 \) (10 \( \texttt{f}4 \texttt{c}5 \)) 10...\( \texttt{g}6 \) 11 \( \texttt{e}1 \texttt{b}8 \) 12 \texttt{b}1 0-0.

b) 9 \( \texttt{b}3 \) (9 \( \texttt{e}2 \) 0-0 10 \( \texttt{b}3 \texttt{e}8 \) is similar) 9...0-0 10 \( \texttt{b}2 \texttt{e}5 \) 11 \( \texttt{e}2 \texttt{e}8 \).

c) 9 \( \texttt{f}4 \) 0-0 10 \( \texttt{e}5 \) (10 \( \texttt{f}3 \texttt{d}7 \) 11 \texttt{e}5 \( \texttt{e}5 \) equalizes; 10 \( \texttt{e}2 \) can be met by 10...\( \texttt{dxe}4 \)) 10...\( \texttt{d}7 \) 11 \( \texttt{h}5 \) \( \texttt{f}5 \) (11...\( \texttt{g}6 \)) 12 \texttt{e}6 \( \texttt{xf}6 \) 13 \( \texttt{e}6 \texttt{e}2 \texttt{d}6 \), Abergel-Petrov, Benidorm 2008.
d) 9 \( \text{N}e1 \text{0-0} \) 10 \( \text{B}f4 \) (10 \( \text{e}5 \)?) \( \text{B}d7 \) 11 \( \text{Ng4} \) f5) 10...\( \text{B}d7 \) (10...d4?) 11 exd5 cxd5 12 \( \text{B}b5 \) \( \text{c}5 \)!

e) 9 \( \text{N}f3 \) 0-0 10 \( \text{N}g3 \) (10 \( \text{N}e1 \) d4 11 \( \text{e}5 \) dxc3 12 exf6 \( \text{B}xf6 \) leads to unclear play) 10...\( \text{N}h5 \) 11 \( \text{N}f3 \) (11 \( \text{Nh3} \) g6) 11...\( \text{B}f6 \).

7...\( \text{B}d5 \) 8 \( \text{B}e4 \)

It is absolutely illogical for White to play 8 \( \text{B}xd5 \)?! cxd5 9 \( \text{B}d4 \) (9 \( \text{B}d3 \)?! \( \text{B}c7 \) 10 \( \text{B}e2 \) \( \text{B}b4 \)!) 9...a6 10 \( \text{B}xa6 \) \( \text{B}a5 \), with a good game for Black. But now Black must act very vigorously if he is to obtain enough counterplay.

8...\( \text{B}c7 \)

Dragging the white pawn to f4 in order to weaken the g1-a7 diagonal and the e3-square in particular.

9 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{B}a5 \)!!? (D)

And the purpose of this check is to create some disharmony in White's position.

10 \( \text{B}d2 \)

White stands worse after 10 \( \text{Be2} \) f5 or 10 \( \text{B}f2 \) \( \text{B}b6 \) + 11 \( \text{B}f3 \) (11 \( \text{Bg}3 \) f5) 11...f5 12 exf6 (12 \( \text{B}f2 \) \( \text{B}b7 \) 12...gx\( \text{f6} \), but two other moves deserve attention:

a) 10 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{Be7} \) 11 \( \text{B}d3 \) \( \text{B}b6 \) 12 \( \text{Be2} \) (12 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 12...a5 13 \( \text{c}4 \) (13 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{B}a6 \) is equal) 13...\( \text{B}b4 \) + 14 \( \text{B}f1 \) f5 is OK for Black, Sax-T.Reiss, Hungarian Team Ch 2008/9.

b) 10 \( \text{B}d2 \) \( \text{B}b4 \) 11 \( \text{c}3 \) (11 \( \text{B}d6 \) + \( \text{B}f8 \) 11...\( \text{Be7} \) 12 \( \text{Be2} \) (for 12 \( \text{B}d3 \) \( \text{B}b6 \) 13 \( \text{Be2} \), see line ‘a’) 12...\( \text{B}b6 \) 13 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 14 exf6 \( \text{B}xf6 \) 15 \( \text{B}d6 \) + \( \text{B}xd6 \) 16 \( \text{B}xd6 \) (Govedarica-Bjelajac, Yugoslav Team Ch, Tivat 1995) 16...\( \text{B}e4 \) 17 \( \text{B}h5 \) + \( \text{B}d8 \) 18 \( \text{B}d4 \) \( \text{B}xd4 \) 19 \( \text{c}xd4 \) \( \text{B}a6 \) and again White has not achieved an advantage.

10...\( \text{B}b6 \) 11 \( \text{B}d3 \)

The purpose of the sly manoeuvre by the black queen is revealed in the variation 11 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{B}d4 \)! 12 \( \text{B}f3 \)! (12 \( \text{B}b1 \) \( \text{B}b8 \) 12...\( \text{B}xb2 \) 13 \( \text{B}d1 \), when 13...\( \text{B}b4 \) led to puzzling complications in Vachier-Lagrave – Wagner, Mulhouse 2005. The line 13...f5 14 \( \text{B}d6 \) + \( \text{B}xd6 \) 15 \( \text{c}xd5 \) \( \text{B}e7 \) 16 dxe6 \( \text{B}xa2 \) 17 exd7+ \( \text{B}xd7 \) 18 \( \text{B}d3 \) 0-0 19 0-0 \( \text{B}e6 \) is calmer, but also gives Black a satisfactory defence.

11...\( \text{Be7} \) 12 \( \text{Be2} \)

In response to 12 \( \text{c}4 \) Black can choose 12...f5, 12...\( \text{B}d4 \) or 12...\( \text{B}a6 \) (intending 13 \( \text{Be2} \) \( \text{B}xb2 \)).

12...\( \text{B}b8 \) 13 \( \text{B}b3 \) \( \text{f}5 \)

The game is approximately equal.

11.6

6 \( \text{B}db5 \) (D)

This is the main line. White is willing to face the Sveshnikov after 6...d6 7 \( \text{B}f4 \) e5 8 \( \text{Bg}5 \). But we have other plans...
ROCK-SOLID CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

6...\texttt{b}4 7 a3

The complications following 7 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{xe}4 8 \texttt{f}3 (after 8 \texttt{c}7+ \texttt{f}8 White should avoid 9 \texttt{xa}8? \texttt{f}6 and settle for the equal 9 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{xc}3?! 10 bxc3 \texttt{f}6 8...d5 (8...\texttt{xc}3?! 9 bxc3 \texttt{f}6) 9 \texttt{c}7+ \texttt{f}8 are not dangerous for Black:

a) After 10 0-0-0 \texttt{xc}3 11 bxc3 e5 12 \texttt{xd}5 f5 13 \texttt{e}3 \texttt{a}5 14 \texttt{c}4 (14 \texttt{b}2 \texttt{e}6 15 \texttt{c}4?! \texttt{e}7) 14...\texttt{e}6 the white king is not safe.

b) 10 \texttt{xa}8?! e5 11 \texttt{d}2 (11 \texttt{e}3?! is met by 11...\texttt{d}4, while 11 \texttt{b}5 \texttt{d}4 12 \texttt{wd}3 is unclear) 11...\texttt{d}4 12 \texttt{wd}1 \texttt{h}4! 13 g3 (13 \texttt{xe}4?! \texttt{xe}4+ 14 \texttt{e}2 \texttt{xc}2+ 15 \texttt{f}1 \texttt{xd}2 16 \texttt{xd}2 \texttt{xa}1 17 \texttt{wd}1?! \texttt{c}2 18 \texttt{xa}1 \texttt{d}7) 13...\texttt{f}6 14 \texttt{xe}4 (14 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{g}6 15 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{g}4 16 \texttt{xe}4 \texttt{xe}4 gives Black the initiative) 14...\texttt{f}3+ 15 \texttt{xf}3?! (15 \texttt{e}2 \texttt{d}4+ is a draw) 15...\texttt{xf}3 16 \texttt{xb}4+ \texttt{g}8 17 \texttt{d}6 \texttt{yh}1 18 0-0-0 \texttt{e}6 with double-edged play.

7...\texttt{xc}3+ 8 \texttt{xc}3

In contrast to most of the previous lines in this chapter, here White acts in a calm positional manner and is satisfied with a small opening advantage. Black is obliged to struggle for equality, but at least we are in familiar strategic territory: Black will have an isolated d-pawn and active piece-play (compare lines in Chapter 5!).

8...d5 (D)

9 \texttt{exd}5

An interesting queenless middlegame arises after the liquidation 9 \texttt{d}3?! \texttt{dxe}4 10 \texttt{xe}4 \texttt{xe}4 11 \texttt{xe}4 \texttt{xd}1+ 12 \texttt{xd}1. If White can calmly finish his development, then he will enjoy good prospects because of his bishop-pair and queenside pawn-majority. However, as long as the white king separates his rooks, the initiative belongs to Black, and by maintaining it he denies White his cherished advantage: 12...\texttt{d}7 13 \texttt{e}3 (13 b3 0-0-0 14 \texttt{b}2 \texttt{e}8+ 15 \texttt{e}1 \texttt{f}6) 13...\texttt{f}5 14 \texttt{f}3 (14 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{e}5 15 \texttt{e}2 \texttt{g}4 16 \texttt{d}4 \texttt{c}6) 14...e5 15 \texttt{c}1 (15 \texttt{e}1 \texttt{f}7) 15...\texttt{c}8?! (15...0-0-0) 16 \texttt{e}1 (16 \texttt{d}1 f4 is equal) 16...\texttt{f}7 retains the dynamic equilibrium.

9...\texttt{exd}5 10 \texttt{d}3
White should not delay castling; in the line 10 \textit{Ag}5?! 0-0 11 \textit{Ad}3 (11 \textit{ Ae}2 \textit{Af}5; 11 \textit{Wf}3 \textit{ Ae}8+ 12 \textit{ Ae}2 \textit{Dd}4) 11...h6 (11...\textit{Ee}8+) 12 \textit{Ah}4 \textit{Ee}8+ 13 \textit{De}2 \textit{De}5 14 0-0 \textit{Wb}6 White runs into problems. Black also achieves a good position after 10 \textit{We}2+ \textit{Ae}6 11 \textit{Ag}5 h6 12 \textit{Ah}4 (or 12 \textit{Af}6 \textit{Wf}6 13 0-0-0 0-0) 12...0-0 13 0-0-0 \textit{Ee}8 14 \textit{Wb}5 \textit{Wc}7 (14...\textit{Bb}8!?) 15 \textit{Ab}1 \textit{Aa}6 16 \textit{Wd}3 \textit{De}4, as in Dvoirys-Hasangatin, Pardubice 2007.

10...0-0 11 0-0 \textit{d}4 (D)

Advancing the d-pawn makes it more vulnerable, but seizes space. Now White’s knight must choose a square:

11.6.1: 12 \textit{De}2 141
11.6.2: 12 \textit{De}4 142

11.6.1

12 \textit{De}2

White directly targets the \textit{d}4-pawn, leading to complicated play.

12...\textit{Ag}4 13 \textit{f}3

There is a wide range of other continuations at White’s disposal, in which the black knights combat the white bishops more or less successfully:

a) 13 \textit{Wd}2?! is ill-advised due to 13...\textit{Axe}2.

b) 13 \textit{h}3 \textit{Axe}2 and now both 14 \textit{Axe}2 \textit{Ee}8 and 14 \textit{Wxe}2 \textit{Ee}8 15 \textit{Wf}3 \textit{Wb}6 are equal.

c) 13 \textit{b}4 \textit{Axe}2 also leads to equality after 14 \textit{Axe}2 \textit{De}4 or 14 \textit{Wxe}2 \textit{Ee}8 15 \textit{Wf}3 \textit{De}5 16 \textit{Xb}7 \textit{Xxd}3 17 \textit{Xxd}3 \textit{Dd}5.

d) 13 \textit{Af}4 \textit{Ee}8 14 \textit{Ee}1 (14 \textit{f}3 \textit{Ah}5) 14...\textit{Wb}6 15 \textit{Ab}1 \textit{Ad}8 with equality, Lanin-Popov, St Petersburg 2007.

e) 13 \textit{Ee}1 \textit{Ee}8 14 \textit{Ag}5 h6 15 \textit{Ah}4 \textit{Axe}2 16 \textit{Xxe}2 \textit{Wd}6 offers White no more than a minimal advantage.

f) 13 \textit{Ag}5 h6 14 \textit{Ah}4 \textit{Axe}2 15 \textit{Wxe}2 (15 \textit{Axe}2 \textit{Ee}8 16 \textit{Ee}1 \textit{Ee}4 17 \textit{Ag}3 \textit{Wb}6 is unclear) 15...\textit{Ee}8 16 \textit{Wf}3 (16 \textit{Wd}2 \textit{De}4 17 \textit{Axe}4 \textit{Wxh}4 18 \textit{f}3 \textit{Wd}8 with equality) 16...\textit{De}5 17 \textit{Wxb}7 \textit{Xxd}3 18 \textit{Xxd}3 \textit{Wd}5 gives Black compensation for the pawn and he may even sacrifice another one, if given the opportunity; for example, 19 \textit{Wxd}5 \textit{Xxd}5 20 \textit{Ag}3 \textit{Ee}2 21 \textit{Ab}1 \textit{f}5 22 \textit{Ad}6 \textit{Ee}8 23 \textit{Ac}5 \textit{Ef}4 24 \textit{Xxa}7 \textit{Ee}2.

13...\textit{Ah}5 14 \textit{Ag}5 (D)

The bishop pins the knight and can be transferred to \textit{f}2 to attack the \textit{d}4-pawn.

Another line with similar ideas, 14 \textit{b}4 \textit{Wb}6 15 \textit{Ab}2 (15 \textit{Af}4 \textit{Ag}6 16 \textit{Xg}6 hxg6 leads to equal play) 15...\textit{Ad}8 16 \textit{Ef}4 (16 \textit{Ah}1 \textit{Ag}6) 16...\textit{Ee}8 17 \textit{Ee}1 \textit{Ag}6 18 \textit{Xg}6 hxg6, looks somewhat weaker.

An alternative plan is to attack the black king, but after 14 \textit{Af}4 \textit{Ee}8!? (14...\textit{Gg}6 15 \textit{Xg}6 hxg6 16 \textit{f}4 \textit{Wb}6 is
unclear) 15 \( \text{Q}xh5 \text{Q}xh5 \) 16 \( \text{f}4 \text{Q}f6 \) 17 \( \text{W}f3 \text{Q}d5 \) 18 \( \text{W}h3 \), as in Topalov-Ivanchuk, Nanjing 2008, Black can defend himself by 18...h6 19 \( \text{W}f5 \text{Q}f6 \).

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\]

14...g6 15 \( \text{Q}h4 \)

This is consistent, but there are other continuations:

a) 15 \( \text{Q}e1 \) can be answered with 15...\( \text{Q}e8 \).

b) 15 \( \text{W}d2 \text{Q}c8 \) 16 \( \text{Q}ad1 \text{Q}e8 \) 17 \( \text{Q}f2 \) (17 \( \text{Q}xg6 \text{hxg6} \) is unclear) 17...\( \text{Q}xd3 \) (17...\( \text{Q}b6!? \) 18 \( \text{Q}xf6 \text{gxf6} \) led to unclear play in Petrushin-Yailian, Aktiubinsk 1985) 18 \( \text{W}xd3 \text{h6} \) is equal.

c) 15 \( \text{Q}f4 \text{Q}xd3 \) 16 \( \text{Q}xd3 \text{Q}d6 \) 17 \( \text{Q}xf6 \text{Q}xf6 \) 18 \( \text{W}d2 \) (Asrian-Khenkin, FIDE Knockout, Moscow 2001) gives Black a choice between the equalizing 18...\( \text{Q}e8 \) and the more adventurous 18...\( \text{Q}e7! \)!

15...\( \text{Q}e8 \) 16 \( \text{Q}xg6 \)

16 \( \text{Q}f2 \) is inaccurate in view of 16...\( \text{Q}xd3 \) 17 \( \text{W}xd3 \text{Q}e5 \).

16...\( \text{hxg6} \) 17 \( \text{Q}f2 \text{W}b6 \)

Black cannot defend the pawn, but all his pieces gain activity.

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18 \( \text{Q}xd4 \)

18 \( \text{W}d2!? \text{Q}ad8 \) 19 \( \text{Q}e1 \) offers Black a choice between the unclear 19...\( \text{W}b5 \) and 19...g5!?, while 18 b4 can be met by 18...\( \text{Q}ad8 \) 19 c3 (19 \( \text{W}d2 \text{Q}a6 \) is equal) 19...d3.

18...\( \text{Q}ad8 \) 19 \( \text{Q}xc6 \text{W}xc6 \) 20 \( \text{Q}d4 \text{Q}d5 \)

Black's counterplay appears sufficient for equality.

11.6.2

12 \( \text{Q}e4 \) (D)

This move leads to exchanges, after which White can expect only a minimal advantage.

12...\( \text{Q}f5 \) 13 \( \text{Q}g5 \text{Q}xe4 \) 14 \( \text{Q}xe4 \text{h}6 \)

Forcing White to part with one of his bishops.

15 \( \text{Q}xf6 \)

After 15 \( \text{Q}h4 \text{g}5 \) 16 \( \text{Q}xc6 \text{bxc6} \) 17 \( \text{Q}g3 \text{W}d5 \) (17...\( \text{Q}e8!? \) is unclear) the activity of the centralized black pieces completely compensates for the weakening of his king's residence. Then 18 \( \text{h}4 \) is met with 18...\( \text{Q}fe8 \), while 18 \( \text{f}4 \)
\[ \text{c}e4 \text{d}4 \text{c}6 \text{e}4 \text{e}5 \text{d}xe5 \text{f}xe5 \text{f}3 \text{g}f5 \text{c}5 \text{d}5 \text{e}5 \text{d}xe5 \text{c}7 \text{d}xc7 \text{c}xc7 \text{f}3 \text{g}f6 \text{g}g5 \text{h}h5 \text{g}g3 \text{f}f5 \text{e}e4 \text{d}d4 \text{c}c5 \text{d}d5 \text{e}e5 \text{d}xe5 \text{f}f5 \text{g}g3 \text{h}h4 \text{i}i4 \text{i}i5 \text{j}j5 \text{k}k5 \text{l}l5 \text{m}m5 \text{n}n5 \text{o}o5 \text{p}p5 \text{q}q5 \text{r}r5 \text{s}s5 \text{t}t5 \text{u}u5 \text{v}v5 \text{w}w5 \text{x}x5 \text{y}y5 \text{z}z5 \]

b) A more accurate implementation of this idea by 16. \text{d}d1. \text{f}f8. 17. \text{f}f3. \text{e}e5. 18. \text{d}d1. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{d}d8. 20. \text{f}f3. \text{e}e5. 21. \text{d}d1. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8. 19. \text{g}g8. 19. \text{f}f8.
12 Transposition to the English

1 d4 e6 2 Ʌf3 c5 3 c4
With this move, White directs the game towards a form of English Opening.

3...cxd4 4 Ʌxd4 Ʌf6 (D)

Most of the lines we examine in this chapter follow the natural moves 4...Ʌf6 5 Ʌc3, when we have transposed to the Symmetrical English line 1 c4 c5 2 Ʌf3 Ʌf6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Ʌxd4 e6 5 Ʌc3. Then Black can choose either the 'Four Knights' with 5...Ʌc6 or the more Nimzo-like 5...Ʌb4. Both players can also choose to avoid the transposition. We survey these possibilities as follows:
• In Section 12.1 we examine the consequences of Black choosing a different 4th move, namely 4...Ʌc6, or of White meeting 4...Ʌf6 with something other than 5 Ʌc3.
• 4...Ʌf6 5 Ʌc3 Ʌb4 is the subject of Section 12.2. This popular variation often arises from the Nimzo-Indian Defence, and we are interested in it mainly because of the move-order 1 d4 e6 2 c4 Ʌb4+ 3 Ʌc3 c5 4 Ʌf3 cxd4 5 Ʌxd4 Ʌf6. If in Chapter 8, you meet 3 Ʌc3 with 3...c5, then you need to be familiar with this line too.
• In Section 12.3 we look into 4...Ʌf6 5 Ʌc3 Ʌc6 (or 4...Ʌc6 5 Ʌc3 Ʌf6), which leads to more complex play and offers Black better chances of counterplay. The position bears more than a superficial resemblance to the Sicilian Four Knights – as we shall see, the two lines share several opening ideas.

12.1 4...Ʌf6 (D)
The main alternative is 4...Ʌc6!? Then:

a) 5 Ʌc3 Ʌf6 transposes to Section 12.3.
b) 5 Ʌb5 Ʌf6 6 Ʌf4 e5!? 7 Ʌg5 Ʌa5+ 8 Ʌc3 8 Ʌd2 Ʌd8 9 Ʌg5 repeats, while 8 Ʌd2 can be met by
8...\(\text{Qe4}\) 9 \(\text{Qc7+ \text{Bx}c7}\) 10 \(\text{Qxe4 \text{Bb}6}\)
8...\(\text{Qe4}\) 9 \(\text{Qd}2\) \(\text{Qxd2}\) 10 \(\text{Qxd2 \text{Qb}4}\)
with equality, Nybäck-Miezis, Jyväskylä 2006.

c) 5 \(\text{g3} \text{Bb6}\) 6 \(\text{Qb}5!\)? (6 \(\text{Qc}2\) is met by 6...\(\text{Qc}5\) 7 \(\text{e}3\) \(\text{d}5\), while 6 \(\text{Qb}3\) \(\text{Qe}5\) 7 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{Bb}4+\) 8 \(\text{Qc}3\) \(\text{Qf}6\) transposes to Section 12.3.4) 6...\(\text{Qe}5\) 7 \(\text{Qf}4\) \(\text{a}6\) 8 \(\text{Bxe}5\) \(\text{axb}5\) 9 \(\text{Qg}2!\)? (9 \(\text{e}4?!\) \(\text{Qc}5\)) 9...\(\text{bxc}4\) 10 0-0 with chances for both sides, Tomashevsky-Zakhartsov, Irkutsk 2010.

Now 5 \(\text{Qc}3\) is covered in Sections 12.2 and 12.3. There is just one major alternative:
5 \(\text{g}3!\)?
White avoids the lines we see in Section 12.3, but allows other possibilities.

5...\(\text{d}5\)
This is a sharp continuation, which is also relevant to lines we cover in Chapter 14.

5...\(\text{Qb}4+\) is an alternative. Then 6 \(\text{Qd}2\) (6 \(\text{Qc}3\) transposes to Section 12.2, while 6 \(\text{Qd}2?!\) is dubious in view of 6...\(\text{Qc}6\)) 6...\(\text{e}7\) (a standard manoeuvre: the white bishop is poorly placed on d2) 7 \(\text{Qg}2\) 0-0 8 0-0 \(\text{Qc}6\) 9 \(\text{Qc}3\) (the bishop finds a good square, but at the cost of blocking the best square for the b1-knight) 9...\(\text{d}5\) 10 \(\text{Qd}2\) \(\text{Bb}6\) leads to an approximately equal position. For example, 11 \(\text{e}3\) (11 \(\text{cxd}5\) \(\text{Qxd}5\) 12 \(\text{Qxd}5\) \(\text{exd}5\) is unclear, while 11 \(\text{Qxc}6\) \(\text{bxc}6\) 12 \(\text{e}3\) \(\text{a}5\) is equal) 11...\(\text{Qd}7\) 12 \(\text{a}3\) \(\text{Qc}8\) (12...\(\text{Bc}6?!\)) 13 \(\text{b}4?!\) (White can maintain equality by 13 \(\text{Qc}1\) \(\text{Qf}8\)) 13...\(\text{Qxd}4\) 14 \(\text{Qxd}4\) \(\text{Bc}6\), and White's pieces are not situated actively enough to support his pawn advance.

6 \(\text{Qg}2\) \(\text{e}5\) 7 \(\text{Qf}3\)
This is the main continuation. Several other knight moves are viable, although in all these lines Black's chances are no worse:

a) 7 \(\text{Qb}5\) \(\text{d}4\) 8 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{a}6\) 9 \(\text{f}xe5\) \(\text{axb}5\) 10 \(\text{exf}6\) \(\text{bxc}4\) 11 0-0 \(\text{Qe}6\).

b) 7 \(\text{Qc}2\) 8 \(\text{f}4\) (8 0-0 \(\text{Qc}6\) 9 \(\text{Qd}2\) \(\text{Qf}5\) 10 \(\text{b}4\) \(\text{Qe}7\) gives Black the initiative) 8...\(\text{Qc}6\) 9 \(\text{Qxc}6+\) (9 0-0 \(\text{Bb}6\)) 9...\(\text{bxc}6\) 10 \(\text{fxe}5\) \(\text{Qg}4?!\) (10...\(\text{Bc}5\) 11 \(\text{Bd}2\) \(\text{Bc}5\) 12 \(\text{Qxd}4\) is unclear) 11 \(\text{Bxd}4\) \(\text{Bc}5\) 12 \(\text{Qxd}4\) \(\text{Qxe}5\).

c) 7 \(\text{Qb}3\) \(\text{d}4\) 8 0-0 (8 \(\text{e}3?!\) \(\text{a}5\) 9 \(\text{exd}4\) \(\text{a}4\) gives Black the initiative; 8 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{Bb}4+\) 9 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{Qg}4\) 10 0-0 \(\text{Qxd}2\) 11 \(\text{Bxd}2\) \(\text{Qe}3\) 12 \(\text{Bf}2\) \(\text{Qg}4\) is equal, because White should avoid 13 \(\text{Qf}3?!\) \(\text{Qc}6\)) 8...\(\text{Qc}6\) 9 \(\text{f}4\) (9 \(\text{e}3?!\) \(\text{Qg}4\); 9 \(\text{Qg}5\) \(\text{a}5\)) 9...\(\text{e}4\) 10 \(\text{f}5\) \(\text{g}6\) 11 \(\text{Qg}5\) \(\text{Qc}7\) 12 \(\text{xf}6\) (12 \(\text{e}3\) \(\text{d}3\)) 12...\(\text{xf}6\) 13 \(\text{Qxe}4\) 0-0.

7...\(\text{d}4\) 8 0-0 \(\text{Qc}6\) 9 \(\text{e}3\)
White should avoid 9 \(\text{b}4?!\) \(\text{c}4\) 10 \(\text{Qg}5\) \(\text{Qxb}4\).

9...\(\text{e}7\) 10 \(\text{exd}4\) \(\text{exd}4\)
Now 11 \( \text{b}2 \text{b}d2 \text{h}e6! ? \) 12 \( \text{g}5 \text{g}4 \) 13 \( \text{b}3 \text{d}7 \) 14 \( \text{d}e4 \) 0-0 left Black in possession of the initiative in Mastrovasilis-Edouard, Cappelle la Grande 2010, while 11 \( \text{f}4 \) 0-0 12 \( \text{e}5 \) (12 \( \text{e}1 \text{b}4! ? \) ) 12...\( \text{b}6 \) 13 \( \text{b}3 \) (13 \( \text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 \) 14 \( \text{d}2 \text{e}6 \) ) .\( \text{a}5 \) ! 14 \( \text{xb}6 \) (14 \( \text{b}5 \text{e}6 \) ) 14...\( \text{xb}6 \) also gives Black satisfactory play.

12.2

4...\( \text{f}6 \) 5 \( \text{c}3 \text{b}4 \) (D)

\[\text{w} \]

6 g3

This is virtually the only way to fight for the advantage, and reaches a position that is better known via the Nimzo-Indian move-order 1 \( d4 \text{f}6 \) 2 \( c4 \text{e}6 \) 3 \( \text{c}3 \text{b}4 \) 4 \( \text{f}3 \) 5 g3 \( \text{c}xd4 \) 6 \( \text{d}xd4 \).

Other continuations are not dangerous for Black:

a) 6 \( \text{c}2 \) 0-0 7 \( \text{g}5 \) (7 \( a3 \text{xc}3+ \) 8 \( \text{xc}3 \) d5 9 \( \text{cxd}5 \text{w}d5 \) ) 7...\( \text{c}6 \) 8 e3 h6 9 \( \text{h}4 \) (9 h4? \( \text{xd}4 \) 10 exd4 d5) 9...\( \text{xd}4 \) 10 exd4 b6 11 \( \text{d}3 \text{b}7 \) 12 0-0 \( \text{e}7 \) and then ...d5 with slightly the more pleasant position for Black.

b) 6 \( \text{g}5 \) h6 7 \( \text{h}4 \text{a}5 \) 8 \( \text{c}2 \) (or 8 \( \text{b}5 \text{e}4 \) 9 \( \text{w}d4 \) 0-0! 10 \( \text{xe}4 \text{a}6 \) 11 \( \text{d}3 \text{axb}5 \) 12 \( \text{cxb}5 \) \( \text{d}5 \) ) 8...\( \text{c}6 \) (8...\( \text{e}4 \) 9 \( \text{c}1 \) f5!? is unclear) 9 e3 (9 \( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{gf}6 \) 10 e3 also offers unclear play) 9...\( \text{e}4 \) 10 \( \text{c}1 \text{xc}3 \) (10...f5!? ) 11 \( \text{bxc}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) was equal in Stern-Alekseev, Santo Domingo 2003.

c) 6 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 7 a3 (7 \( \text{e}3 \) 0-0 8 \( \text{e}2 \) d5 is also equal) 7...\( \text{e}7 \) 8 \( \text{g}5 \) (or 8 \( \text{e}3 \) 0-0 9 \( \text{e}2 \) d5 with equality) 8...0-0 9 e3 h6 10 \( \text{h}4 \) d5 11 \( \text{cxd}5 \text{bxc}6 \) 12 \( \text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 \) 13 \( \text{xe}7 \text{we}7 \) 14 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 15 \( \text{wc}3 \) c5 gave rise to level play in Cifuentes-Ubilava, Roquetas de Mar 2008.

d) 6 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \) (6...\( \text{e}7 ! ? \) ) 7 \( \text{e}3 \) (this is artificial; 7 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 8 \( \text{f}3 \) is simpler, and equal) 7...\( \text{b}6 \) 8 f3 0-0 9 \( \text{d}1 \) (9 \( \text{f}2 \) e5 gives Black the initiative) 9...\( \text{a}5 \) (9...e5!? is an interesting alternative) 10 \( \text{f}2 \text{c}8 \) 11 e3 \( \text{c}6 \) was equal in Granda-Gashimov, Lugo 2009.

e) 6 \( \text{b}5 \) is more interesting but also brings no advantage:

e1) 6...0-0 7 a3 \( \text{xc}3+ \) 8 \( \text{xc}3 \) d5 9 \( \text{g}5 \) (9 \( \text{cxd}5 \) ?! exd5 10 \( \text{g}5 \) d4) 9...h6 10 \( \text{xf}6 \) (10 \( \text{h}4 \) d4 11 \( \text{e}4 \) g5) 10...\( \text{xf}6 \) 11 \( \text{cxd}5 \text{f}5 \) is sufficient for equality since 12 e3 is met by 12...\( \text{h}8 \), while after 12 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 13 e3 \( \text{d}8 \) 14 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{g}6 \) Black's lead in development completely compensates for the missing pawn.

e2) 6...d5 can lead to interesting complications: 7 \( \text{cxd}5 \) (7 \( \text{f}4 \) 0-0 8 \( \text{a}6 \) 9 a3 \( \text{c}5 \) 10 \( \text{d}6 \text{xc}3+ \) 11 \( \text{bxc}3 \) \( \text{bd}7 ! \) 12 \( \text{cxd}5 \) e5 gives Black the initiative) 7...\( \text{xd}5 \) 8 \( \text{f}4 \) (8 \( \text{g}5 \) 0-0 9 e3 \( \text{c}6 \) 10 \( \text{e}2 \) a6 11 \( \text{d}4 \)
\[ \text{\textit{Transposition to the English}} \]

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\[ \text{\textit{ii.xc3+ 12 bxc3 \textit{wa5 is unclear, Aronian-Gustafsson, Deizisau 2002} 8...0-0} \]

9 a3?! (9 tbc7 is unclear) 9...\textit{xc3+}

10 bxc3 tbc6 and now White cannot even equalize, Lenic-Y akovenko, European Team Ch, Khersonissos 2007.

6...0-0 7 \textit{g2} d5 (D)

8 cxd5

This is the strongest continuation. Nowadays other lines occur less often, although they too require accurate play from Black. In both the following lines, White’s initiative compensates for the sacrificed pawn, but he has no advantage:

a) 8 0-0 dxc4 9 \textit{wa4} (9 \textit{g5 \textit{e7; 9}\textit{c2} \textit{xc3} 10 bxc3 \textit{c7} 11 \textit{b1} \textit{d8} 12 \textit{f4} \textit{e7} 13 \textit{c1} d5) 9...\textit{a6} 10 \textit{db5} (10 \textit{d1} \textit{d7) 10...d5 (or 10...\textit{e8}?) 11 \textit{d1} \textit{xc3} 12 \textit{xc3} \textit{xc3} 13 bxc3 \textit{c5} 14 \textit{wc2} \textit{c7} 15 \textit{a3} (15 \textit{d4} e5; 15 \textit{e3} \textit{b8} 15...\textit{b8} 16 \textit{d4} b5 17 \textit{wd2} \textit{b7} 18 \textit{xb7} \textit{xb7}.

b) 8 \textit{wb3} \textit{xc3+} 9 bxc3 (9 \textit{xc3} e5 10 \textit{b3} \textit{c6} 11 \textit{g5} dxc4 12 \textit{xc4} \textit{e6} 13 \textit{h4} \textit{xb3} 14 axb3

\[ \text{\textit{\textit{d4} 15 0-0 \textit{xe2}+ 16 \textit{h1} \textit{d4 with equality} 9...dxc4 10 \textit{wa3} (10 \textit{xc4} e5 11 \textit{b5} a6 12 \textit{c7} b5 13 \textit{c5} \textit{bd7} 14 \textit{a3} \textit{b8} 15 \textit{xa6} \textit{xa6} 16 \textit{wa6} \textit{wc7} is equal) 10...\textit{bd7} 11 0-0 \textit{b6}.

8...\textit{xd5} 9 \textit{wb3}!

9 \textit{d2} is less ambitious: 9...\textit{xc3} 10 bxc3 \textit{c5} (it is useful to leave the e7-square vacant) 11 \textit{e3} (11 \textit{b3} \textit{b6} 12 0-0 \textit{c6} and 11 0-0 e5 12 \textit{c2} \textit{c6} 13 \textit{b1} \textit{c7} also lead to an equal game) 11...\textit{e7} 12 \textit{wb3} \textit{a6} 13 0-0 \textit{b8} with a level game in prospect, Almeida-Almagro Llanas, Madrid 2010.

9...\textit{c5} (D)

\[ \text{\textit{Up to here we have followed the standard main line of Nimzo-Indian theory, but this rare move looks like a reasonable way to move in a different direction – and one that our opponents are unlikely to have analysed in advance. White must at once make a tricky decision.}} \]

10 \textit{xd5}

The following lines are also possible:
1a) 10 \( \triangle db5 \) a6 11 \( \triangle xd5 \) exd5 12 \( \triangle c3 \) d4 13 \( \triangle d5 \) \( \triangle c6 \) 14 0-0 \( \triangle e6 \) is equal.
b) 10 \( \triangle xd5 \) \( \triangle xd4 \) 11 \( \triangle c3 \) (11 \( \triangle e3 \) \( \triangle c6 \) and now not 12 \( \triangle xd4 \)?! \( \triangle xd4 \) 13 \( \triangle wc4 \) \( \triangle xe2 \), but 12 \( \triangle d1 \) \( \triangle a5+ \) 13 \( \triangle d2 \) \( \triangle c5 \) with an equal position) 11...\( \triangle c6 \) 12 0-0 e5 13 e3 (13 \( \triangle d1 \) \( \triangle f6 \)) 13...\( \triangle b6 \) 14 \( \triangle d1 \) \( \triangle g5 \) with counterplay; for example, 15 \( \triangle d5 \) \( \triangle e6 \) 16 \( \triangle b5 \) \( \triangle ad8 \).
c) 10 \( \triangle f3 \)?! \( \triangle c6 \) (10...\( \triangle b6 \)?) 11 0-0 \( \triangle xc3 \) 12 \( \triangle wxc3 \) \( \triangle w7 \) 13 \( \triangle e3 \) (13 \( \triangle f4 \) f6) 13...\( \triangle xe3 \) 14 \( \triangle xe3 \) e5 leads to equality.
d) 10 \( \triangle c2 \) \( \triangle c6 \) (the possible loss of the d5-pawn does not perturb Black) 11 \( \triangle xd5 \) (11 0-0 \( \triangle a5 \) 12 \( \triangle b5 \) \( \triangle xc3 \) 13 bxc3 \( \triangle b6 \) is equal; 11 \( \triangle xd5 \) exd5 12 \( \triangle wd5 \) \( \triangle b6 \)!) 11...exd5 12 0-0 (12 \( \triangle xd5 \) \( \triangle a5+ \) 13 \( \triangle d2 \) \( \triangle xf2+ \) 14 \( \triangle xf2 \) \( \triangle xd2 \) is unclear, while 12 \( \triangle wd5 \) \( \triangle a5+ \) 13 \( \triangle d2 \) \( \triangle b6 \) 14 0-0 \( \triangle g4 \) is equal) 12...d4 13 \f4 (13 \( \triangle d1 \) \( \triangle e8 \)) 13...\( \triangle w7 \) with equal chances.
10...exd5 11 \( \triangle e3 \) \( \triangle xd4 \) 12 \( \triangle xd4 \) \( \triangle c6 \) 13 \( \triangle d1 \)
It is dubious for White to continue 13 0-0-0-? \( \triangle c5 ? \) d4.
13...\( \triangle h3 \)
Now the white king remains in the centre.
14 \( \triangle xd5 \)
Other moves are at best unclear: 14 f3?! \( \triangle e8 \) 15 \( \triangle f2 \) \( \triangle w7 \), 14 \( \triangle g1 \) \( \triangle e6 \), 14 \( \triangle c5 \) \( \triangle e8 \) 15 \( \triangle xd5 \) \( \triangle wf6 \) or 14 \( \triangle xb7 \) \( \triangle wd6 \).
14...\( \triangle xd4 \) 15 \( \triangle xd4 \) \( \triangle c8 \) 16 f3 \( \triangle c1 \) 17 \( \triangle d1 \) \( \triangle xd1+ \) 18 \( \triangle wxd1 \) \( \triangle e6 \)
The game is equal.

12.3
4...\( \triangle f6 \) 5 \( \triangle c3 \) \( \triangle c6 \) (D)

White has a wide choice of continuations here, so before moving on to our four main lines, we shall briefly deal with moves that do not pose serious problems for Black:
a) There's no justification for 6 \( \triangle c2 \)?! (6 \( \triangle b3 \)?! and 6 \( \triangle f3 \)?! are also absolutely inappropriate) 6...d5 7 \( \triangle xd5 \) \( \triangle e3 \) (8 e3 is slightly preferable) 8...\( \triangle d6 \)! 9 g3 (9 \( \triangle xd5 \) \( \triangle f5 \) gives Black the initiative) 9...0-0 10 \( \triangle g2 \) \( \triangle e5 \), when Black enjoys the better chances.
b) 6 \( \triangle xc6 \) bxc6 7 e4 \( \triangle b4 \) transposes to Section 12.3.1.
c) 6 e3 d5 7 \( \triangle cxd5 \) (7 \( \triangle e2 \) dxc4?!) 7...\( \triangle xd5 \) and now 8 \( \triangle e2 \) \( \triangle d6 \) 9 0-0 \( \triangle a6 \) transposes to Section 13.1.2. A more vigorous idea is 8 \( \triangle b5 \) \( \triangle d7 \) 9 0-0 \( \triangle d6 \) 10 e4 (10 \( \triangle f3 \) \( \triangle g4 \)), but by playing 10...\( \triangle xe4 \) 11 \( \triangle xc6 \) \( \triangle xc6 \) 12 \( \triangle xd5 \) 0-0 13 \( \triangle xe4 \) \( \triangle xc3 \) 14 bxc3 \( \triangle bx6 \) 15 \( \triangle bx6 \) \( \triangle c8 \) Black soon re-establishes the material equilibrium, with equal chances.
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d) 6 \text{\textit{f4}} can also be met by 6...d5.
Then:

d1) 7 \text{\textit{d}b5} transposes to Section 12.3.3.

d2) 7 e3 is quite adequately answered by 7...\text{\textit{c}c5}!? 8 \text{cxd5} (8 \text{\textit{c}c1 0-0} 8...\text{\textit{d}x}d5 9 \text{\textit{d}x}d5 (9 \text{\textit{d}xc6} bxc6 is equal) 9...\text{ex}d5 10 \text{\textit{d}xc6} bxc6, with equality.

d3) 7 \text{cxd5} \text{\textit{d}x}d5 8 \text{\textit{d}xc6} bxc6 9 \text{\textit{d}d2} is a more interesting possibility. White's pawn-structure is superior, but due to the tempo lost by \text{\textit{f}4-d2} he has no time to make use of this advantage: 9...\text{b}4 10 \text{\textit{c}2} (10 \text{\textit{c}c1} \text{\textit{b}8} 10...\text{\textit{a}5} (or 10...0-0!? 11 a3 \text{\textit{a}c3} 12 bxc3 \text{\textit{f}6} with equality) 11 a3 \text{\textit{b}8} 12 e3 0-0!? (weaker is 12...\text{a}6!? 13 \text{\textit{a}6} \text{\textit{a}6} 14 \text{\textit{a}4} \text{\textit{a}4} 15 \text{\textit{a}a4}) 13 \text{\textit{d}d3} \text{\textit{a}6} 14 \text{\textit{h}7+} \text{\textit{h}8} 15 \text{\textit{d}d3} \text{\textit{f}d8} is equal.

e) 6 \text{\textit{g}5} \text{\textit{e}7} 7 e3 \text{\textit{a}5}!? 8 \text{\textit{h}4} (8 \text{\textit{d}b5} 0-0 9 a3 d5 10 \text{\textit{b}4} \text{\textit{d}8} was equal in Agrest-Timman, Malmö 1999, while 8 \text{\textit{xf}6}?! \text{\textit{xf}6} 9 \text{\textit{xd}2} \text{\textit{d}x}d4 10 \text{ex}d4 b6 gives Black the initiative) and now Black must make an important decision:

e1) After 8...\text{\textit{e}4} 9 \text{\textit{xe}7} \text{\textit{xc}3} 10 \text{\textit{d}2} \text{\textit{xe}7} (10...\text{\textit{xe}7}!? 11 bxc3 \text{\textit{d}x}d4 and 10...\text{\textit{d}x}d4!? 11 \text{ex}d4 \text{\textit{e}7} 12 \text{\textit{c}c1} b6 are both unclear) 11 \text{\textit{b}5} d5 12 \text{\textit{xc}3} (12 \text{\textit{d}6}+ \text{\textit{f}8} 13 \text{\textit{xe}3} \text{\textit{xc}3+} 14 bxc3 \text{\textit{g}6} is equal) 12...\text{dx}c4 Black can play for equality.

e2) 8...\text{\textit{b}4} offers Black more positive prospects. After 9 \text{\textit{c}2} \text{\textit{xe}4} 10 \text{ex}d4 b5!? 11 \text{\textit{xf}6} gx\text{f}6 12 \text{c}x\text{b}5 \text{\textit{b}7} he sacrifices a pawn to secure the initiative.

Now we move on to the main lines:

12.3.1: 6 e4
12.3.2: 6 a3
12.3.3: 6 \text{\textit{d}b5}
12.3.4: 6 g3

12.3.1

6 e4 (D)

Another metamorphosis: we have now reached a line of the Sicilian Defence (1 e4 c5 2 \text{\textit{f}3} \text{\textit{c}6} 3 d4 \text{cxd}4 4 \text{\textit{d}x}d4 e6 5 c4 \text{\textit{f}6} 6 \text{\textit{c}c}3), but not one that is considered dangerous for Black. The line 6 \text{\textit{xc}6} bxc6 7 e4 \text{\textit{b}4} comes to the same thing.

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

6...\text{\textit{b}4} 7 \text{\textit{xc}6} bxc6 8 \text{\textit{d}3}

It is not good for White to choose 8 e5? \text{\textit{d}e}4 9 \text{\textit{d}2} \text{\textit{xc}3} (Black even has a stronger path in 9...\text{\textit{xd}2}!? 10 \text{\textit{xd}2} \text{\textit{a}5}) 10 \text{\textit{xc}3} \text{\textit{xc}3} 11 bxc3 \text{\textit{a}5} 12 \text{\textit{d}4} \text{\textit{b}8} with the initiative for Black, A.Stefanova-Zhu Chen, Wijk aan Zee 2004.

8...e5

Otherwise Black will need to take White's e5 advance into consideration; for example, 8...0-0 9 e5!? \text{\textit{a}5} 10 \text{\textit{f}4} with unclear play.
9 \( \textit{\&}e3 \)

9 0-0 is a more common move-order, although Black can then play 9...\( \textit{\&}c5?! \), taking control of the important g1-a7 diagonal. Instead, after the standard 9...0-0, 10 \( \textit{\&}e3 \) transposes to our main line below, while the straightforward 10 f4 d6 (10...\( \textit{\&}c5+?! \) 11 \( \textit{\&}h1 \) d6 12 f5 h6 gives Black the initiative) 11 f5?! (better is 11 \( \textit{\&}a4 \) \( \textit{\&}e8 \) 12 a3 \( \textit{\&}a5 \), with unclear play) 11...d5 allowed Black to take over the initiative in A.Muzychuk-Cherenkova, Russian Women’s Team Ch, Sochi 2007. Given the strategic importance of the g1-a7 diagonal, both sides should seek to control it; for example, after 9 \( \textit{\&}d2 \) or 9 \( \textit{\&}g5 \) Black replies 9...\( \textit{\&}c5 \) to good effect.

9...0-0 10 0-0 d6 11 h3

11 \( \textit{\&}a4 \) \( \textit{\&}g4 \) 12 \( \textit{\&}d2 \) (12 \( \textit{\&}c1?! \) is unclear) 12...\( \textit{\&}xd2 \) 13 \( \textit{\&}xd2 \) \( \textit{\&}h4 \) 14 h3 \( \textit{\&}f6 \) (Anka-Berczes, Hungarian Team Ch 2005/6) and 11 \( \textit{\&}a4 \) \( \textit{\&}xc3 \) 12 bxc3 \( \textit{\&}e6 \) do not promise White an advantage.

11...\( \textit{\&}xc3 \) 12 bxc3 \( \textit{\&}e6 \)

12...\( \textit{\&}c5?! \) is more ambitious (although somewhat risky): Black fixes the pawn-structure and restricts the activity of the white bishops. 13 f4 (13 \( \textit{\&}d2 \) \( \textit{\&}b7 \) 14 f3 \( \textit{\&}d7 \); 13 \( \textit{\&}b1 \) \( \textit{\&}c7 \) 13...\( \textit{\&}d7 \) 14 f5 f6 (14...\( \textit{\&}b8?! \) 15 f6 \( \textit{\&}xf6 \) 16 \( \textit{\&}g5 \) \( \textit{\&}e8 \) can follow, with unclear play, which may be sharpened if White launches a kingside attack.

13 f4 exf4 14 \( \textit{\&}xf4 \) \( \textit{\&}b6+ \) 15 \( \textit{\&}f2 \)

Or 15 \( \textit{\&}h1 \) \( \textit{\&}c5 \), as in the game Chandler-Emms, Hastings 2000. Interposing the rook appears slightly stronger than moving the king, but it does not change the assessment of the position.

15...\( \textit{\&}c5 \)

The game is approximately equal as both sides have pawn-weaknesses.

12.3.2 6 a3 (D)

This is a rather popular continuation. Covering the b4-square is useful in many lines, while in specific terms White seeks an improved version of the 6 \( \textit{\&}f4 \) d5 7 cxd5 variation, which we examined at the beginning of Section 12.3.

6...d5 7 cxd5 exd5

This time taking with the knight is somewhat weaker: after 7...\( \textit{\&}xd5 \) 8 \( \textit{\&}xc6 \) bxc6, 9 \( \textit{\&}d2 \) or 9 \( \textit{\&}c2 \) will follow, with a small but stable advantage for White.

8 \( \textit{\&}g5 \)

8 g3 leads to positions similar to the Tarrasch Queen’s Gambit where the move a3 is not very useful. After 8...\( \textit{\&}c5 \) 9 \( \textit{\&}e3 \) (the careless 9 \( \textit{\&}xc6?! \) bxc6 10 \( \textit{\&}g2 \) \( \textit{\&}g4 \) hands the initiative
to Black right away) 9...\(\text{b6}\) 10 \(\text{g2}\) 0-0 11 0-0 \(\text{e8}\) the game is level, Kasimdzhanov-Gopal, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007.

8...\(\text{c5}\) 9 e3 0-0 10 \(\text{e2}\) (D)

Changing the pawn-structure by 10 \(\text{xc6}\) bxc6 does not provide any benefit for White, since the vulnerability of his own queenside reduces the effect of the pressure along the c-file. Black obtains enough counterplay; for example, 11 \(\text{e2}\) h6 12 \(\text{h4}\) \(\text{e8}\) 13 0-0 \(\text{f5}\) 14 \(\text{a4}\) \(\text{d6}\) 15 \(\text{c1}\) \(\text{e6}\) 16 \(\text{c5}\) (16 \(\text{g3}\) a5 is equal, while 16 b4 can be answered with 16...\(\text{xh2+}\)!? 17 \(\text{xh2}\) \(\text{g4+}\) 18 \(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{e8}\)+ 19 \(\text{h3}\) \(\text{g6}\) 16...\(\text{xc6}\) 17 \(\text{xc5}\) g5 18 \(\text{g3}\) \(\text{e4}\) 19 \(\text{c1}\) a5, maintaining the equilibrium without any particular difficulty. It is worth paying attention to the weakness of the b2-pawn – a consequence of the move 6 a3.

![Diagram](image)

10...h6

This move has so far not been played in practice, but it is a useful way to liven up the game. In principle, 10...\(\text{xd4}\) 11 exd4 h6 suits Black, but after 12 \(\text{e3}\)?? \(\text{e8}\) 13 0-0 \(\text{f5}\) 14 \(\text{c1}\) White’s position remains the more pleasant because of his bishop-pair.

11 \(\text{xf6}\)

11 \(\text{h4}\) is quite well answered with 11...\(\text{xd4}\) 12 exd4 \(\text{f5}\) 13 0-0 \(\text{c8}\) or 11...\(\text{xd4}\) 12 exd4 \(\text{e7}\) 13 0-0 \(\text{e6}\), when 14 \(\text{b3}\), 14 \(\text{f3}\) and 14 \(\text{e1}\) are all met by 14...\(\text{e4}\).

11...\(\text{xf6}\) 12 \(\text{xd5}\)

After 12 \(\text{b3}\) \(\text{d6}\) 13 \(\text{xd5}\) (13 0-0?! \(\text{d8}\) 13...\(\text{e5}\) the position of the b3-knight is insecure and Black’s initiative completely compensates for his small material deficit.

12...\(\text{e5}\) 13 \(\text{xc6}\)

After 13 \(\text{b3}\) \(\text{d8}\) 14 \(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 15 \(\text{d3}\) \(\text{g5}\) the activity of the black pieces again turns out to be enough to maintain the equilibrium; for example, 16 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{g4}\) 17 \(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{e5}\), 16 0-0 \(\text{h3}\) 17 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{g2}\) 18 \(\text{xe2}\) \(\text{d8}\) or 16 g3?! \(\text{e5}\), when 17 \(\text{b3}\) loses to 17...\(\text{xd3}\) 18 \(\text{xe3}\) \(\text{f3+}\).

13...\(\text{xc6}\) 14 \(\text{f4}\)

Or 14 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{b8}\) 15 \(\text{c1}\) \(\text{d6}\). White is ready to return the pawn, but Black is in no hurry to take it back.

14...\(\text{f5}\) 15 \(\text{d3}\) \(\text{xd3}\) 16 \(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{ab8}\) 17 \(\text{d1}\) \(\text{xb2}\)

The game is approximately equal.

12.3.3

6 \(\text{db5}\) (D)

Now 6...d6!? is possible, with very interesting play after 7 \(\text{f4}\) e5 8 \(\text{g5}\) a6. However, White can also choose 7 e4, transposing to a Sicilian main line, namely 1 e4 c5 2 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{c6}\) 3 d4 cxd4 4 \(\text{xd4}\) e6 5 \(\text{b5}\) d6 6 c4 \(\text{f6}\) 7 \(\text{1c3}\). So let us not tempt fate any longer.
6...d5

This move is a pawn sacrifice, but one that White usually does not accept.

7  \( \text{\textit{xf4}} \)

The choice is not large – either this bishop move or the exchange 7 cxd5 \( \text{\textit{Qxd5}} \). Now it is illogical to play 8 e4 \( \text{\textit{Qxc3}} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{Wxd8+}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxd8}} \) 10 bxc3 (more careful is 10 \( \text{\textit{Qxc3}} \) \( \text{\textit{Ae5}} \), with equality) 10...

\( \text{\textit{Qc5}} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{Qf4}} \) a6 12 \( \text{\textit{Qd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{Qb3 \ Aa3}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{Qd1}} \) (14 \( \text{\textit{Ab1!}} \)?) 14...

\( \text{\textit{Qe7}}, \) when White’s activity is exhausted but his pawn weaknesses remain, Miladinović-Antić, Kragujevac 2009. However, 8 \( \text{\textit{Qxd5}} \) exd5 9 \( \text{\textit{Wxd8+}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxd8}} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{Qd2}} \) is more critical. Black has the initiative in return for the pawn after 10...

\( \text{\textit{Qc5}} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{Qf4}} \) a6 12 \( \text{\textit{Qd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) 10...

\( \text{\textit{Qe6!}} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{Wxd8+}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxd8}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{Qc3}} \) 0-0 13 e3 \( \text{\textit{Qd6}} \) or 10...

\( \text{\textit{Qe7}} \) 11 0-0-0!? (11 \( \text{\textit{Qc3?!}} \) 0-0; 11 a3!? \( \text{\textit{Qxd2+}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{Wxd2}} \) is unclear) 11...

\( \text{\textit{Qxd2+}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{Qxd2}} \) 0-0 13 \( \text{\textit{Qd6}} \) \( \text{\textit{Wh4}} \) (13...

\( \text{\textit{Qg5}} \) 14 e3 \( \text{\textit{Qd8?}} \) 15 h4) 14 g3 \( \text{\textit{We4}} \). However, all these lines could be investigated further.

7...e5 8 cxd5

White initiates a forcing sequence that leads to a sharp ending. 8 \( \text{\textit{Qg5?!}} \) is not advantageous in view of 8...

cxd5 axb5 10 dxc6 \( \text{\textit{Wxd1+}} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{Qxd1}} \) bxc6.

8...\( \text{\textit{Qxf4}} \) 9 dxc6 bxc6 10 \( \text{\textit{Wxd8+}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxd8}} \) (\( D \))

11 \( \text{\textit{Qd1+}} \)

11 0-0-0+?! \( \text{\textit{Qe7!}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{Qd4}} \) (12 \( \text{\textit{Qd6}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qe6}} \)?) 12...

\( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) is of doubtful value for White as the f2-pawn is undefended and so the unpleasant threat of...

\( \text{\textit{Qg4}} \) appears.

After 11 \( \text{\textit{Qd4}} \) Black can equalize by 11...

\( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) 12 g3 \( \text{\textit{fxg3}} \) 13 hxg3 \( \text{\textit{Qb4}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{Qg2}} \) (14 \( \text{\textit{Qc1 \ Qb8}} \) 14...

\( \text{\textit{Qxc3+}} \) 15 bxc3 \( \text{\textit{Qc7}} \) or try to obtain more with 11...

\( \text{\textit{Qc7?!}} \) 12 g3 \( \text{\textit{Qb8}} \) (12...

\( \text{\textit{Qc5}} \) is unclear, Korchnoi-Portisch, Candidates (3), Bad Kissingen 1983) 13 \( \text{\textit{Qc1 \ Qxb2}} \).

11...

\( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{Qd6 \ Qc7}} \)

Or 12...

\( \text{\textit{Qxd6}} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{Qxd6 \ Qb8}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{Qd2}} \) (14 b3 \( \text{\textit{Qb4}} \) 15 g3 \( \text{\textit{Qe7}} \) is equal) 14...

\( \text{\textit{Qe8}} \) 15 g3 (15 f3 \( \text{\textit{Qe5}} \) 16 g3 \( \text{\textit{Qd5}} \)) 15...

f3 16 \( \text{\textit{Qd1 \ fxe2+}} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{Qxe2 \ Qc7}} \), with approximate equality.
13 \( \text{Qxf7 Gg8} \) 14 \( \text{Qe5} \)

White's knight should save its skin right away. After 14 g3?! \( \text{b8} \) 15 \( \text{d2} \) (15 \( \text{g2 xb2} \) 16 0-0 \( \text{b4} \) 17 \( \text{c1 fxg3} \) ) 15...\( \text{b4} \) 16 \( \text{g2} \) the unexpected 16...f3! 17 \( \text{xf3 Ge8} \) drives White into a difficult situation.

14...\( \text{b8} \) 15 \( \text{d2} \)

More accurate than 15 \( \text{xd7} \) (or 15 \( \text{d3 f5} \) ) 15...\( \text{xd7} \) 16 g3 (16 \( \text{d2 e5} \) ) 16...\( \text{xb2} \) 17 \( \text{h3 f6} \) (17...\( \text{b6} \) !?) 18 0-0 \( \text{b4} \), when Black has the initiative, Postny-Grünfeld, Givataim 1998.

15...\( \text{b4} \) 16 \( \text{xd7 xd7} \) 17 g3 \( \text{e5} \)

The game is equal. Blees-Hegeler, Krumbach 1991 ended in perpetual check after 18 \( \text{h3 xc3} \) 19 bxc3 \( \text{b1}+ \) 20 \( \text{d1 d3}+ \) 21 exd3 \( \text{e8}+ \) 22 \( \text{d2 b2}+ \) 23 \( \text{c1 ee2} \) 24 \( \text{de1 ec2}+ \) 25 \( \text{d1 d2}+ \).

12.3.4
6 g3 (D)

As in Section 12.2, the fianchetto is the most promising for White if he wants to fight for an opening advantage. Here, however, Black has more ways to create counterplay.

6...\( \text{b6} \) 7 \( \text{d3} \)

7 e3 can be met by 7...\( \text{b4} \) 8 \( \text{g2 e5} \) or 7...d5, with equality, while 7 \( \text{c2 d5} \) 8 \( \text{g2} \) (not 8 \( \text{xd5}?! \) exd5 9 \( \text{xd5? xd5} \) 10 \( \text{xd5 e6} \) 11 \( \text{e4 b4+} \) ) 8...\( \text{xc4} \) 9 \( \text{e3} \) (9 0-0 \( \text{d7} \) ) 9...\( \text{a6} \) 10 a4 \( \text{b4} \) 11 0-0 \( \text{xc3} \) 12 bxc3 0-0 looks unattractive for White.

The adventurous 7 \( \text{db5} \) !? is much more interesting and popular. Then 7...d5?! is certainly possible, but the main line is 7...\( \text{e5} \), when we have two important moves to consider:

a) 8 \( \text{g2 xc4} \) 9 \( \text{a4 a6} \) 10 \( \text{xc4 axb5} \) 11 \( \text{xb5} \) (11 \( \text{xb5} \) !? \( \text{c5} \) ) 12 \( \text{e3 xe3} \) 13 \( \text{c7}+ \) \( \text{e7} \) 14 \( \text{xa8 xf2+} \) 15 \( \text{f1 d4} \) gave Black the advantage in the game Mkrtchian-Burtasova, European Women's Ch, Dresden 2007) 11...\( \text{xb5} \) 12 \( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{b4}+ \) 13 \( \text{d2 xd2+} \) 14 \( \text{xd2 e7} \) 15 \( \text{ch1 d5} \) and an equal ending arises.

b) 8 \( \text{f4 fg4} \) leads to complications:

b1) 9 e3 a6 10 h3 (10 \( \text{c7+?! wb7} \) 11 \( \text{xb7} \) ) 10...\( \text{xb5} \) 11 \( \text{xb5} \) 12 \( \text{xb5} \) 13 \( \text{d4} \) 14 \( \text{e2 d5} \) 15 \( \text{a5} \) (Timofeev-Stević, Bosnian Team Ch, Bihac 2010) 17 a4 \( \text{d7} \) is equal.

b2) 9 \( \text{a4?!} \) (adding more fuel to the fire) 9...\( \text{fxe2+} \) !? (it is strange that this simple reply has still not been tried in practice) 10 \( \text{d2 wc5} \) 11 \( \text{e4 wb6} \) !? 12 h3 \( \text{f6} \), with rather intricate play.
7...\texttt{\textbf{D}}e5 8 e4

White is not completely obligated to defend the c4-pawn, but after 8 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}g2 \texttt{\textbf{D}}xc4 9 0-0 (9 e4 \texttt{\textbf{B}}b4 10 0-0 \texttt{\textbf{D}}xc3 11 bxc3 d6 12 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}g5 e5, Kalashian-D.Petrosian, Armenian Ch, Erevan 2010) 9...\texttt{\textbf{D}}e7 (9...d5!? 10 e4 \texttt{\textbf{D}}xe4! 11 \texttt{\textbf{D}}xe4 dxe4) 10 e4 d6 11 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}e2 \texttt{\textbf{D}}xe5 (11...\texttt{\textbf{B}}b4 and 11...\texttt{\textbf{B}}a6 are also possible) he gets no real compensation.

8...\texttt{\textbf{D}}b4 9 \texttt{\textbf{W}}e2 d6 (D)

10 f4

The modest 10 \texttt{\textbf{D}}d2 a5 11 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}b5!? (11 f4 \texttt{\textbf{D}}c6 12 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}a4 \texttt{\textbf{W}}c7 gives Black the initiative) 11...\texttt{\textbf{D}}xd2+ 12 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}xd2 is enough for equality at most; for example, 12...\texttt{\textbf{D}}f4!? 13 b3 (not 13 f4?? \texttt{\textbf{D}}d3+) 13...\texttt{\textbf{Q}}d7 14 f4 \texttt{\textbf{D}}d3+ 15 \texttt{\textbf{W}}xd3 \texttt{\textbf{W}}f2+ 16 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}d1 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}xb5 17 cxb5 \texttt{\textbf{A}}c8 18 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}c4 \texttt{\textbf{D}}xc4 19 bxc4 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}e3+.

10...\texttt{\textbf{C}}c6 11 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}e3

11 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}g2 is answered with 11...e5, seizing the initiative.

11...\texttt{\textbf{A}}xc3+ 12 bxc3 \texttt{\textbf{W}}c7 13 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}g2 e5! (D)

For the time being castling can wait; first it is more important to arrange the pawns correctly.

14 0-0

14 c5 dxc5 15 \texttt{\textbf{D}}xc5 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}g4 (15...exf4 is unclear) 16 \texttt{\textbf{W}}e3 \texttt{\textbf{D}}d7 fails to inconvenience Black greatly.

14...\texttt{\textbf{B}}6 15 fxe5

Now 15...dxe5?! is dubious in view of 16 \texttt{\textbf{B}}h6, but after 15...\texttt{\textbf{D}}xe5 Black stands no worse.
13 2 \textit{\textbf{f3 c5 3 e3}}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{1 d4 e6 2 \textit{f3 c5 3 e3}}
    
    This modest continuation can serve as an introduction to one of three different opening schemes for White, depending on what he does with his c-pawn.
    
    3...\textbf{d5 (D)}

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

    We occupy the centre, not fearing lines where we end up with an isolated d-pawn, given that White has made a rather slow move with this e-pawn, and won’t be able to adopt the most potent line in the Tarrasch Queen’s Gambit.

    Given that 4 \textit{d3} can be answered by 4...\textbf{c4 5 \textit{e2 b5 6 0-0 \textit{f6 7 b3 \textit{b7 8 a4 a6}}, not only seizing space but also establishing firm control over e4, White needs to make a committal move right now:

    \begin{itemize}
      \item \textbf{4 c4 (Section 13.1)} leads to the Symmetrical Tarrasch, which is not dangerous for Black.
      \item The same verdict may be passed on 4 c3 (Section 13.2). Moreover, if White employs Colle’s system of development in full, he even risks falling into a slightly worse position.
      \item The most noteworthy line is 4 b3 (Section 13.3), known as the Zukertort Attack. White can opt for central play (c4, when hanging pawns are likely) or a classical attacking plan with \textit{e5, f4}, etc. Black must take both these possibilities into account.
    \end{itemize}

    \begin{itemize}
      \item \textbf{13.1}
      \item \textbf{4 c4 (D)}
    \end{itemize}

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

    With this move, the game transposes to the Symmetrical Tarrasch (a
standard move-order being 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ∞f3 c5 4 e3). The strategic struggle will revolve around both sides' attempts to resolve the central tension in their favour, and as economically as possible in terms of tempi.

4...a6?!

The exchange 4...dxc4 5 ∞xc4 ∞f6 transposes to the traditional main line of the Queen’s Gambit Accepted. With the text-move, Black hopes to encourage White to exchange pawns himself, or else to play ∞d3, when Black can save a tempo by replying ....dxc4.

4...∞f6 is a reasonable alternative. Then 5 ∞c3 a6 transposes to our main line below, while 5 cxd5!? exd5 6 ∞b5+ ∞c6 7 0-0 ∞d6 (a kind of reversed Nimzo-Indian) 8 dxc5 (8 ∞xc6+ bxc6 9 ∞c2 ∞b6 10 dxc5 ∞xc5; 8 ∞c2 ∞b6 9 dxc5 ∞xh2+, Hebden-Chandler, British League (4NCL) 1997/8) 8...∞xc5 leads to a different type of game. In the following illustrative lines, White fails to secure the initiative, and there is a complicated struggle with chances for both sides: 9 ∞c2 ∞b6 10 ∞xc6+ ∞xc6 11 b3 ∞g4, 9 ∞xc6+ bxc6 10 ∞c2 ∞d6 11 b3 (11 ∞c3 ∞g4) 11...∞a6 12 ∞d1 0-0 or 9 b3 0-0 10 ∞b2 ∞d6 11 ∞xc6 bxc6 12 ∞c2 ∞d7 (when White should avoid 13 ∞g5?! ∞xh2+).

5 ∞c3

5 b3?! is answered by 5...cxd4 6 exd4 ∞b4+ and 5 a3 with 5...dxc4, as Black’s a-pawn move is a little more useful than White’s in this structure – compare Section 13.1.1. White can also play 5 dxc5 ∞xc5 6 a3. After 6...∞f6 7 b4 ∞e7 8 ∞b2 0-0 9 ∞bd2 a5 10 b5 ∞bd7 (10...b6!? 11 cxd5 ∞xd5) 11 ∞c2 (11 cxd5 exd5 12 ∞e2 ∞c5 and 11 ∞e2 b6 12 cxd5 ∞xd5 are also equal) 11...b6 12 ∞d4 ∞b7 13 ∞c6 ∞xc6 14 bxc6 ∞c5 Black maintains the equilibrium.

5...∞f6 (D)

Now White should avoid 6 b3?! cxd4 7 exd4 ∞b4 (or 7...∞e4) 8 ∞d2 dxc4, and choose one of the following continuations:
13.1.1: 6 a3 156
13.1.2: 6 cxd5 157

13.1.1

6 a3 dxc4 7 ∞xc4 b5

Again we have a Queen’s Gambit Accepted, but one of the secondary variations rather than the main line.

8 ∞a2

This retreat is logical, since White’s main hopes are pinned to aggressive play in the centre. The following lines have also been seen in practice:

a) 8 ∞e2 ∞b7 9 0-0 ∞bd7 10 dxc5 ∞xc5 11 b4 ∞e7 12 ∞b2 0-0 is equal, Sarakauskas-Ivanisević, Tromsø 2010.
b) 8 \( \text{d}d3 \text{bd}7 \text{9 0-0 d}b7 \text{10 e}2 \text{d}6!? \) (10...\( \text{e}e7 \)) 11 \( \text{d}d1 \text{0-0} \) 12 dxc5 \( \text{xc}5 \) 13 e4 \( \text{c}7 \) leaves Black with the initiative, Šćekić-Nikolov, Nova Gorica 1998.

8...\( \text{b}7 \text{9 0-0 bd}7 \text{10 e}1 \)

A risky continuation, but 10 \( \text{e}2 \text{c}7 \) 11 \( \text{d}d1 \text{d}6 \) yields no more than equality.

10...\( \text{d}6 \) 11 d5

After 11 e4 cxd4 12 \( \text{xd}4 \) (12 \( \text{xd}4 \text{c}5 \)) 12...\( \text{b}8 \) 13 h3 0-0 White already needs to struggle for equality, Ekström-Godena, Swiss Team Ch 2001.

11...exd5 12 e4 0-0

Black is somewhat better, since 13 e5 carries no punch. After the further moves 13...\( \text{xe}5 \) 14 \( \text{xe}5 \) d4 15 \( \text{b}1 \text{c}7 \) Black has more than enough for the piece.

13.1.2

6 cxd5 exd5 (D)

White is gearing up for a battle against an isolated d-pawn. More active continuations also deserve attention:

a) 7 \( \text{d}3 \text{c}6 \) 8 0-0 \( \text{g}4 \) 9 dxc5 (9 h3 \( \text{xf}3 \) 10 \( \text{xf}3 \) cxd4 11 exd4 \( \text{xd}4 \) is equal, while 9 \( \text{e}1 \text{c}4 \) 10 \( \text{b}1 \text{e}7 \) is unclear) 9...\( \text{xc}5 \) 10 h3 \( \text{h}5 \) 11 e4 \( \text{xf}3 \) 12 \( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 13 \( \text{g}3 \text{xd}3 \) 14 \( \text{xd}3 \) dxe4 15 \( \text{g}3 \text{d}6 \) leads to equal play.

b) 7 g3!? is an interesting attempt to play the main lines of the Tarrasch with the extra moves e3 and ...a6. However, after 7...\( \text{c}6 \) 8 \( \text{g}2 \text{e}7 \) it is hard to intensify the pressure on Black (since \( \text{g}5 \) is impossible), and 9 dxc5 \( \text{xc}5 \) 10 0-0 0-0 11 b3 \( \text{g}4 \) is equal.

7...\( \text{c}6 \) 8 0-0 cxd4

8...\( \text{d}6 \) 9 dxc5 \( \text{xc}5 \) occurs more often, when Black hopes to profit from his bishop’s influence on the g1-a7 diagonal:

a) 10 b3 0-0 11 \( \text{b}2 \text{a}7 \) 12 \( \text{c}1 \) (12 \( \text{c}2 \) can be met by 12...\( \text{e}7 \) or 12...\( \text{e}6 \)) 12...\( \text{e}8 \) 13 \( \text{c}2 \) (after 13 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{e}4 \) White should settle for equality by 14 \( \text{c}3! \) ? \( \text{f}6 \), since 14 \( \text{d}4! ? \) \( \text{g}5 \) gave Black the initiative in the game Renet-Conquest, Clichy 2001) 13...\( \text{e}6 \) 14 \( \text{fd}1 \) \( \text{e}7 \) and little by little White’s play reaches a deadlock.

b) 10 a3!? 0-0 11 b4 \( \text{a}7 \) 12 \( \text{b}2 \) (or 12 b5 axb5 13 \( \text{xb}5 \) and now 13...\( \text{b}6 \) 14 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 15 \( \text{c}1 \text{e}8 \) was unclear in Grecescu-Lysy, European Ch, Plovdiv 2008, but Black can also try 13...\( \text{b}8 ! ? \) 14 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 15 \( \text{c}1 \text{e}8 \) (D)) 12...\( \text{e}6 \) 13 b5 (13 \( \text{a}4 \)
After 10...Wc7 11...Wf3 12...Wd2 0-0 13...Wc1

Now 13...Wad8 is quite acceptable; for example, 14...Wc2 15...c8 15...Wd1 Wd8 16...Wb1 d4?! 17...Wc4 18...Wxe4 19...Wd5 19...Wg4 19...e6 20...Wd4 axe3 21...fxe3 h6 with equal play, V.Ger­

giev-J.Blauert, Turin 2002. However, Black may well try 13...Wad8, because the other rook could prove useful on the c-file.

13.2

4...c3 (D)

White chooses the Colle System. White is playing a kind of reversed Semi-Slav (the original looks like 1...d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3...f3 4...f6 4...c3 e6 5 e3

bd7 6...d3...d6), and the idea is that White should be able to make good use of his extra tempo. As in many other cases of ‘reversed’ openings, this strategy does not represent a serious danger for Black, mainly because it works best as a counterpunching set-up, and is less well suited to pursu­
ing active plans.

4...Wf6 5...bd2...c6 6...d3...d6 7

0-0

7...dxc5!?...xc5 8 b4 is a kind of reversed Meran, but Black has no difficul­
ties after 8...Wd6 (8...Wf7!?) 9 a3 (9 0-0 0-0 transposes to note ‘a’ to White’s 9th move) 9...e5! 10...e5 10...e5 is unclear) 11 b5...e5 12...xe5...xe5 13...f3 (13

0-0 b6 14...f3...d6 15...c4...b7) 13...d6 14 c4 dxc4 15...xc4 16...e7 16

0-0 e5.

7...e5 8...dxc5

White switches to active measures, since otherwise Black will play ...e5 himself. For example, 8...e1 e5 9...e4?! cxd4 10 exd5...xd5 11...c4...a4. Instead 8...e2...e7 9...dxc5 (9...a4 10...e4 e5) 9...a5 10 e4 transposes to
our main line below. The immediate advance 8 e4 is parried without difficulty by 8...cxd4 9 cxd4 e5 (provoking simplifications; 9...dxe4!? 10 Qxe4 A7 is also an effective equalizing variation) 10 dx e5 (10 exd5 Qxd4) 10...Qxe5 11 Qxe5 Axe5 12 exd5 Qg4 13 Axf3 h6 14 Ae2 (14 h3 Axf3 15 Qxf3 Qxd5 16 Qxd5 Qxd5 also leads to equal play) 14...Axe5 15 h3 Axb5 with equality, Samsonkin-J. Friedel, Toronto 2010.

8...Axe5 9 e4

9 b4 still remains the alternative for White:

a) 9...Ae6 10 f2 (10 a3 a5 is equal) 10...a6 (10...Ae7 is also possible) 11 a3 b5 12 a4 Axb8 13 axb5 axb5 14 Aae2 Ab6 15 Qd4 (15 e4 Aa4) 15...Qxd4 16 exd4 Ab7 with an equal game.

b) 9...Ae7 10 b5 (10 Axb2 a6 11 a3 b5 12 a4 Axb8 13 axb5 axb5 14 Aae2 Ab6 and now White should avoid 15 Axb5?! e5) 10...Aa5 11 Axb2 a6 12 Aa4 Axc7 13 c4 dxc4 leads to chances for both sides.

9...Ae7 (D)

The game has taken on contours of the French Defence, though it is by no means easy for White to execute the e5 advance, as Black’s accurate queen move not only hinders it, but sets up some neat ideas for counterattacking the pawn if it does eventually reach e5.

10 Aa2

Preparing the advance e5. After 10 h3 Aa8 11 exd5 (11 Aa2 is met by 11...Axe5 and 11 Ac2 with 11...Ab6) 11...Qxd5 White has nothing to count on.

The exchange 10 exd5 Axd5 11 Axb3 (not 11 h3? Abxd3) 11...Ab6 right away delivers the initiative to Black. Then 12 h3 allows a dangerous piece sacrifice, but it looks as if Black's attack only leads to a draw: 12...Ab3 13 gxb3 Ab3+ 14 Aa1 Abxb3 15 Aa1 Aa2 16 Aa2 f5 17 Ac4 Ae4 18 Ac3 Aa4 (or 18...Aa5 19 Aa5 Ae8 20 Ac6 Ac8 21 Aa5 with equality) 19 Axc5 Ac8 20 Aa5 Ac8 21 Ac1 Ae4? 13 Aa4 Ac4 14 Ac4 Aa6 14 maintains the tension and keeps the initiative. Other typical lines are 12 Aa4 Aa4 13 Ab4 (13 Aa4 Ac4 14 Aa4 Aaxb4 15 Aaxb4 Aa4 14 Aa4 Aa4 is equal) 13 Aa4 Aa4 14 Aa4 Aa4 15 Aa4 Aa4 16 Aa4 Aa4 17 Aa4 Aa4 18 Aa4 Aa4 19 Aa4 Aa4 with a choice between 15 Aa5 and the equal 15 Aa4 Aa4 16 Aa4 Aa4.
Now Black appears in the role of the provocateur, tempting White with the standard idea of a bishop sacrifice on h7. 10...\texttt{b6} has a similar idea: 11 \texttt{e5} (Black can be content with 11 \texttt{h3 \texttt{h5}}, 11 \texttt{c2 \texttt{d7}} or 11 \texttt{b3 \texttt{e8}}) 11...\texttt{d7}! 12 \texttt{xh7+} (Black has the initiative after 12 \texttt{e1 \texttt{f6}}) 12...\texttt{xh7} 13 \texttt{g5+ \texttt{g6}} 14 \texttt{d3+ \texttt{f5}} 15 \texttt{xe6 \texttt{xe5}} 16 \texttt{xf8+ \texttt{xf8}} 17 \texttt{e3 \texttt{e4}} 18 \texttt{d2 \texttt{e5}}, with chances for both sides.

11 \texttt{e5}

If White does not take up the challenge, he forfeits the initiative. For example, 11 \texttt{h3 \texttt{h5}} 12 \texttt{d1 \texttt{f4}} 13 \texttt{b3 \texttt{xd3}} 14 \texttt{xd3 \texttt{c7}} 15 \texttt{exd5 \texttt{d8}} or 11 \texttt{b3 \texttt{d6}} 12 \texttt{b2 \texttt{h7}} 13 \texttt{exd5} (13 \texttt{c4?! \texttt{d4}} allows Black to take over the initiative), when Black can try 13...\texttt{exd5}?! or settle for equality after 13...\texttt{xd5} 14 \texttt{g3}.

11...\texttt{g4!} (D)

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

\texttt{12 \texttt{xh7+}}

Half-measures are of no use – 12 \texttt{b4?! \texttt{e7}} 13 \texttt{e1 \texttt{f6}} is in Black’s favour.

12...\texttt{\texttt{g5+ \texttt{g8}} 14 \texttt{\texttt{xe5 \texttt{h5}}}}

Or 15 \texttt{d3 \texttt{f6}} (15...\texttt{f5} 16 \texttt{xf5 \texttt{exf5}} 17 \texttt{e1 \texttt{f6}} is another idea) 16 \texttt{h5} (16 \texttt{a4} is answered by 16...\texttt{e5}, while 16 \texttt{h4 \texttt{g6}} leads to an equal game) 16...\texttt{e6} 17 \texttt{hxh6} 18 \texttt{d3 \texttt{h7}} 19 \texttt{f4 \texttt{a6}} and Black’s position is preferable, Parameswaran-Zarnicki, Erevan Olympiad 1996.

15...\texttt{g5} 16 \texttt{g4}

After 16 \texttt{d3 \texttt{a6}} 17 \texttt{d1} (17 \texttt{e1? \texttt{f6}}) 17...\texttt{d3} 18 \texttt{g4 \texttt{g6}} 19 \texttt{\texttt{g6 \texttt{g6}} Black also has good prospects, Fenollar Jorda-Gonzalez Garcia, Barbera del Valles 2011.

16...\texttt{g6} 17 \texttt{\texttt{g6 \texttt{fxg6}} 18 \texttt{b3 \texttt{e7}} 19 \texttt{h3 \texttt{e5}}}

Black has the advantage in the ending.

13.3

4 \texttt{b3} (D)

This set-up is known as the Zukertort Attack. Among all the development systems for White considered in the present chapter, this one is the
most flexible. For the time being the c2-pawn remains in its place, but can be moved forward to c4 at an appropriate moment.

4...c6 5 d3

The straightforward 5 b2 leaves Black more possibilities for improvisation:

a) 5...f6 6 d3 a5+ (6...b6 7 0-0 transposes to our main line below) 7 c3 (7 bd2 cxd4 8 exd4 a3 is equal) 7...cxd4!? 8 exd4 e4 9 0-0 f5 is unclear; e.g., 10 b4 c7.

b) 5...cxd4!? 6 exd4 ge7 7 d3 g6 (or 7...f5 8 0-0 e7) 8 0-0 g7 9 c3 (9 bd2 0-0 10 e1 b6) 9...0-0 10 bd2 d7 with unclear play, San Emeterio Cabanes-Arencibia, Madrid 2002.

5...f6 6 0-0

There is no need to play 6 a3, which again gives Black an opportunity for the useful queen check 6...a5+!? 7 bd2 (7 c3 d6 8 0-0 e5 9 dxe5 xe5 is equal) 7...cxd4 8 exd4 c3 9 bl dx4, as in Zarubin-Makarychev, Russian Team Ch, Moscow 1994.

6...b6 7 b2 b7 (D)

White must now make an important decision that will determine the nature of the struggle:

13.3.1: 8 c4 161
13.3.2: 8 de5 162

For 8 de5, see Section 13.3.2.

13.3.1

8 c4

By playing in the centre, White opts for a standard position with hanging pawns.

8...exd4 9 exd4 d6 10 c3

After 10 bd2 0-0 White’s centre is defended better, but he has fewer attacking chances. In the following lines, Black is no worse:

a) 11 e2 f4 12 a3 c8 and now 13 c5 is met by 13...bxc5 14 dxc5 e5.

b) 11 de5 dxc4 12 dc4 e7 13 e1 b4 14 b1 bd5 15 wf3 b5 (or 15...b8!?) 16 de3 b4 17 d1 c8, Hebden-E.Berg, European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008.

c) 11 a3 c8 (other possibilities include 11...e7!? and 11...f4) 12 e1 dxc4 13 bxc4 f4 14 e4 xe4 (14...a5!??) 15 xe4 h6 16 g4 offers Black a choice between 16...g6, as played in Mladenović-A.Kovačević, Serbian Cup, Valjevo 2011, and 16...a5!?.

10...0-0 (D)

10...dxc4 11 bxc4 0-0 is sharper. White is in danger of losing one of his pawns, but Black risks coming under attack:

a) 12 e1 c8 13 d5 (13 a3 a5) 13...b4 14 f1 (14 b1 xc4 15 dxe6 fxe6 16 w2 and now 16...g4!
17 h3 \textit{xf}3 18 \textit{wx}e6+ \textit{h}8 19 \textit{hx}g4 \textit{hx}g4 20 \textit{wb}3 \textit{lc}5 gives Black the initiative) 14...exd5 15 a3 \textit{a}6 16 \textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 17 cxd5 \textit{c}5 is unclear.

b) 12 \textit{we}2 \textit{tc}8 13 \textit{mad}1 (or 13 a3 \textit{a}5 14 \textit{de}5 \textit{bl} b3 15 \textit{mad}1 \textit{xd}4 16 \textit{hx}h7+ \textit{hx}h7 17 \textit{xd}4 \textit{wg}5) 13...\textit{db}4 (13...\textit{e}8!?) 14 \textit{bl} (not 14 \textit{de}5?! \textit{xd}3 15 \textit{xd}3 \textit{a}6) 14...\textit{xf}3 15 \textit{wx}f3! (15 \textit{gx}f3? \textit{fd}5) 15...\textit{xc}4 16 d5 \textit{we}7?! 17 a3 \textit{b}xd5 18 \textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 19 \textit{hx}h7+ \textit{h}8 is unclear.

\textbf{11 \textit{we}2}

Exchanging by 11 cxd5 offers White very little hope of an advantage after 11...exd5 or 11...\textit{xd}5 12 \textit{xd}5 exd5.

\textbf{11...\textit{e}8 12 \textit{mad}1 \textit{c}8 13 \textit{b}1}

White must not continue 13 \textit{fe}1?!
\textit{b}4 14 \textit{bl} dxc4 15 bxc4 \textit{xf}3 16 \textit{gx}f3 \textit{b}8 17 \textit{e}4 \textit{h}5, when Black gets the advantage, Franco-A. Sokolov, Pamplona 1993/4.

\textbf{13...\textit{b}8}

Both sides have chances. White should still refrain from 14 \textit{fe}1?! in view of 14...dxc4 15 bxc4 \textit{a}5, when 16 \textit{e}5?! is met by 16...\textit{xc}4.

\textbf{13.3.2}

\textbf{8 \textit{bd}2 (D)}

This is a more directly aggressive handling of the position. White is going to play \textit{de}5, which was the original idea of the Zukertort Attack. 8 \textit{de}5 \textit{d}6 9 \textit{d}2 leads to the same position.

\textbf{8...\textit{d}6 9 \textit{e}5}

After 9 c4, the line 9...cxd4 10 cxd5 \textit{xd}5 11 \textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 12 \textit{xd}4 0-0 seems sufficient for equality, while 9...0-0 10 cxd5 (otherwise 10...cxd4 will follow) 10...exd5 can again reach a position with hanging pawns, but now it will be Black who possesses them. White's extra tempo would be of vital importance if his knight were more actively placed on c3, but here Black can be quite confident as his pawns won't come under much pressure: 11 \textit{e}5 (11 \textit{e}1 \textit{e}8) 11...\textit{b}4 12 \textit{bl} (12 \textit{e}2 cxd4 13 \textit{xd}4 \textit{c}8) 12...\textit{e}8.

\textbf{9...0-0 10 a3}

The pawn covers the b4-square. 10 \textit{we}2 is met by 10...\textit{b}4, while 10 f4
is premature in view of 10...cxd4 11 exd4 Qb4 12 A.e2 Qe4 with a pleasant game for Black.

10...Qe7 (D)

This is Bogoljubow’s manoeuvre, by which Black wants to prevent 11 f4.

But since the f4 advance is not really so dangerous for Black, he can also calmly wait for this move and then seek to exploit its loosening effect on White’s position: 10...Cc8 11 f4 (11 Wf3?! Wc7 12 Wg3 Qe7 13 Wh3 Qe4 14 f3 Qg5 gives Black the initiative) 11...Qe7 and now:

a) 12 Wf3 b5 (12...Qf5!?) 13 dxc5 Axc5 14 b4 (avoiding 14 Wg3? Qe4! and 14 Wh3?! Qe4 15 Mad1 Qf5) 14...b6 15 Qh1 (15 A.d4!? is unclear – Zsu.Polgar) 15...Qe4 16 A.xe4 dxe4 17 A.xe4 Axe4 18 Wxe4 Wd5 19 Wxd5 Qxd5 20 Qd7 Afd8 21 Axb6 axb6 and Black has the initiative, Košić-Dinger, Budapest 2008.

b) 12 Wf3 Qf5 13 Wc7 12 A.xe4 (13 A.xe4 dxe4 14 dxc5 Axc5) 13...dxe4 14 A.c4 cxd4 (14...Qf5!?) 15 exd4 (15 A.xd4 Qf5) 15...Qf5 16 a4 and Black can pursue the initiative by 16...Wc7 or 16...Axe5!? 17 dxe5 Wc7.

Therefore, after 10...Cc8, the calm continuation 11 Wf2 Qe7 12 dxc5 (12 Mad1 Qg6 was equal in Cvitan-Carluana, European Ch, Budva 2009) 12...Axc5 deserves attention, although in this case the position will be approximately level.

11 Wf2

Black’s idea is that 11 f4 is well met by 11...Qe4, when 12 A.f3? f6 13 A.g4 cxd4 14 exd4 h5 is clearly no good for White. 12 Wf2 can be answered with 12...Cc8!?, transposing to line ‘b’ of the previous note, while 12...Qf5 13 Mad1 offers a pleasant choice between 13...Qe7 and 13...Cc8.

11 Wf3 Qg6 12 Wh3 is rather a dubious plan. Then 12...Qe4 is equal, but Black can also opt for 12...cxd4 13 A.xg6 hxg6 14 exd4. After 14...g5!? it is Black who has attacking chances on the kingside, while 14...Qh5 15 g3 a5 was equal in Bagirov-Kochiev, Lenin-grad 1989.

11...Qe4 12 Mad1

The complications after 12 A.xe4 dxe4 13 dxc5 Axc5 are quite favourable for Black; e.g., 14 Mad1 Wc7 15 Wg4 f5 16 Wg3 f4 17 Wg4 fxe3.

12...Wc7

The game is complex, with chances for both sides.
To complete our repertoire with 1 e4 e6 and 1 d4 e6, it remains only to consider a variety of more minor continuations for White on moves 2 and 3 that haven’t been covered in earlier chapters.

There isn’t much point dwelling on some of these options because Black can obtain a good position simply by logical development or else direct the game to lines we have already examined by bearing in mind suitable transpositions. For instance, 2 g3 c5 3 c3 (3 d5 exd5 4 g2 f6 3...d5 4 g2 g6 5 f3 e7 or 2 c3 c3 f6 (2...d5 offers White a French Defence right away) 3 g5 (3 f4 b4) 3...d5 4 (4 e4 is a French) 4...bd7, when 5 e4 can be met by 5...h6.

We shall focus on three lines where Black can face more significant opening problems:

• In Section 14.1 we examine all possible forms of the London System. White’s key move here is f4, and we need to consider 2 f4, 2 c3 c5 3 c3 (with f4 to follow) and the immediate 2 c3, intending a quick f4. These last two move-orders may also be used by players looking to employ some form of Torre Attack, with g5.

• Section 14.2 features 2 c3 c5 3 g3 or 2 g3 c5 3 f3. This has ideas akin to a Catalan, and can transpose to mainstream openings after White plays c4. However, Black can direct the game into a form of reversed Grünfeld where White will find it hard to get much traction on the black position.

• After 2 f3 c5 3 c3 (Section 14.3) we are, conceptually at least, fighting against our own weapon: White uses an unusual move-order to make it more difficult for Black to achieve his ambitions. Highly original positions result in many lines.
14.1
The London System is a rather popular scheme of development where White plays d4, \( \texttt{f}4 \), c3, e3, \( \texttt{g}f3 \) and \( \texttt{b}d2 \), in one sequence or another. Generally speaking, White seeks a very reliable position with a slight initiative. Black can tailor his reply according to White’s precise move-order, or else reduce his workload by adopting a universal method that can be employed against all forms of the London System. We examine:

14.1.1: 1 d4 e6 2 \( \texttt{f}f4 \) 165
14.1.2: 1 d4 e6 2 \( \texttt{f}f3 \) c5 3 c3 166
14.1.3: 1 d4 e6 2 c3!? 167

Note that within these last two sections, we need to bear in mind that White isn’t yet committed to playing \( \texttt{f}f4 \), and may seek to profit from some other development scheme.

14.1.1
1 d4 e6 2 \( \texttt{f}f4 \) (D)

![Chess Diagram]

This straightforward move allows counterplay against White’s b2-pawn and a rapid sharpening of the struggle. The absence of the moves \( \texttt{g}f3 \) and \( ...\texttt{f}f6 \) can turn out to be in Black’s favour.

2...c5

Black can also just ignore White’s move-order and play 2...d5 3 e3 \( \texttt{f}6 \) 4 \( \texttt{f}f3 \) c5 5 c3 (5 c3 a6 is equal) 5...\( \texttt{c}6 \), transposing to Section 14.1.3. This represents the ‘universal method’ mentioned above.

3 e3

3 c3 \( \texttt{b}6 \) generally leads to calmer play, since White can defend his b-pawn by 4 \( \texttt{c}2 \texttt{cxd4} \) 5 cxd4 \( \texttt{c}6 \) 6 e3 \( \texttt{b}4 \) (6...\( \texttt{f}6 \) 7 \( \texttt{c}3 \texttt{b}4 \) 7 \( \texttt{b}3 \) (7 \( \texttt{d}2 \texttt{d}5 \) 7...\( \texttt{a}5 \) 8 \( \texttt{c}3 \) (8 \( \texttt{d}2 \texttt{b}6 \) 8...\( \texttt{f}6 \), when the game is approximately equal. Instead, 4 \( \texttt{b}3 \)!! \( \texttt{xb}3 \) 5 axb3 cxd4 6 cxd4 \( \texttt{c}6 \) is not only insipid, but it also leads to the more pleasant position for Black.

3...cxd4 4 exd4 \( \texttt{b}6 \) 5 \( \texttt{c}3 \)

White is not bound to enter the complications, but in the variation 5 b3 \( \texttt{f}6 \) 6 \( \texttt{f}3 \) (6 c3 \( \texttt{d}6 \)?) 6...\( \texttt{d}5 \) 7 \( \texttt{d}2 \texttt{c}6 \) Black has no problems. The pure gambit 5 \( \texttt{f}3 \texttt{xb}2 \) 6 \( \texttt{bd}2 \texttt{f}6 \) gives White some tempi but no clear compensation for the pawn. All that leaves is 5 \( \texttt{a}3 \texttt{xb}2 \) 6 \( \texttt{b}5 \), which transposes to the main line below.

5...\( \texttt{xb}2 \) 6 \( \texttt{b}5 \)

6 \( \texttt{d}2 \) may be parried by 6...\( \texttt{b}6 \) or 6...\( \texttt{a}6 \).

6...\( \texttt{b}4 \)+ 7 \( \texttt{e}2 \texttt{c}6 \) (D)

8 \( \texttt{b}1 \)

Black is safe after 8 \( \texttt{f}3 \texttt{f}6 \) (8...\( \texttt{f}8 \)?) 9 \( \texttt{c}7 \texttt{d}8 \) 10 \( \texttt{b}1 \) (10 a3?! \( \texttt{e}4 \) 11 \( \texttt{c}1 \texttt{c}3 \) 10...\( \texttt{x}a2 \) 11 \( \texttt{x}a8 \texttt{d}5 \). White should avoid 8
A ROCK-SOLID CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

\[ W \]

\[ B \]

\[ \square \]

\[ \square \]

\[ \square \]

\[ \square \]

\[ \square \]

\[ \square \]

\[ \square \]

\[ \square \]

\[ \square \]

16 A

ROCK-SOLID CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

tt:lc7+?!, while 8 \( \square \)b1 can be met by 8...\( \square \)xb1 9 \( \square \)c7+ \( \square \)d8 10 \( \square \)xb1 e5.

8...\( \square \)xa2 9 \( \square \)c7+!? 

A courageous attempt to play for a win. It is not advisable to play 9 d5? \( \square \)f6, but White can repeat moves by 9 \( \square \)a1 \( \square \)b2 10 \( \square \)b1, etc. Black has to take this drawing line into consideration if he chooses this variation.

9...\( \square \)e7 10 \( \square \)xa8 \( \square \)xd4+ 11 \( \square \)xd4 \( \square \)xb1 12 \( \square \)f3 

Not 12 c3? \( \square \)c2+ 13 \( \square \)d2 (or 13 \( \square \)d2 \( \square \)e4+ 14 \( \square \)e3 \( \square \)d6) 13...\( \square \)d6 14 \( \square \)xg7 b6, when Black wins (Johnsen and Kovačević).

12...\( \square \)xc2+ 13 \( \square \)d2 

It is evidently weaker for White to continue 13 \( \square \)d2?! \( \square \)xd2 14 \( \square \)xd2 b6.

13...\( \square \)c5 

Now:

a) White should avoid 14 \( \square \)xc5+?!

b) After 14 \( \square \)xg7 \( \square \)xd2 15 \( \square \)xd2 (15 \( \square \)xd2 \( \square \)xf2+ 16 \( \square \)d3 \( \square \)xf4 is equal) 15...\( \square \)f6 16 \( \square \)xh8 \( \square \)b5+ the game ends in a draw again, since the white king cannot escape from the checks.

c) 14 \( \square \)e3 offers Black a choice between two acceptable endings:

  c1) 14...\( \square \)xd4 15 \( \square \)xd4 \( \square \)f6 16 \( \square \)xa7 d6 (or 16...b5) 17 \( \square \)e3 b5 18 \( \square \)xb6 \( \square \)c5 looks safe enough for Black.

  c2) 14...\( \square \)b5+ 15 \( \square \)e1 \( \square \)a5 16 \( \square \)xg7 \( \square \)c3 17 \( \square \)g5+ \( \square \)xg5 18 \( \square \)xg5+ \( \square \)f6 is not easy to assess, but it doesn’t appear bad for Black.

14.1.2

1 d4 e6 2 \( \square \)f3 c5 3 c3 (D)

This flexible move-order retains ideas of either \( \square \)f4 or \( \square \)g5, or some other system completely.

3...\( \square \)f6 

3...d5 embodies the ‘universal’ reply that we referred to in the introduction to Section 14.1: rather than try to exploit any special features of White’s move-order, Black is happy for his opponent to set up his preferred formation. Then 4 \( \square \)f4 \( \square \)c6 5 e3 \( \square \)f6 transposes to Section 14.1.3. Torre enthusiasts will gain little after 4 \( \square \)g5
RARE 2ND AND 3RD MOVES AFTER 1 d4 e6

Note that Black should in one way or another take control of the e4-square since after 3...\text{\textcopyright}c6 4 e4 d5 5 exd5 we find ourselves in Alapin Sicilian territory.

4 \text{\textcopyright}g5

White adopts the Torre Attack. 4 \text{\textcopyright}f4 is less effective here in view of 4...\text{\textcopyright}e7 (4...\text{\textcopyright}c6 5 e3 \text{\textcopyright}h5 6 \text{\textcopyright}g5 \text{\textcopyright}b6 is also quite good) 5 h3 (5 e3 is met by 5...\text{\textcopyright}h5, while 5 \text{\textcopyright}bd2 cxd4 6 cxd4 \text{\textcopyright}c6 7 e3 \text{\textcopyright}h5 was equal in V.Georgiev-Ivanchuk, Merida 2006) 5...cxd4 6 cxd4 \text{\textcopyright}b6 7 \text{\textcopyright}d2 (7 \text{\textcopyright}c2 \text{\textcopyright}c6 8 e3 \text{\textcopyright}b4 9 \text{\textcopyright}b3 \text{\textcopyright}bd5 is equal) 7...\text{\textcopyright}e4 8 \text{\textcopyright}c2 \text{\textcopyright}c6 9 \text{\textcopyright}c3 f5, with a good game for Black.

4...\text{\textcopyright}c6 5 e3

Now it is not advantageous for White to seize the centre by 5 e4 since Black hits back with 5...cxd4 6 cxd4 (6 e5 h6 and 6 \text{\textcopyright}xf6 \text{\textcopyright}xf6 7 cxd4 d5 show Black's other ideas) 6...\text{\textcopyright}b6 7 \text{\textcopyright}c3 d5.

5...h6 6 \text{\textcopyright}h4 \text{\textcopyright}b6 7 \text{\textcopyright}b3

White can also play 7 \text{\textcopyright}c2 d5 8 \text{\textcopyright}bd2 \text{\textcopyright}d7 9 \text{\textcopyright}e2 (or 9 \text{\textcopyright}d3; 9 \text{\textcopyright}xf6 gxf6 is unclear) 9...cxd4 10 exd4 \text{\textcopyright}h5.

7...d5 8 \text{\textcopyright}bd2 (D)

The queen exchange 8 \text{\textcopyright}xb6 axb6 quite suits Black; for example:

a) 9 \text{\textcopyright}a3?! c4 gives Black the initiative after 10 \text{\textcopyright}b5 \text{\textcopyright}a5 11 a4 \text{\textcopyright}a7 or 10 \text{\textcopyright}c2 \text{\textcopyright}e4 11 \text{\textcopyright}d2 \text{\textcopyright}xd2 12 \text{\textcopyright}xd2 b5 13 a3 h5.

b) 9 \text{\textcopyright}bd2 c4 10 a3 b5 and now 11 \text{\textcopyright}b1 is met by 11...g5 12 \text{\textcopyright}g3 \text{\textcopyright}h5, while 11 \text{\textcopyright}xf6!? gxf6 12 \text{\textcopyright}b1 leads to equality.

8...\text{\textcopyright}h5

It is simpler to play 8...\text{\textcopyright}d6 9 \text{\textcopyright}e2 \text{\textcopyright}d7, with an equal position. With the text-move Black wants to enliven the game.

9 \text{\textcopyright}e2

White can preserve the status quo in the variation 9 g4 \text{\textcopyright}f6 10 h3 \text{\textcopyright}d6.

9...g5 10 \text{\textcopyright}e5 \text{\textcopyright}xe5

Black's other try is 10...cxd4!? 11 \text{\textcopyright}xf7 \text{\textcopyright}xb3 12 axb3 \text{\textcopyright}xf7 13 \text{\textcopyright}xh5+ \text{\textcopyright}e7 14 \text{\textcopyright}g3 dxc3 15 bxc3 \text{\textcopyright}g7 16 \text{\textcopyright}e1 \text{\textcopyright}d7.

11 dxe5 gxh4 12 \text{\textcopyright}xb6 axb6 13 \text{\textcopyright}xh5 \text{\textcopyright}g8 14 g4 hxg3 15 hgx3 b5

Both sides have chances in a complicated endgame, Pankov-Nepomniashch, Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2009.

14.1.3

1 d4 e6 2 c3!?

A rather subtle introduction to the London System.

2...d5 (D)

2...c5 is of course possible, but after 3 e4 d5 4 exd5 we have transposed to an Alapin Sicilian.
3 \( \texttt{f4} \)

After 3 \( \texttt{d3} \) it is not bad for Black to opt for 3...\( \texttt{d6} \)? 4 \( \texttt{g5} \) (4 \( \texttt{bd2} \) f5) 4...f6 5 \( \texttt{h4} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) 6 e3 c5.

3...c5

This is the 'universal' approach as applied to this move-order, as we shall in two moves' time reach a position that Black can achieve against all forms of the London System.

If Black wishes to exploit the peculiarities of White's precise sequence, he can play 3...\( \texttt{d6} \). Then:

a) 4 \( \texttt{x}d6 \) \( \texttt{xd6} \) gives Black an equal game, as his doubled pawns usefully control central squares.

b) 4 \( \texttt{g3} \) \( \texttt{f6} \) 5 \( \texttt{d2} \) 0-0 6 \( \texttt{gf3} \) b6 7 e3 \( \texttt{b7} \) 8 a4 (8 \( \texttt{d3} \) \( \texttt{e4} \) is unclear, while 8 \( \texttt{e5} \) \( \texttt{c6} \) is equal) 8...c5 with equality, Grivas-Sandalakis, Porto Carras 2008.

c) 4 e3 \( \texttt{f6} \) 5 \( \texttt{f3} \) 0-0 6 \( \texttt{bd2} \) (6 \( \texttt{g3} \) \( \texttt{e4} \) 7 \( \texttt{bd2} \) f5) 6...\( \texttt{xf4} \) 7 \( \texttt{xf4} \) c5 8 dxc5 \( \texttt{xc7} \) is equal.

4 e3 \( \texttt{c6} \) 5 \( \texttt{f3} \) \( \texttt{f6} \) 6 \( \texttt{bd2} \) (D)

This position is the result of an opening compromise: White has successfully achieved his desired opening formation, and Black sees nothing bad in that for himself.

6...\( \texttt{d6} \) 7 \( \texttt{g3} \)

This is the most aggressive continuation. The following lines have also been tried in practice:

a) 7 \( \texttt{d3} \) shows that White is not too concerned about pawn-structure. 7...\( \texttt{xf4} \) 8 \( \texttt{xf4} \) \( \texttt{b6} \) (8...\( \texttt{cxd4} \) also leads to equality) 9 \( \texttt{b3} \) (9 \( \texttt{dxc5} \)?) \( \texttt{xb2} \) 9...\( \texttt{xd4} \) (9...\( \texttt{xb3} \)?) 10 axb3 \( \texttt{cxd4} \) 10 \( \texttt{xb6} \) axb6 11 \( \texttt{xd4} \) \( \texttt{xd4} \) is equal.

b) 7 dxc5 \( \texttt{xc5} \) 8 \( \texttt{d3} \) 0-0 9 0-0 h6!? (9...\( \texttt{d6} \) 10 \( \texttt{xd6} \) \( \texttt{xd6} \) 11 e4 \( \texttt{d8} \) and 9...\( \texttt{e8} \) 10 e4 e5 11 \( \texttt{g5} \) d4 are also possible) 10 h3 (10 e4?! \( \texttt{h5} \) 10...\( \texttt{d6} \) 11 \( \texttt{xd6} \) \( \texttt{xd6} \) 12 e4 \( \texttt{d8} \) with equality.

c) 7 \( \texttt{g5} \) h6 8 \( \texttt{h4} \) 0-0 9 \( \texttt{d3} \) (9 \( \texttt{e2} \) 10 0-0 11 \( \texttt{b7} \) is also equal) 9...\( \texttt{e8} \) 10 0-0 (10 \( \texttt{c2} \) e5 11 dxe5 \( \texttt{xe5} \) 12 \( \texttt{xe5} \) \( \texttt{xe5} \)?) 10...e5 and the game is level.

d) 7 \( \texttt{e5} \) appears aggressive, but this turns out to be a premature intrusion, since after 7...\( \texttt{xc7} \) White has no convincing follow-up:
RARE 2ND AND 3RD MOVES AFTER 1 d4 e6

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d1) 8 \text{b}5?! 0-0 9 \text{x}c6 \text{bxc}6 gives Black the preferable game; e.g., 10 0-0 \text{b}8 11 \text{b}1 \text{cxd}4 12 \text{cxd}4 c5.

d2) After 8 \text{df}3?! \text{cxd}4 White should settle for 9 \text{x}c6 with an equal game, since 9 \text{exd}4?! \text{e}4 10 \text{x}c6 \text{xf}4 11 \text{ce}5 f6 hands Black the initiative.

e) 7 \text{x}d6 \text{w}xd6 8 \text{b}5 d7 9 0-0 (9 \text{a}4 \text{b}8?!?) 9...0-0 10 a4 a6 11 \text{x}c6 \text{xc}6 12 \text{e}5 \text{d}7 13 \text{xd}7 \text{xd}7 14 a5. White is relying on his knight to prove superior to the black bishop, but by opening files for his rooks Black secures enough counterplay: 14...b6! 15 axb6 (15 \text{b}3, as played in the game Kveinys-Krivoruchko, Cappelle la Grande 2008, can be met by 15...\text{cxd}4 16 \text{exd}4 \text{ab}8 17 \text{c}2 \text{fc}8) 15...\text{fb}8 16 \text{c}2 \text{xb}6 with equality.

7...0-0 8 \text{d}3

It is still too early for 8 \text{e}5 in view of 8...\text{c}7 9 \text{f}4?! \text{cxd}4 10 \text{exd}4 \text{d}4 (10...\text{e}8?! 11 \text{d}3 f6) 11 \text{d}3 f5, but 8 \text{b}5?! is more interesting; for instance, 8...\text{e}7 9 \text{x}c6 \text{bxc}6 10 \text{a}4. Black must act vigorously to avoid coming under positional pressure: 10...\text{cxd}4 11 \text{cx}d4 \text{ab}8 12 \text{xd}6 \text{xd}6 is unclear) 11...\text{h}5?! 12 \text{xd}6 (12 \text{w}c6?! \text{x}g3 13 \text{hx}g3 \text{b}8 leaves White in considerable danger) 12...\text{xd}6 13 0-0 (13 g3 f6; 13 \text{e}5 c5 14 \text{a}3 \text{b}6 15 \text{dxc}5 \text{c}7) 13...f6 with counterplay.

8...b6 (D)

This position is reminiscent of the Zukertort Attack (Section 13.3.2), and Black may defend himself similarly.

9 \text{e}5

9 0-0 \text{x}g3 10 \text{hx}g3 \text{b}7 leads to an equal game, and the tempting 9 \text{e}4 is parried by the cool-headed retreat 9...\text{e}7!, when 10 \text{dxc}5 \text{bxc}5 is equal, 10 e5?! is met by 10...\text{h}5, and 10 \text{c}2 by 10...\text{cxd}4 11 e5 \text{d}5.

9...\text{b}7 10 \text{f}4 \text{e}7 11 \text{f}3

Otherwise 11...\text{e}4 and then...f6 will follow.

11...\text{e}8

So Black’s knight goes to another square. Black can also choose 11...\text{f}5 12 \text{f}2 \text{e}7, intending 13...\text{d}6 with unclear play, Mitkov-Borges Mateos, Toluca 2009.

11 \text{f}2 \text{f}6

Now White can decide between a draw by perpetual check (13 \text{x}h7+ \text{x}h7 14 \text{w}h3+ \text{g}8 15 \text{wx}e6+) and 13 \text{w}h3 \text{f}5 14 g4 \text{cxd}4!, with chances for both sides.

14.2

1 d4 e6 2 \text{f}3 c5 3 g3 (D)

With this hybrid variation, White postpones the move c4. Now Black’s task (from the point of view of our repertoire) is to avoid coming under
pressure in a main line of the Catalan or Tarrasch.

3...cxd4 4 Qxd4 d5 5 g2
5 c4 Qf6 (5...e5!? ) 6 g2 transposes to Section 12.1.
5...Qf6 6 0-0
6 c4 is again Section 12.1.
6...e5 7 Qb3 Qe6

We now have the Grünfeld line 1 d4 Qf6 2 c4 g6 3 Qf3 d5?! 4 cxd5 Qxd5 5 e4 Qb6 with reversed colours and two extra tempi for White. This factor would normally be a damning indictment of an opening line, but that form of Grünfeld leaves Black with a very passive game. Can White put his extra tempi to good use, or will Black be able to catch up in development while still enjoying his excellent pawn-centre?

8 Qg5
8 c4 Qc6 9 cxd5 Qxd5 is inoffensive for Black, but 8 Qc3!? Qe7 9 f4 (9 Qg5 Qbd7 transposes to the main line below) 9...exf4 is more dangerous. The natural 10 Qxf4!? Qc6 has not so far been seen in practice, but 10 gxf4 g6 has been examined several times. The game acquires an original nature, but it appears that this is White’s only real achievement. For example:

a) 11 Qd4 Qc6 and now White should settle for the unclear 12 Wh1, since 12 Qxe6?! fxe6 13 e4 Wb6+ 14 Wh1 d4 gives Black the initiative.

b) 11 Wh1 Qc6 12 Qe3 0-0 13 Qd4 Wd7 (13...Qc8!? ) 14 Qxe6 (14 f5 gxf5) 14...fxe6 15 Qg1 Qad8 (Romanishin-Bluvshtein, Montreal 2003) and here 16 e4 enables White to maintain equality.

8...Qbd7 (D)
9...\textit{\textbf{e7}}

An acceptable alternative is 9...h6 10 \textit{\textbf{xf6}} \textit{\textbf{xf6}} 11 \textit{\textbf{d3}} (11 \textit{\textbf{f4}} \textit{\textbf{b6+}} 12 \textit{\textbf{h1}} \textit{\textbf{exf4}} 13 \textit{\textbf{gxf4}} \textit{\textbf{d8}}) 11...\textit{\textbf{e4}} 12 \textit{\textbf{b5+}} (12 \textit{\textbf{d4}} \textit{\textbf{e7}} 13 \textit{\textbf{c5}} a6 is equal) 12...\textit{\textbf{d7}} 13 \textit{\textbf{xd7+}} \textit{\textbf{xd7}}, when Black stands no worse.

10 \textit{\textbf{f4}}

It is clear that 10 \textit{\textbf{xd5}}?? \textit{\textbf{xd5}} is no use to White, and 10 e3 only leads to equality after 10...\textit{\textbf{e4}} 11 \textit{\textbf{d4}} \textit{\textbf{b6}}. Meanwhile, 10 e4 dxe4 transposes to the note to White’s 9th move.

10...\textit{\textbf{exf4}} 11 \textit{\textbf{xf4}}

The extravagant 11 \textit{\textbf{gxf4}} \textit{\textbf{b6}} 12 f5 \textit{\textbf{d7}} also gives White no advantage here.

11...\textit{\textbf{b6+}}

The game is roughly level. The possible loss of the d5-pawn should not perturb Black too much; for example, after 12 \textit{\textbf{h1}} (12 e3 h6!?) 12...0-0 13 \textit{\textbf{xd5}} (13 \textit{\textbf{cxd5}} \textit{\textbf{xd5}} 14 \textit{\textbf{xd5}} \textit{\textbf{d8}}) 13...\textit{\textbf{ad8}} he has quite enough positional compensation.

14.3  

1 d4 \textit{\textbf{e6}} 2 \textit{\textbf{f3}} c5 3 \textit{\textbf{c3}} (D)

A rare but interesting continuation.

3...\textit{\textbf{xd4}}

The line 3...d5 4 e4 \textit{\textbf{f6}} 5 exd5 is not enough for equality.

4 \textit{\textbf{xd4}}

4 \textit{\textbf{xd4}} \textit{\textbf{c6}} 5 \textit{\textbf{a4}} hardly deserves serious attention. Black can choose 5...a6!? 6 e4 d6 or 5...\textit{\textbf{f6}} 6 e4 \textit{\textbf{b4}} 7 \textit{\textbf{d2}} (Teuschler-Hess, Graz 2008) 7...d5, with equality.

4...\textit{\textbf{f6}} 5 \textit{\textbf{db5?!}}

5 e4 \textit{\textbf{c6}} transposes to the Sicilian Four Knights, considered in Chapter 11. However, White has other plans – it turns out that the Sicilian Defence can also be played without the move e4! Let us note only that it would be inaccurate for White to play 5 \textit{\textbf{f4}} in view of the reply 5...a6.

5...d6 6 \textit{\textbf{f4}} e5 7 \textit{\textbf{g5}} a6 (D)

White’s opening experiment has led to a position that looks rather similar to the Sveshnikov Sicilian – only the moves e4 and ...\textit{\textbf{c6}} are lacking. Both sides have ways to avoid completing the transposition.

8 \textit{\textbf{xf6}}
The immediate retreat of the knight by 8 \( \text{Na3} \) is the alternative:

a) 8...\( \text{Nc6} \) 9 \( \text{Nxf6} \) (9 \( \text{e4 Nbd7} \)) 9...\( \text{Nxf6} \) 10 \( \text{Nxd5} \) (10 \( \text{e4 Ng6} \)) 10...\( \text{Nd8} \) 11 \( \text{e4} \) (11 \( \text{Nc4 Nbd7} \)) 11...\( \text{Nbd7} \) 12 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{Nc8} \) 13 \( \text{Nce3} \) (13 \( \text{c3 Nh4} \)) 13...\( \text{e7} \) 14 \( \text{Nxe2} \) 0-0 15 0-0 \( \text{Ng5} \) is equal.

b) 8...\( \text{Nbd7} \) !? 9 \( \text{Nc4} \) \( \text{h6} \) 10 \( \text{Nh4} \) (10 \( \text{Nxf6 Nxf6} \) 11 \( \text{e4 Nc6} \) gives Black the initiative) 10...\( \text{g5} \) 11 \( \text{Nh3} \) \( \text{Nc5} \) 12 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{b5} \) (12...\( \text{Nc6} \) 13 \( \text{e4 Nxc8} \)) 13 \( \text{Nxe3} \) \( \text{Nc6} \) 14 \( \text{Ned5 Nxd5} \) 15 \( \text{Nxd5 Na4} \) 16 \( \text{Nbl Nc6} \), with chances for both sides.

8...\( \text{gxf6} \) 9 \( \text{Na3} \) \( \text{f5} \) (D)

White can also play 10 \( \text{g3 Ne6} \) 11 \( \text{Ng2 Ne4} \) 12 0-0 \( \text{h5} \)!? (12...\( \text{Na5} \) 13 \( \text{Nd5 Nc8} \)) 13 \( \text{Nxh7 Nh7} \) 14 \( \text{Nxa6 h4} \) or 10 \( \text{e3 Na6} \) (10...\( \text{b5} \) 11 \( \text{Nd5 Ne6} \)

11 \( \text{Nd5} \) (11 \( \text{Nc4 b5} \) 12 \( \text{Nd5 Nbd7} \) 11...\( \text{Ne6} \). These variations are difficult to evaluate with a high level of certainty, as is our main line.

10...\( \text{b5} \)

Avoiding 10...\( \text{Na6} \)!?, which transposes to a sideline of the Sveshnikov that is thought satisfactory for Black.

11 \( \text{Nd5} \) \( \text{fxe4} \)

Now 11...\( \text{Na6} \) would transpose to a main-line Sveshnikov Sicilian.

12 \( \text{Nbl Na6} \) (D)

The variation 12...\( \text{Ng7} \) 13 \( \text{a4 bxa4} \) (13...\( \text{b4} \)!? has the idea 14 \( \text{Nxb4 e3} \), and can be met by 14 \( \text{Nd2} \), with unclear play) 14 \( \text{Nbc3 Nc6} \) 15 \( \text{Nxe4} \) 0-0 is worthy of notice.

10 \( \text{e4} \)

13 \( \text{a4 b4} \) 14 \( \text{Nd2 Ne6} \)

The game is unclear.
15 Should Black Play 1...e6 vs Flank Openings?

Clearly the move 1...e6 is playable after any opening move by White, and as a matter of principle one would like to make our 1...e6 repertoire complete by recommending it against moves such as 1 c4 and 1 Qf3 too. However, the mere fact that the move can be played does not necessarily mean that this would be a coherent repertoire. For that to be true, there would need to be transpositions that work in Black’s favour by lessening his workload, and areas of strategic common ground between the lines he needs to handle. Above all, his choice against 1 c4 and 1 Qf3 shouldn’t mean that he is forced to transpose to huge tracts of 1 d4 or 1 e4 theory that he has hitherto been able to avoid.

Unfortunately, after 1 c4 e6 2 Qf3 (2 Qc3 and 2 g3 must also be considered) or 1 Qf3 e6 2 g3 it is very difficult to propose for Black any worthwhile original ideas that give this move-order some real purpose within the context of our repertoire. Certainly there are independent ideas, but they are more a case of ‘originality for the sake of originality’ than anything else. Otherwise the play just reaches usual theoretical continuations.

So if simply playing 1...e6 against all of White’s reasonable first moves is not the end in itself, then we should at least seek answers to these moves that fit as well as possible with our chosen repertoire. The basic problem lies in the fact that after 1 c4 or 1 Qf3 White can seek to transpose to 1 d4 openings that may not be within our opening preparation. And while in the case of 1 c4 c5 (Section 15.1) the solution may be no more complex than simply adding a few lines to those covered in Chapter 12, the situation with 1 Qf3 is not so simple: Black must either allow the possibility of the Sicilian Defence (1 Qf3 c5 2 e4 – and there is no guarantee we will get an Open Sicilian, for which Chapter 11 has prepared us), or prepare some other rejoinder. As an example, in Section 15.2 the variation 1 Qf3 d5 2 d4 c5 is quoted, but it can serve mainly as a surprise weapon.

Thus the main purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance and a few thoughts on how you might complete your repertoire.

15.1

1 c4 c5 (D)

Chapter 12 has already covered lines where White plays an early d4. Here we briefly examine lines in which
White delays the d4 advance or avoids it entirely.

2 \( \text{\textit{Qf3}} \)

I suggest meeting 2 \( \text{\textit{Qc3}} \) by 2...g6. Then:

a) 3 \( \text{Qf3} \) \textit{g7} 4 d4 cxd4 5 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \textit{Qc6} 6 \( \text{Qc2}?! \) (6 e3 is equal) 6...\textit{Qxc3+} 7 bxc3 \textit{Qf6} offers Black a pleasant game.

b) 3 g3 \textit{g7} 4 \textit{g2} \textit{Qc6} 5 a3 (5 e3 can be met by 5...d6 6 \textit{Qge2} \textit{Qf6} 7 d4 0-0 or 5...e6 6 \textit{Qge2} \textit{Qge7} with equality; 5 \textit{Qf3} d6 6 0-0 \textit{Qf6} will transpose to lines covered below) 5...\textit{Qf6} 6 \textit{b1} 0-0 7 b4 cxb4 8 axb4 a5 9 bxa5 d6 10 d3 (10 \textit{Qf3} d5 is equal) 10...\textit{Qxa5} is unclear.

2...\textit{Qc6} 3 \textit{Qc3} \textit{Qf6} 4 g3

After 4 e3 e6 5 d4 d5 another form of Symmetrical Tarrasch arises:

a) 6 cxd5 exd5 7 \textit{Qb5} (7 \textit{Qe2} a6 transposes to Section 13.1.2) 7...\textit{Qd6} 8 dxc5 \textit{Qxc5} 9 0-0 0-0 is equal.

b) 6 a3 a6 7 dxc5 (7 b3 cxd4 8 exd4 \textit{Qe7} and now 9 \textit{Qb2} b6 leads to equal play, while 9 c5 can be answered by 9...\textit{b6} 10 cxb6 \textit{Qxb6} 11 \textit{Qa4} \textit{Qb8}, with an unclear game, or 9...\textit{Qe4}!?)

7...\textit{Qxc5} 8 b4 \textit{Qa7} 9 \textit{Qb2} 0-0 10 \textit{Qc2} (10 \textit{Qe2} dxc4 is equal) 10...\textit{Qd7} is unclear.

4...\textit{g6} 5 \textit{Qg2} (\( D \))

5...d6

Black plays this move before ...\textit{Qg7} so that he is better prepared to meet White's d4 advance.

6 d4

White can instead opt for wing play: 6 a3 \textit{Qg7} 7 0-0 (7 \textit{b1} 0-0 8 b4 cxb4 9 axb4 a5 10 bxa5 d5 and 7 d3 0-0 8 \textit{b1} d5 are equal) 7...0-0 8 \textit{b1} (8 d3 \textit{Qd7} 9 \textit{b1} \textit{Qd4} 10 b4 \textit{Qc6} yields equal chances) 8...\textit{b6}! 9 b4 (9 \textit{Qe5} \textit{Qxe5} 10 \textit{Qxa8} \textit{Qf5} also leaves the game level) 9...\textit{Qb7}, with approximate equality.

6...\textit{cxd4} 7 \textit{Qxd4} \textit{Qd7} 8 0-0

In the variation 8 \textit{Qb3} a5!? 9 a4 (9 c5 a4 is unclear, Vitiugov-Zhou Jian-chao, Moscow 2011) 9...\textit{Qg7} 10 c5 d5 Black stands no worse.

8...\textit{Qg7} 9 \textit{b3}

White has also examined these other continuations, without achieving any real advantage:
SHOULD BLACK PLAY 1...e6 VS FLANK OPENINGS?

a) 9 e3 0-0 (9...h5!? 10 b3 a6 11 \(a)b2 \(a)a5 12 a3 (or 12 \(a)e2 \(a)ac8) 12...\(a)ab8.

b) 9 \(d)xc6 \(b)xc6 (9...\(d)xc6 10 e4 0-0) 10 \(d)f4!? (both 10 c5 d5 11 e4 dxe4 12 \(d)xe4 \(d)d5, as in Galić-Stević, Croatia Cup, Šibenik 2011, and 10 e4 0-0 11 c5 dxc5 are equal) 10...0-0 11 \(w)d2 \(w)e8.

c) 9 \(d)c2 and now Black can seek counterplay by 9...h5 10 h4 \(w)c8 11 b3 \(h)h3 12 \(a)b1 0-0, with equal play, or 9...\(d)g4!?: for example, 10 \(d)d2 h5 11 h3 \(d)ge5 12 b3 (12 \(d)e3 is unclear) 12...\(w)c8 13 \(h)h2 (13 f4 \(h)xh3 is unclear) 13...f5?! 14 h4 g5! 15 hgx5 h4, when he had seized the initiative in Leko-Gashimov, Astrakhan 2010.

9...0-0 10 \(d)c2

Or 10 \(a)b2 \(w)a5 11 \(a)c1 \(a)ac8 (11...\(w)fc8 12 a3 \(a)ab8) 12 e3 a6 13 a3 \(d)x4 14 \(w)x4 \(c)c6 with equality, Andersson-Tal, Malmö (4) 1983.

10...\(w)a5 11 \(a)b2 \(w)h5 12 e4 \(d)g4 13 f3 \(w)c5+ 14 \(h)h1 \(e)e6

Both sides have chances.

15.2

1 \(d)f3 d5 (D)

2 d4

With this move, White prefers a queen’s pawn opening rather than a pure Réti approach. The traditional Réti continues with 2 c4, when I suggest 2...d4. Here is a brief summary:

a) 3 g3 \(d)c6 4 \(g)g2 e5 5 d3 \(f)f6 6 0-0 a5 7 e3 \(c)c5!? 8 \(x)d4 \(x)d4 is unclear.

b) 3 e3 \(d)c6 4 \(x)d4 (4 b4 dxe3 5 fxe3 \(x)xb4 6 d4 e5 gives Black the initiative) 4...\(x)d4 5 \(x)d4 \(w)x4 6 \(c)c3 e5 7 d3 \(e)e7 with approximate equality.

c) 3 b4!? \(f)f6 4 \(b)b2 (both 4 g3 c5 and 4 e3 dxe3 5 fxe3 e5!? 6 \(e)e5 \(d)bd7 are also unclear) 4...c5 5 e3 dxe3 6 fxe3 cxb4 7 a3 e6 is unclear.

White’s other standard way of playing the Réti is 2 g3, when I propose the solid 2...c6 3 \(g)g2 \(g)g4 4 0-0 (4 \(e)e5 \(f)f5 is equal; 4 c4 e6 5 0-0 \(f)f6) 4...\(d)d7 5 d4 (other lines run 5 c4 \(x)f3 6 \(x)f3 \(e)e5, 5 h3 \(x)f3 6 \(x)f3 e5 and 5 d3 \(g)gf6) 5...\(g)gf6 6 c4 e6 7 h3 \(h)h5 8 \(w)b3 \(w)b6, leading to a protracted positional struggle with roughly equal chances, Adly-Zhang Zhong, Khanty-Mansiisk Olympiad 2010.

2...c5

This is an interesting way to avoid the standard continuations. Black offers his opponent a game of symmetry.

3 c4

The meek 3 e3 e6 allows us to reach Chapter 13, and 3 c3 e6 is discussed in Section 14.1.2. That leaves 3 dxc5 e6 4 \(g)g5 (4 e4 \(x)xc5 5 \(b)b5+ \(c)c6 is equal) 4...\(f)f6 5 e3 \(x)xc5 6 c4 \(c)c6 7 \(c)c3
0-0 8 a3 \( \text{\&}e7 \), when White does not achieve any advantage. A further idea is 3 \( \text{\&}c3 \), with a kind of reversed Chigorin Queen’s Gambit, but White’s extra move doesn’t prove very useful. Then 3...\( \text{\&}c6 \) 4 \( \text{\&}f4 \) (4 dxc5 \( \text{\&}f6 \) 5 \( \text{\&}g5?! \) d4!) 4...\( \text{\&}f6 \) 5 e3 \( \text{\&}g4 \) keeps the game level.

3...\( \text{\&}xd4 \)

Instead, 3...e6 is a Tarrasch Defence, and 3...dxc4 is a line of the Queen’s Gambit Accepted – both main-line openings that demand detailed preparation.

4 \( \text{\&}xd5 \) \( \text{\&}f6 \) (D)

This position is also known from the Symmetrical Queen’s Gambit, i.e. 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c5 3 \( \text{\&}xd5 \) \( \text{\&}f6 \) 4 \( \text{\&}f3 \) cxd4, but that move-order gives White a variety of dangerous alternative options.

5 \( \text{\&}xd4 \)

5 \( \text{\&}xd4 \) \( \text{\&}xd5 \) 6 e4 (6 \( \text{\&}b5 \) \( \text{\&}a5+ \); 6 \( \text{\&}f3?! \) \( \text{\&}c6 \) 7 e4 \( \text{\&}db4 \) 8 a3 \( \text{\&}xd1+ \) 9 \( \text{\&}xd1 \) \( \text{\&}a6 \) ) 6...\( \text{\&}f6 \) is also rather interesting:

a) 7 \( \text{\&}b5+ \) \( \text{\&}d7 \) 8 \( \text{\&}xd7+ \) (8 e5 \( \text{\&}xb5 \) 9 \( \text{\&}xb5 \) \( \text{\&}xd1+ \) 10 \( \text{\&}xd1 \) \( \text{\&}d5 \) 11 \( \text{\&}c3 \) \( \text{\&}c6 \) is equal) 8...\( \text{\&}xd7 \) 9 \( \text{\&}c3 \) e6 10 0-0 a6 with White somewhat for preference.

b) 7 \( \text{\&}c3 \) e5 8 \( \text{\&}b5+ \) \( \text{\&}d7 \) 9 \( \text{\&}f3 \) (9 \( \text{\&}f5 \) \( \text{\&}xb5 \) 10 \( \text{\&}xd8+ \) \( \text{\&}xd8 \) 11 \( \text{\&}xb5 \) \( \text{\&}xe4 \) leads to unclear play, while 9 \( \text{\&}xd7+ \) \( \text{\&}xd7 \) is equal) 9...\( \text{\&}b4 \) 10 \( \text{\&}b3 \) (10 \( \text{\&}c4 \) 0-0 11 0-0 \( \text{\&}xc3 \) 12 \( \text{\&}xc3 \) \( \text{\&}c7 \) 10...\( \text{\&}xc3+ \) 11 \( \text{\&}xc3 \) 0-0 also gives White slightly the better game.

5...\( \text{\&}xd5 \) 6 \( \text{\&}c3 \)

6 \( \text{\&}xd5 \) \( \text{\&}xd5 \) 7 \( \text{\&}d2?! \) (7 a3 g6?! 8 e4 \( \text{\&}b6 \) is unclear) appears more dangerous for Black, as White will keep the initiative for a lengthy period; for example, 7...\( \text{\&}c6 \) 8 e4 \( \text{\&}c7 \) 9 \( \text{\&}f4 \) (9 \( \text{\&}c3 \) \( \text{\&}g4 \) 10 \( \text{\&}d5 \) \( \text{\&}c8 \) ) 9...\( \text{\&}e6 \) 10 \( \text{\&}e3 \) g6.

6...\( \text{\&}xd4 \) 7 \( \text{\&}xd4 \) a6 8 g3

After 8 \( \text{\&}g5 \) \( \text{\&}d7 \) 9 \( \text{\&}xf6 \) exf6 10 \( \text{\&}d5 \) \( \text{\&}a7 \) Black successfully defends himself, Varga-Bogut, Šibenik 2008.

8...e5 9 \( \text{\&}b3 \) \( \text{\&}c6 \) 10 \( \text{\&}g2 \) \( \text{\&}e6 \) 11 0-0 0-0-0

Black has quite good chances of equality, Genov-Serafimov, Guingamp 2011.
An opening repertoire is more than just a collection of variations; it is also a variety of structures and themes connected with those variations, and in order to be effective with the repertoire, we need to know how to handle these situations when we are at the board. We can gain these skills by experience and by additional study. While deciding which lines to select and which to discard, it is easy to lose sight of general considerations and concepts.

This chapter is designed as a first step towards broadening your understanding of the lines featured in this book. Our focus is not on games where Black swept his opponent off the board, but on positions where Black had to make a vital decision, and in many cases failed to choose correctly. These are in effect warning examples – it is better to learn from the mistakes of others than to learn from our own. In many of the examples that follow, the decision we are examining was not necessarily bad, but was at least insufficiently thought-out, and a first step towards greater difficulties. In some cases the error was a consequence of a superficial approach to problem-solving, and with the help of these examples you can test your own level of positional assessment.

Each key moment is marked with a diagram and a caption ‘What should Black play?’, so before reading the commentary that follows, give some serious thought to how he should continue. The numbers that appear above the players’ names denote the section of the book in which the opening line is discussed.

3.2
Pavel Tregubov – Svetlana Matveeva
Russia Cup, Tomsk 1998

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 4 f3 c6 5 d3 d6 6 0-0 ge7 7 c4 dxс4 8 xcс4 0-0 9 с3 g4 10 h3 (D)

What should Black play?
10...\( \text{\textbf{h}}\text{5} \)

As a result of this retreat, the bishop is driven away to the empty b1-h7 diagonal, and White keeps a superiority in the centre. However, it is too early to claim that Black's choice is incorrect, as the weakening of White's king position is also relevant. 10...\( \text{\textbf{x}}\text{f3} \) 11 \( \text{\textbf{xf3}} \) \( \text{\textbf{xd4}} \) is an alternative.

11 g4 \( \text{\textbf{g}}\text{6} \) 12 a3 h5

A logical attempt to create counterplay against g4. After 12...\( \text{\textbf{wd7}} \) 13 \( \text{\textbf{e1}} \) \( \text{\textbf{ae8}} \) 14 d5, only passive defence awaits Black.

13 \( \text{\textbf{e3}} \) \( \text{\textbf{d7}} \) 14 \( \text{\textbf{h}}\text{4} \) \( \text{\textbf{ad8}} \)!

This rook move is a waste of time; it is better to retreat the bishop by 14...\( \text{\textbf{h7}} \) right away.

15 f4 \( \text{\textbf{h7}} \) 16 \( \text{\textbf{wf3}} \)?! (D)

After the more logical 16 f5 Black would find herself in rather an unpleasant position.

17 \( \text{\textbf{ad1}} \)!

White continues to linger and even ends up losing the initiative. 17 g5! would have given him an overwhelming attack.

17...\( \text{\textbf{fe8}} \) 18 \( \text{\textbf{g2}} \) \( \text{\textbf{a5}} \) 19 \( \text{\textbf{a2}} \) \( \text{\textbf{b6}} \) 20 f5 \( \text{\textbf{ac4}} \) 21 \( \text{\textbf{g5}} \)!

White shows activity at a most inappropriate moment. After 21 \( \text{\textbf{c1}} \) the position remains unclear.

21...\( \text{\textbf{xb2}} \) 22 \( \text{\textbf{b1}} \) \( \text{\textbf{c2c4}} \)

Black has the advantage, although she went on to lose (1-0, 34).

4.6

Joel Benjamin – Daniel Edelman

New York 1992

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 \( \text{\textbf{c6}} \) 5 \( \text{\textbf{f3}} \) \( \text{\textbf{b6}} \) 6 \( \text{\textbf{e2}} \) cxd4 7 cxd4 \( \text{\textbf{h6}} \) 8 d3 \( \text{\textbf{f5}} \) 9 dx5 exf5 10 0-0 \( \text{\textbf{e6}} \) 11 \( \text{\textbf{c3}} \) h6 12 h4 \( \text{\textbf{e7}} \) 13 \( \text{\textbf{e2}} \) (D)

16...\( \text{\textbf{c8}} \)?

Black's game is difficult, but active play by 16...\( \text{\textbf{fe8}} \) 17 f5 \( \text{\textbf{xd4}} \) 18 \( \text{\textbf{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textbf{c6}} \) 19 \( \text{\textbf{f2}} \) \( \text{\textbf{e5}} \) makes White's task far harder.

What should Black play?

13...0-0-0?!?

The white king's residence is weakened and Black aspires to attack with
...g5. However, in spite of the outward logic of this decision, the sharpening of the play turns out not to be in his favour. If Black castles on the other side – 13...0-0! – his position is preferable, as his king’s safety is ensured and he retains the initiative on the queenside.

14 Axb1! g5?

An impetuous reply – Black does not obtain compensation for the pawn. It is also not entirely successful for him to play 14...Axd8 15 b4 g5?! (15...Ab8 16 Aa3!? gives White the initiative) 16 b5 Aa5 17 hxg5 hxg5 18 Axc5 Axc5 19 Axg5 Ac4 (19...Axb8?? is ruled out by 20 Ac1+). 20 f4, while the line 14...Ab8 15 b4 Ac8 (or 15...Aa5 16 Axc6) would mean a switch to defence.

15 hxg5 hxg5 16 Axc5 Axc5 17 Axc5 Bh5 18 f4 Adh8 19 Af3 Ab8 20 Af2

White went on to win (1-0, 55).

4.7.2

Alexander Grischuk – Nikita Vitiugov
Moscow 2010

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 Ab6 5 Ac3 Ac6 6 a3 c4 7 Bbd2 Aa5 8 g3 Ad7 9 Ag2 0-0-0 10 0-0 (D)

What should Black play?

10...f5?!

This untimely thrust leads to difficulties for Black. The opening of the g-file does not promise him any counterplay, since White manages to avoid weakening his king’s position by playing h4. Meanwhile, the black e6-pawn becomes vulnerable, and this circumstance, together with the undermining b3, allows White to seize the initiative. 10...h6 is better.

11 exf6 gxf6 12 Ae1

The immediate 12 Axb1, meeting 12...Ae7 by 13 b3, is even more resolute.

12...Ad6?

A waste of time; Black patently disregards the need for defence. He should play 12...Ab8 or 12...Ae7.

13 Ah3 Ac7 14 Ab1 Ab8 15 b4 axb3 16 Axb3 Ae7

It is already too late.

17 Af2 Ac6 18 Ac5 Af5 19 Axb3 Axb3 20 Axh3 b6 21 a4

White has a direct attack (1-0, 36).

5.2

Leonid Stein – Wolfgang Uhlmann
Moscow 1967

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Ac2 c5 4 Agf3 cxd5 5 exd5 Axd5 6 Ac4 Ad6 7 0-0 Af6 8 Ab3 Ac6 9 Axd4 Axd4 10 Axd4 Ae7 11 b3 a6 12 Axb2 0-0 13 Af3 Ac7 14 Afe1 (D)
What should Black play?

14...b5

This sharp continuation is perfectly viable, but Black badly misjudges its consequences. 14...b4 is safer.

White’s next two moves are obvious enough.

15 c3 d3 b7 16 h3 g6?

Black correctly considers the d3-bishop to be a source of direct danger and therefore tries to protect h7, but the way he does so is too mechanical. A more subtle defence is needed: 16...ad8! successfully meets White’s tactical threats, and maintains the equilibrium.

17 a4!

White wants to regain the c4-square for his bishop.

17...bxa4 18xa4

The immediate knight sacrifice 18 xex6?! allows Black to hold on by playing 18...fxe6 19 xe6+ xf7 20 c4 d5.

18 g5?

This leads to a crushing defeat. 18 d5? 19 xex6 is also hopeless for Black, but he could try 18...c5!?, keeping survival chances.

19 xex6 fxex6 20 xe6+ f7 21 c4 f4? 22 xf7+ xf7 23 xe7 1-0

5.4

Garry Kasparov – Andrei Kharitonov

USSR Ch, Moscow 1988

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c2 c5 4 c3 d6 5 exd5 exd5 6 b5+ d7 7 xd5+ bbd7 8 0-0 c7 9 dxc5 dxc5 10 d4 d7 11 f3 0-0 12 b3 c4 13 f5 fd8

One could question this move, and suggest instead 13...c7. But objectively, Black is still OK.

14 e1 f8 15 c3 (D)
the main reason for disliking Black’s decision to exchange queens is that he helps his opponent transfer his knight to an excellent post on e3.

16 ♂xf5 g6 17 ♗e3 ♗e8 18 ♗d1 ♕c5?!

This careless move leads to real difficulties. After 18...a5 Black still has a reliable position.

19 g4! h6 20 h4 ♕xb3?!

Another poor move; 20...♕g7 21 g5 hxg5 22 hxg5 ♕e4 24 ♕g4! ♖b6?!

The final mistake; 24...♖ed8 25 b4 ♖e7 is more tenacious.

25 ♖g2 ♖g7 26 ♖f4 ♖ad8 27 ♕f3

White has a decisive positional advantage (1-0, 35).

6.3.2

Roeland Pruijssers –
Hagen Poetsch
Groningen 2011

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 e5 ♘fd7 5 f4 c5 6 ♘f3 ♘c6 7 ♗e3 cxd4 8 ♘xd4 ♖b6 9 ♖d2 ♖xb2 10 ♗b1 ♖a3 11 ♗b5 ♘xd4 12 ♘xd4 a6 13 ♘xd7+ ♘xd7 14 ♗b3 ♖e7 15 ♖xb7 ♖h4+ 16 ♗f2 ♖d8 17 ♗b6 ♖c8 18 ♚c7 ♖d8 19 ♗b7 ♖c8 20 ♚c7 ♖d8 21 ♖d4 ♚c8 22 ♖a7 (D)

What should Black play?

22...♖h4+

This risky variation serves as a vivid demonstration of the contemporary approach to solving opening problems, under which the strategic struggle is replaced by a tactical battle, sometimes continuing all the way into the endgame. In such positions even a minor detail can be of paramount importance for the assessment of the position. For example, now either way for the queen to flee is acceptable for Black, but combining the two turns out to fail. 22...♖e7 is the other viable move.

23 g3 ♖e7?

Now that Black has brought his queen into battle, it is correct to keep it active by 23...♖h3.

24 ♗d2!

A subtle rejoinder: the white king defends the c3-knight, neutralizing the attack ...♖a3. And thanks to Black’s overly elaborate queen manoeuvre, the h4-square is now inaccessible to his queen.

24...♖a3?

By persevering with active measures, Black marches to his death. But all was not yet lost – he should have tried 24...g5.
ROCK-SOLID CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

25 \textit{\textbb{b}1} \textit{\textbb{c}4}? 26 \textit{\textbb{w}xc4!} dxc4 27 \textit{\textbb{a}8+ \textit{\textbb{c}8} 28 \textit{\textbb{w}xc8+ \textit{\textbb{d}7} 29 \textit{\textbb{c}7+ \textit{\textbb{d}8} 30 \textit{\textbb{w}xc4+ 1-0}}

6.3.3
Tatiana Kosintseva – Hou Yifan
Jermuk (women) 2010

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 \textit{\textbb{c}c3} \textit{\textbb{f}6} 4 e5 \textit{\textbb{d}d7} 5 f4 e5 6 \textit{\textbb{f}3} \textit{\textbb{c}6} 7 \textit{\textbb{e}3} \textit{\textbb{e}7} 8 \textit{\textbb{w}d2 0-0 9 \textit{\textbb{e}2} b6 10 \textit{\textbb{d}1 (D)}}

What should Black play?

10...f5?!
10...cxd4 is correct. By allowing her opponent to join up her pawn-chain, Black loses the possibility of placing her knight on c5 and then (given the opportunity) on e4. As a result she suffers from a constrained and slightly worse position, while White retains attacking chances on the kingside with 0-0, \textit{\textbb{h}1}, \textit{\textbb{g}1}, g4, etc.

11 c3! a5 12 0-0 \textit{\textbb{a}6?}
Black is careless; the preliminary 12...\textit{\textbb{d}b8} is better. The immediate attempt to exchange the light-squared bishops leads to unpleasant consequences.

13 \textit{\textbb{x}a6 \textit{\textbb{x}a6} 14 c4!}
This break in the centre is typical in such positions. Here the tactics supporting it are not very complicated.

14...cxd4 15 \textit{\textbb{d}xd4 \textit{\textbb{d}xd4} 16 cxd5! \textit{\textbb{b}5}
16...\textit{\textbb{c}6} 17 dxc6 \textit{\textbb{c}5} is slightly better.

17 \textit{\textbb{w}e2 \textit{\textbb{c}7} 18 d6 b5
Now by playing 19 a4 White could have secured an obvious advantage, though even after missing this she went on to win anyway (1-0, 48).

7.2
Peter Leko – Sergey Volkov
FIDE Knockout, New Delhi 2000

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 \textit{\textbb{c}c3} \textit{\textbb{f}6} 4 \textit{\textbb{g}5} \textit{\textbb{e}7} 5 e5 \textit{\textbb{f}d7} 6 \textit{\textbb{xe}7 \textit{\textbb{w}xe7} 7 f4 0-0 8 \textit{\textbb{f}3} c5 9 dxc5 \textit{\textbb{c}6} 10 \textit{\textbb{d}3} f5 11 exf6 \textit{\textbb{w}xf6} 12 g3 \textit{\textbb{xc}5} 13 0-0 \textit{\textbb{d}7}
13...a6 14 \textit{\textbb{w}d2} \textit{\textbb{a}d8} 15 \textit{\textbb{a}e1} \textit{\textbb{e}8} 16 a3 (D)
What should Black play?

16...\texttt{\textit{h}5}?! 
Black wants to activate his 'French' bishop, but chooses an inappropriate moment. The simple 16...a6 is more useful; e.g., 17 b4 \texttt{\textit{x}d}3 18 cxd3 \texttt{\textit{c}8}.

17 \texttt{\textit{e}5 \textit{xe}5} 18 \texttt{\textit{x}e}5 \texttt{\textit{g}4}?! 
This move seems like the natural conclusion of the manoeuvre, but the modest retreat 18...\texttt{\textit{f}7} is stronger.

19 \texttt{\textit{g}2}?! 
White could exploit his opponent’s carelessness and seize the advantage by 19 b4! \texttt{\textit{x}d}3 (19...\texttt{\textit{d}7} 20 \texttt{\textit{g}5}) 20 cxd3, followed by transferring the knight to d4.

19...\texttt{\textit{c}8} 
Now Black’s dream comes true: he gains counterplay along the c-file.

20 h3 \texttt{\textit{xd}3} 21 cxd3 \texttt{\textit{f}5} 22 \texttt{\textit{f}3} d4 23 \texttt{\textit{b}5}?! 
A flank sally of doubtful value. After 23 \texttt{\textit{e}4} \texttt{\textit{xe}4} (23...\texttt{\textit{d}8} 24 \texttt{\textit{g}5}) 24 \texttt{\textit{xe}4} the position remains equal.

23...\texttt{\textit{c}1}+ 
23...\texttt{\textit{fd}8} 24 \texttt{\textit{xa}7} (not 24 g4? \texttt{\textit{xd}3}) 24...\texttt{\textit{c}1}+ 25 \texttt{\textit{h}2} \texttt{\textit{h}6} is more accurate, and keeps the initiative; e.g., 26 g4? \texttt{\textit{xd}3}.

24 \texttt{\textit{h}2} \texttt{\textit{d}8} 25 \texttt{\textit{d}2} \texttt{\textit{a}1} 26 g4 \texttt{\textit{x}g}4 
This piece sacrifice is more or less forced, but it is enough for equality.

27 h\texttt{\textit{x}g}4 \texttt{\textit{h}4}+ 28 \texttt{\textit{h}3} \texttt{\textit{h}1}+?! 
28...\texttt{\textit{x}g}4 is far simpler.

29 \texttt{\textit{x}h}1 \texttt{\textit{x}h}3+ 30 \texttt{\textit{g}1} \texttt{\textit{x}g}4+ 31 \texttt{\textit{g}2} \texttt{\textit{xf}4}+ 
Only 31...\texttt{\textit{d}1}+! keeps Black in the game, when the computer line 32 \texttt{\textit{h}2} a6! 33 \texttt{\textit{c}7} \texttt{\textit{c}8} 34 \texttt{\textit{c}5} \texttt{\textit{e}1} 35 \texttt{\textit{h}3} \texttt{\textit{e}3}+
36 \texttt{\textit{g}3} e5 37 \texttt{\textit{x}a}6 (37 f5 \texttt{\textit{h}6}+ 38 \texttt{\textit{g}2} b6!) 37...\texttt{\textit{xc}5} 38 \texttt{\textit{xc}5} exf4 39 \texttt{\textit{xe}3} dxe3 is equal!

32 \texttt{\textit{g}5} \texttt{\textit{f}8} 33 \texttt{\textit{xe}6} 
White went on to win (1-0, 39).

7.3.1 Ferdinand Hellers – Evgeny Bareev 
World Junior Ch, Gausdal 1986

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 \texttt{\textit{c}3} \texttt{\textit{f}6} 4 \texttt{\textit{g}5} \texttt{\textit{e}7} 5 e5 \texttt{\textit{fd}7} 6 h4 h6 7 \texttt{\textit{e}3} c5 8 \texttt{\textit{g}4} g6 9 \texttt{\textit{f}3} (D)

What should Black play?

9...\texttt{\textit{c}6}?! 
This is a fundamental error that leads to a difficult position for Black. He should take on d4: after 9...cxd4, 10 \texttt{\textit{xd}4} leaves the white bishop poorly placed, and the pawn sacrifice 10 \texttt{\textit{xd}4} \texttt{\textit{xe}5} has unclear consequences.

10 dxc5! \texttt{\textit{xc}5} 
10...\texttt{\textit{d}xe}5 11 \texttt{\textit{xe}5} \texttt{\textit{xe}5} 12 \texttt{\textit{g}3} is advantageous for White, so Black tries to avoid the opening of lines.
11 0-0-0 a6 12 $xc5 $xc5 13 $e4 $e7?! Black should prefer 13...$b6 14 $xc5 (14 $f6+ $f8) 14...$xc5 with an inferior but resilient position.

14 $f4 b5? After this error Black can put up little further resistance. 14...$f8 is better.

15 $d6+ $xd6 16 exd6 $a7? This concluding oversight ends the game.

17 $d4! $d7 18 $xb5 $xb5 19 $xf7+ 1-0

What should Black play?

9...$e5?! After choosing the somewhat risky 4...$xc3+, heightened caution is required of Black. The white f-pawn is ready to advance, and Black has to decide on which square to halt its push forward. In this case another way to blockade White’s pawn-centre looks more reliable: 9...0-0 10 f4 $f5!, with unclear play.

10 f4 $f6 11 d5 $a5 12 $g3 0-0 It is very dubious for Black to opt for 12...exf4?! 13 $f5.

13 $f5 (D)

The development of events is rather interesting. Black is going to attack the c4-pawn, but White’s threats on the kingside turn out in the long term to be more dangerous.

13...$e8 It looks more logical to continue 13...$a6 14 $h5 $h8 right away. Those moves without which one cannot manage anyway should be made first of all.
14 \( \diamondsuit h5 \) \( \blacklozenge h8 \) 15 \( g4 \)
White stakes everything on his attack. The calmer idea 15 \( a4 \) \( \diamondsuit a6 \) 16 \( \blacklozenge e2 \) blocks Black’s counterplay on the queenside.

15...\( \diamondsuit g8 \) 16 \( g5 \) \( fxg5?! \)
Activating the hostile bishop.

17 \( \blacklozenge xg5 \) \( \diamondsuit a6 \) 18 \( \blacklozenge g4 \) \( \blacklozenge d7 \) 19 \( \blacklozenge h1 \) \( \blacklozenge f7 \) 20 \( \blacklozenge h4 \) \( \blacklozenge xc4 \) 21 \( \blacklozenge xc4 \) \( \blacklozenge xc4 \) 22 \( f6 \) \( g6 \) 23 \( \diamondsuit g7 \)
White has the advantage (1-0, 36).

9.1.1

Kiril Georgiev – Levon Aronian
Bundesliga 2001/2

1 \( c4 \) \( \blacklozenge f6 \) 2 \( \blacklozenge f3 \) \( e6 \) 3 \( d4 \) \( \blacklozenge b4+ \) 4 \( \blacklozenge bd2 \) \( c5 \) 5 \( a3 \) \( \blacklozenge xd2+ \) 6 \( \blacklozenge xd2 \) \( cxd4 \) 7 \( \blacklozenge xd4 \) \( \blacklozenge c6 \) 8 \( \blacklozenge d3 \) \( d5 \) 9 \( cxd5 \) (D)

What should Black play?

9...\( \blacklozenge xd5?! \)
A highly dubious decision. Black must be very cautious about exchanging queens, because he has no firm squares for his knights and in the long term it will be difficult for him to resist the strength of the white bishops. 9...\( \text{exd5} \) is preferable.

10 \( \blacklozenge xd5 \) \( \blacklozenge xd5 \)
Even here 10...\( \text{exd5} \) deserved attention.

11 \( e4 \)

11 \( b4?! \) \( f6 \) 12 \( e4 \) \( \blacklozenge b6 \) (Malakhatko-Rozentalis, Cappelle la Grande 2010)
13 \( \blacklozenge e3 \) is another promising possibility for White.

11...\( \text{f6} \) 12 \( \Diamond d3 \) 0-0 13 \( b4?! \)
This pawn move is an inaccuracy, which Black immediately exploits. 13 \( \text{f4} \) is stronger, and keeps a small but lasting advantage.

13...\( \text{d8} \) 14 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{g4} \) ! 15 \( \text{c2} \) \( b6 \)
16 \( b5 \) \( \text{a5} \) 17 \( h3 \) \( \text{f6} \) 18 \( \text{f4} \) \( a6 \) (D)
18...\( \text{b7} \) 19 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{ac8} \) maintains approximate equality.

19 \( a4 \) \( \text{axb5} \) 20 \( \text{axb5} \) \( \blacklozenge b7?! \)
Now this is ineffective. Black should immediately target the b5-pawn by 20...\( \text{d7} \). After 21 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{b3} \) the position still seems balanced.

21 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{ac8} \) 22 \( \text{hc1} \) \( \text{c4} \) 23 \( f3 \)
24 \( \text{h5} \) 25 \( \text{g5} \) \( f6 \) 25 \( \text{xc4} \)
White went on to win (1-0, 34).
10.4.2

Vladislav Tkachev – Aleksander Delchev
French Team Ch 2001

1 d4 e6 2 c4 b4+ 3 d2 a5 4 f3 d6 5 c3 f6 6 c2 c6 7 a3 x3 8 xc3 e7 9 e4 e5 10 d5 b8 11 e2 (D)

What should Black play?

11... g4?!

This continuation is quite plausible, but clearly not the best, since now White could continue 12 b4!. Compare this with 11...0-0 12 b4 h5, which offers Black good counterplay.

12 0-0 a4?

Black evidently forgets about the two tempi already lost by him earlier in the opening, which mean that he must be very cautious about any lines where the game opens up. Now he should either castle or play 12...xf3! 13 xf3 a4, with good chances of equality. The immediate a-pawn advance blocks White’s queenside play, but allows him to burst through in the centre.

13 h4! xd5?!

13...d7? is entirely bad due to 14 f4, but 13...xe2 14 f5 f8 15 xe2 g6 is a better defence.

14 exd5 xh4 15 f4 xe2 16 xe2 d7 17 fxe5 dxe5 18 xe5 0-0 19 xc7 ac8 20 d6

White has a decisive advantage (1-0, 40).

13.1.2

Mark Hebden – Chris Ward
Southend 2008

1 d4 f6 2 f3 e6 3 e3 c5 4 c4 a6 5 c3 d5 6 cxd5 exd5 7 g3 c6 8 g4

8...e7 is my recommendation.

9 0-0 (D)

What should Black play?

9...c8?!

A similar variation exists in the Tarrasch Defence: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 c3 c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 f3 c6 6 g3
\[ \text{X-FILES} \]

10 \text{h3} \text{e6} 11 \text{e2}?!  
This is too sluggish. By continuing 11 \text{g5} \text{e7} 12 \text{e4}! White can seize the initiative with confidence.

11...\text{cxd4}  
More logical is 11...\text{e7} 12 \text{b3} \text{e4} 13 \text{dxc5} \text{xc5} 14 \text{b2} 0-0, with approximate equality.

12 \text{fxd4} \text{wd7}  
Black continues to provoke his opponent.

13 \text{xe6} \text{fxe6} 14 \text{e4} \text{xe4} (D)

15 \text{f4}  
White should prefer the simple 15 \text{xe4} \text{dxe4} 16 \text{xd7+} \text{xd7} 17 \text{d1+}, with a minimal advantage.

15...\text{d6} 16 \text{h5+}  
Now after 16...\text{g6} 17 \text{xg6} \text{f7} an unclear position would arise. He instead played 16...\text{f7}?! 17 \text{xe6}! and went on to lose after mistakes by both sides (1-0, 38).

13.2  
\text{Carl Oscar Ahues – Ludwig Engels}  
\text{Bad Nauheim 1915}

1 \text{d4} \text{f6} 2 \text{f3} \text{d5} 3 \text{e3} \text{c5} 4 \text{bd2} \text{c6} 5 \text{e4} 6 \text{d3} \text{c7} 7 0-0 \text{e7} 8 \text{dx} \text{c5} \text{xc5} 9 \text{e4} 0-0 10 \text{we2} \text{h6} 11 \text{e5} (D)

What should Black play?

11...\text{g4}?!  
It is not so easy to feel the difference between the variations 10...\text{b6} 11 \text{e5} and 10...\text{b6} 11 \text{e5}, but this difference is rather considerable. In the first case Black should reply with 11...\text{g4}, and in the second, 11...\text{d7}.

12 \text{hx} \text{h7+} \text{hx} \text{h7} 13 \text{g5+} \text{g8} 14 \text{wg4} \text{xe5} 15 \text{wh5}! \text{f5} 16 \text{df3} \text{g6}?!  
Black finds nothing better than offering an exchange of queens. 16...\text{f6?} loses to 17 \text{g4} \text{d3} 18 \text{e1} or 17 \text{h4} \text{d3} 18 \text{g6}, but 16...\text{d8} 17 \text{e3} \text{gx} \text{g5} 18 \text{gx} \text{g5} should have been tried, even though White keeps the initiative.
17 \( \text{gxg6 fxg6} \) 18 \( \text{\textbf{e3}} \)

The ending is distinctly better for White because his g5-knight occupies a dominant position.

18...\( \text{\textbf{c7}} \) 19 \( \text{\textbf{hxd1 d8}} \) 20 \( \text{\textbf{h4 e5}} \)

White has an extra pawn, although he failed to win the game (\( \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \), 72).

14.1.3

Dragan Kosic – Stefan Mijovic

Montenegrin Team Ch, Cetinje 2009

1 d4 d5 2 \( \text{\textbf{f4}} \) lbf6 3 e3 e6 4 \( \text{\textbf{d2}} \)

c5 5 c3 \( \text{\textbf{c6}} \) 6 \( \text{\textbf{gf3}} \) \( \text{\textbf{d6}} \) 7 \( \text{\textbf{g3}} \) 0-0 8 \( \text{\textbf{d3}} \)

b6 9 \( \text{\textbf{e5}} \) \( \text{\textbf{b7}} \) 10 f4 \( \text{\textbf{e7}} \) 11 \( \text{\textbf{f3}} \) (D)

What should Black play?

11...\( \text{\textbf{d7}} \)!

This continuation must give rise to some doubts, since Black's basic idea is to attack the white e5-knight with his f-pawn, but now this idea is indefinitely delayed. Black should prefer 11...\( \text{\textbf{e8}} \) or 11...\( \text{\textbf{f5}} \) 12 \( \text{\textbf{f2}} \) \( \text{\textbf{e7}} \). Nevertheless, Black's real hardship only begins after his next move.

12 \( \text{\textbf{f2}} \)

After 12 \( \text{\textbf{h4}} \) Black defends by 12...\( \text{\textbf{c7}} \) (not 12...\( \text{\textbf{f5}} \) 13 g4) 13 \( \text{\textbf{h3}} \) \( \text{\textbf{g6}} \).

12...\( \text{\textbf{f5}} \)!

12...\( \text{\textbf{f6}} \) is no use due to 13 \( \text{\textbf{h4}} \) \( \text{\textbf{c7}} \) 14 \( \text{\textbf{h3}} + \) \( \text{\textbf{g8}} \) 15 \( \text{\textbf{xe6}} + \), but the two-square advance of the pawn is a poor substitute. Black should calmly play 12...\( \text{\textbf{c7}} \) (meeting 13 \( \text{\textbf{h3}} \) with 13...\( \text{\textbf{f6}} \)), retaining the option of driving the e5-knight away with \( \text{\textbf{f6}} \) at some later moment.

13 g4 \( \text{\textbf{f6}} \) 14 gxf5 exf5 15 \( \text{\textbf{g1}} \) \( \text{\textbf{xe5}} \) 16 fxe5 \( \text{\textbf{e4}} \) 17 \( \text{\textbf{g2}} \)!

17 h4 is more accurate, denying the black knight the g6-square. White's advantage is then obvious.

17...\( \text{\textbf{g6}} \) 18 \( \text{\textbf{f3}} \) \( \text{\textbf{e7}} \) 19 0-0-0 cxd4 20 cxd4 \( \text{\textbf{ac8}} + \) ?!

Black misses an excellent chance for counterplay by 20...\( \text{\textbf{f4}} \)! 21 \( \text{\textbf{bl}} \) (21 \( \text{\textbf{xe4}} \) dxe4 22 \( \text{\textbf{g5}} \) \( \text{\textbf{d5}} \) 21...\( \text{\textbf{fxe3}} \) 22 \( \text{\textbf{xe3}} \) \( \text{\textbf{f4}} \).

21 \( \text{\textbf{b1}} \) \( \text{\textbf{b4}} \) 22 \( \text{\textbf{e1}} \) \( \text{\textbf{a4}} \) 23 \( \text{\textbf{e2}} \) a6

White was threatening to trap the black queen by 24 \( \text{\textbf{b5}} \).

24 h4

White went on to win (1-0, 33).
Index of Variations

A: 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3
B: 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 d2
C: 1 e4 e6: other lines
D: 1 d4 e6 2 c4 b4+
E: 1 d4 e6: other lines
F: 1 c4 and 1 f3

A)

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 c3 66
3 ... f6
4 g5 80

4 d3 66
4 exd5 exd5 30
4 e5 66 4...fd7:

a) 5 h5?! 66
b) 5 f3 66 5...c5 6 dxc5 c6 7 f4;
b1) 7...a6 68
b2) 7...xc5 68
b3) 7...xc5 69

c) 5 ce2 70 5...c5 6 f4 c6 7 c3:
c1) 7...b6 71

c2) 7...e7 72
d) 5 f4 74 5...c5 6 f3 c6 7 e3
(7 e2 71):
d1) 7...e7 78
d2) 7...cxd4 8 xd4:
d21) 8...c5 74

d22) 8...b6 76
4 ... e7
5 e5
5 d3? 80

5 xf6 80
5 exd5 80 5...exd5 31
5 ... fd7
6 xe7
6 e3 80
6 h4 87 6...h6:
a) 7 e3 87
b) 7 f4 87
c) 7 h5 87
d) 7 xe7 88

6 ... xe7
7 f4 83

7 d3 81
7 f3 81
7 b5 82
7 g4?! 83
7 h5 83
7 d2 81 7...0-0:
a) 8 d1?! 81
b) 8 f4 – see 7 f4 0-0 8 d2

7 ... 0-0
8 f3

8 h5 83
8 d2 c5:
a) 9 b5? 84
b) 9 f3 85
8 ... c5
9 d2 85

Or:
9 g3 84
9 b5 84
9 d3 84
9 dxc5 c6:
a) 10 d2 85
b) 10 \( \text{	extbf{d}} \text{d3}: \\
\text{b1) } 10...\text{	extbf{x}}\text{xc5 11 0-0 h6 84} \\
\text{b2) } 10...f6 11 \text{exf6} \text{\textbf{wxf6 12 g3} \\
\text{\textbf{x}}\text{xc5 85}

B) 
1 e4 e6 \\
2 d4 d5 \\
3 \text{	extbf{d}d2 50} \\
3 ... c5 \\
4 \text{exd5} \\
4 \text{b5+ 51} \\
4 c3 51 \\
4 \text{dx}c5 51 \\
4 \text{\textbf{g}f3 50:} \\
\text{a) } 4...\text{cxd4 51} \\
\text{b) } 4...\text{\textbf{f}6 5 e5} \text{\textbf{d}d7 6 c3 \text{\textbf{c}6 7} \\
\text{d3:} \\
\text{b1) } 7...\text{\textbf{w}b6 52} \\
\text{b2) } 7...h6 53 \\
4 ... \text{exd5 58} \\
4...\text{\textbf{w}xd5 54} \\
5 \text{\textbf{g}f3 59} \\
5 \text{b5+ 58} \\
5 ... a6 61 \\
5...\text{\textbf{f}6 59} \\
6 \text{\textbf{e}2 64} \\
\text{Or: } 6 \text{c3 61; 6 c4!? 61; 6 dx}c5 62; 6 \text{d3 64}

C) 
1 e4 e6 9 \\
2 d4 \\
2 e5 9 \\
2 g3 9 \\
2 c4 10 \\
2 b3 11 \\
2 f4 12 \\
2 \text{\textbf{w}e2 16} \\
2 \text{\textbf{c}3 d5:} \\
a) 3 f4 9 \\
b) 3 \text{\textbf{f}3 13} \\
2 \text{\textbf{f}3 d5 3 e5 (3 \text{\textbf{c}3 13) 3...c5:} \\
a) 4 d4 35 \\
b) 4 c3 \text{\textbf{c}6 5 d4 \text{\textbf{b}6 36} \\
c) 4 b4 13 \\
2 d3 d5: \\
a) 3 \text{\textbf{w}e2 18} \\
a1) 3...\text{\textbf{f}6 19} \\
a2) 3...\text{\textbf{c}6 21} \\
b) 3 \text{\textbf{d}2 22 3...\text{\textbf{f}6 4 \text{\textbf{g}f3:} \\
b1) 4...b6 23 \\
b2) 4...\text{\textbf{e}7 24} \\
2 ... d5 \\
3 e5 33 \\
3 \text{\textbf{e}3? 9} \\
3 \text{\textbf{d}3 14} \\
3 \text{ex}d5 27 3...\text{ex}d5: \\
a) 4 c3 28 \\
b) 4 \text{\textbf{d}3 27} \\
c) 4 \text{\textbf{c}3 30} \\
d) 4 \text{\textbf{f}3 29} \\
e) 4 \text{c4 31} \\
3 ... c5 \\
4 c3 36 \\
4 \text{dx}c5?! 34 \\
4 \text{\textbf{g}4?! 34} \\
4 \text{\textbf{f}3 35} \\
4 ... \text{\textbf{w}b6} \\
5 \text{\textbf{f}3} \\
5 a3 \text{\textbf{c}6 6 \text{\textbf{f}3 41} \\
5 ... \text{\textbf{c}6} \\
6 a3 \\
6 \text{dx}c5?! 36 \\
6 \text{\textbf{a}3 36} \\
6 \text{\textbf{d}3 37} \\
6 \text{\textbf{e}2 38 6...\text{cxd4 7 \text{cxd4 \textbf{h}6:} \\
a) 8 b3?! 39 \\
b) 8 \text{\textbf{c}3 40} \\
c) 8 \text{\textbf{d}3?! 40} \\
6 ... \text{\textbf{f}6 48} \\
\text{Or: } 6...\text{\textbf{d}7 42; 6...c4 44}
INDEX OF VARIATIONS

D)

1. d4 e6
2. c4 \( \text{b}4+ \)

Now:

D1: 3 \( \text{d}2 \)
D2: 3 \( \text{c}3 \)
D3: 3 \( \text{d}2 \)

D1)

3. \( \text{d}2 \) 109
3. ...
3. c5 109

3... \( \text{f}6 \) 113:

a) 4 a3 113
b) 4 g3 113
c) 4 \( \text{f}3 \) 0-0 114:

c1) 5 e3 114
c2) 5 g3 115
c3) 5 a3 \( \text{e}7 : \)
c31) 6 e3 115
c32) 6 g3 115
c33) 6 b4 115
c34) 6 e4 116
4. a3 \( \text{xd}2+ \)
5. \( \text{xd}2 \) \( \text{xd}4 \)

Now: 6 \( \text{xd}4 !? 110 ; 6 \text{f}3 111

D2)

3. \( \text{c}3 \) 93
3. ...
3. c5 94

3... b6 101:

a) 4 \( \text{c}2 \) 102
b) 4 \( \text{b}3 \) 102
c) 4 g3 102
d) 4 e3 102
e) 4 e4 104 4... \( \text{b}7 : \)
e1) 5 d5!? 104
e2) 5 \( \text{c}2 \) 105
e3) 5 \( \text{d}3 \) 105
e4) 5 f3 107
4. e3 99

Or:

D3)

3. \( \text{d}2 \) 118
3. ...
3. a5 124

3... \( \text{xd}2+ \) 118:

a) 4 \( \text{xd}2 \) 119
b) 4 \( \text{xd}2 \) 119 4... \( \text{f}6 : \)
b1) 5 \( \text{c}3 \) 120
b2) 5 g3 121
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4. \( \text{f}3 \) 127
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4. ...
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Now:

a) 5 a3!?! 126
b) 5 e3 128
c) 5 g3 128
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2. \( \text{f}3 \)

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2. \( \text{c}3 \) 164
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3 c3 166
3 g3 169
3 □c3 171
3 e4 144 3...cxd4 4 □xd4 □f6
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b) 5...□c6 148:
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b2) 6 □f4 149
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3 e3 155 3...d5:
a) 4 c3 158
b) 4 □d3 155
c) 4 c4 155 4...a6!? 5 □c3 □f6:
c1) 6 b3?! 156
c2) 6 a3 156
c3) 6 cxd5 157
d) 4 b3 160 4...□c6 5 □d3 □f6 6 0-0 b6 7 □b2 □b7:
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d2) 8 □e5 162
d3) 8 □bd2 162
3 ... cxd4
4 □xd4
4 c3 133
4 ... □f6
5 □c3
5 □d3 134
5 ... □c6
6 □db5 139
6 f3?! 135
6 a3 134
6 □e3 135
6 □e2 136
6 g3 137
6 □xc6 138
6 □f4 □b4 7 □db5 140
6 ... □b4
7 a3 □xc3+
8 □xc3 □d5
9 exd5 exd5
10 □d3 0-0
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F)
1 c4
1 □f3 d5 175 (1...e6 173; 1...c5 173):
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b) 2 g3 c6 175
c) 2 d4 c5:
c1) 3 dxc5 175
c2) 3 □c3 176
c3) 3 e3 e6 155
c4) 3 c3 e6 166
c5) 3 c4 cxd4 4 cxd5 □f6 176
1 ... c5 173
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2 ... □f3
2 □c3 g6 174
2 ... □c6
3 □e3
3 d4 cxd4 4 □xd4 e6 144
3 ... □f6
Now:
a) 4 d4 cxd4 5 □xd4 e6 148
b) 4 e3 174
c) 4 g3 174
Playing as Black in a game of chess can be difficult. Do you simply try to neutralize White's initiative, or go all-out to complicate the game? Either way, there are many pitfalls, and a lot of study may be needed.

In this book, Grandmaster Eingorn shows that it is possible both to play solidly, and to take White out of his comfort zone. He recommends ideas and move-orders that are a little off the beaten track, but which he has very carefully worked out over many years of his own practice. The repertoire, based on playing 1...e6, is strikingly creative and will appeal to those who want a stress-free life as Black. You will get every chance to demonstrate your chess skills, and are very unlikely to be blown off the board by a sharp prepared line. All you need is a flexible approach, and a willingness to try out new structures and ideas. Eingorn's subtle move-orders are particularly effective if White refuses to pick up the gauntlet, as Black can then use his delay in playing ...c6 to good effect and take the fight directly to his opponent.

Viacheslav Eingorn is an extremely experienced grandmaster from Odessa (Ukraine), who played regularly and successfully in the Top League of the USSR Championship in the 1980s. He has represented Ukraine many times in team events, winning a gold medal at the 2001 World Team Championship. Eingorn is a FIDE Senior Trainer, and coached the victorious Ukrainian women's team at the 2006 Olympiad.