Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian
An Uncompromising Repertoire for Black

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With a foreword by Levon Aronian

NEW IN CHESS
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Preface by Levon Aronian

Honestly speaking, I rarely buy opening books. Most of them seem like diet pills, with promises of a wonderful cure to an array of problems by using shortcut methods. We know where that all leads. In the few cases when I actively pursue a chess book is when I respect the author and in particular, when the author is a fellow professional.

My relationship with Zaven is personal, we played for the same club ‘Mika’ for three years, and we have trained together on various occasions. I have also watched his progress from a young, promising player, with very little knowledge about openings, to a grandmaster that has developed quality opening knowledge and novel ideas (some of which I have used in some of my own games).

What I feel is essential in a good book is honesty and a truly personal approach to the assessment and evaluation of positions. This book clearly displays those values. I think that with the amount of Zaven’s work and depth of knowledge shown in certain variations, this book will be very useful to players who would not only like to start playing the Najdorf with black but who also endeavour to acquire a deeper understanding of the most topical lines. I for one, might start thinking about reading it myself!

Levon Aronian
April 2013
Dear chess friends,

This book is devoted to an analysis of the Najdorf Variation of the Sicilian Defence. In my opinion the Najdorf can be considered not merely a variation, but a unique defence in itself, because the possibilities and variations are so many from both sides that the Najdorf itself is even larger than some other defences.

Although the book is written for players who want to learn to play the Najdorf and also for amateurs who would like to learn some new information and interesting traps in the line, this does not mean that the book is of no interest to strong players, as many useful pieces of advice can be found for them. Strong players will also appreciate the deep and correct analysis of sharp positions and the fresh and human look at the positional lines, plus the new comments on these types of positions. Although the Najdorf is considered to be only a sharp and tactical variation, there are also a lot of positional nuances and sacrifices of the positional type, such as the typical exchange sacrifice ... $dxc3$ for Black.

I decided to write this book as the Najdorf is my favourite variation and I have been playing it for many years, with both colours. In recent years, when looking at books about chess openings, the idea came to my mind to write a book in a different way, one which will be more practical, and will include some novelties and a fresh look at the positions.

It was also strange for me that although Armenia is one of the leading chess countries in the world, and our players and our national team are regularly on top, there is no chess opening book written by any of our players. This can be explained by the fact that our players don't like remembering variations and studying openings, but prefer to improvise over the board. Our chess literature only consists of several books about chess problems and endgame studies.

Before starting to play the Najdorf, I was playing the Dragon Sicilian, but at that time Black was facing serious problems in that opening, and I was regularly getting bad positions. It was becoming very difficult for me, every time I had to play the Dragon, as I tended to be in a very bad mood before the game. Then I realized that I should play a more correct and also more dynamic variation, which suited my style, and watching games of Kasparov, who was playing brilliantly at that time (the end of the 1990s), I started to learn the Najdorf and to play it. It became my main weapon. Now there are no tournaments where I don't use it, and with its help, I have won many important games. Indeed, it is amusing and perhaps logical, that I like to play in the Najdorf Memorial tournament, which is held every year in Warsaw.
Miguel Najdorf was a Polish grandmaster who ended up in Argentina in 1939 at the beginning of World War II and became a successful businessman, a world-class grandmaster, and a colourful figure in the chess world. In the late 1930s, he was one of the first to experiment with the move 5...a6, which has the intention of preparing the central thrust ...e7-e5. Since the 1950s the variation has been associated with his name.

The Najdorf Variation has helped me on various occasions.

One of the most important games of my life, where I played the Najdorf, was the 9th round of the World Junior Championship, when I needed to draw as Black to take my first grandmaster norm. I managed it, and after getting my GM norm, and completing the goal which I had set for myself before the tournament, I thereafter felt free and played with relief.

One of the most important victories of my career was the winning of the Russian Cup in Belgorod 2010. Throughout this tournament I won several important games with the help of my favourite Najdorf.

The book is written as a repertoire for Black, and covers all variations for White. The main idea of the book is that in all variations, Black tries to use a novelty first, to deviate from the main lines and surprise the opponent right from the beginning of the game, so as to make him feel uncomfortable.

The book consists of 13 chapters, grouped into 4 parts, and I have tried to analyse all possible main moves which are played by White, and all possible strong answers to these moves for Black. Even the moves which are played rarely by White and are not considered to be good ones, are covered here. This has been done for two main reasons: first to show the contrast with the good move which is shown in the book, and secondly, because the so-called ‘secondary moves’ are the ones preferred by some players, who like the positions which are created after these lines.

However, the secondary lines are not given as much space as main lines such as 6.♘g5, 6.♗c4 and 6.♗e3, which are played most often and preferred by the elite players, and where there are a lot of interesting games.

In this book, another interesting move is covered in detail, namely 6.h3, which is becoming more and more popular nowadays. The advantages of this rather strange move are explained in the book.

My approach in this book is that Black’s main idea is to play ...e7-e5. The reason why Black plays 5...a6 in the first place is that the immediate 5...e5 runs into the
annoying $6.b5+$. But after $6.g5$ and $6.c4$, Black has to change his plans, as we will see in Part I and II.

While looking at the database and the games that have been played in recent years (after 2006), we see that the most common move for White was $6.e3$. The reason for this (and the reason that your author also prefers this move) is this: in my opinion, $6.e3$ is preferable because Black then has three main answers, and to all these three replies, White has many possibilities to continue the game, both positional and tactical, so all kinds of players can play this move. That is the reason why it is played so widely.

The second most common move is $6.g5$. This is one of the oldest moves and it used to be regarded as causing the most trouble to Black. However, in recent years, with the help of strong computers Black has managed to solve his problems, as you will see in the relevant chapters of the book.

As noted above, the move $6.h3$ is becoming trendy. When we look at the games which are being played all over the world each week, we see that $6.h3$ is being played more and more by strong players.

At the end of the book, you can find a series of exercises, which are very important to solve, but only after reading and understanding the main points of the book. The exercises are in relation to the main ideas of the Najdorf. If you wish to check how well you have mastered the book, these exercises will be very useful.

Those chess players who do not know the Najdorf but wish to play it, after studying this book in detail and looking at the games in the database, will be able to play the Najdorf with black without any doubts, and be sure that they will not be in danger of falling into any traps; indeed, with the help of the book, the white opponent will be trapped first!

For playing the Najdorf well, another useful piece of advice, which I followed during my studies, is to analyse the games of chess king Garry Kasparov, not with the help of the computer, but by just putting the position on the board and, maybe with a sparring partner, analysing the games. The important thing is not to try to remember the moves, but to understand why this or that certain move was played, and to try to understand the ideas that Kasparov implements.

I would like to thank all the New In Chess staff, especially Peter Boel, who helped me with very good and useful advice and also with the work that he did on editing the book, and also Mr. Allard Hoogland, who believed in me and supported me in writing of the book.

I must also express my great gratitude to my friend Levon Aronian, for his interesting preface to the book.

Zaven Andriasyan

April 2013
In the following three chapters, we will look at $6. \text{g5}$, the most aggressive reply to the Najdorf Variation. This is the oldest and most poisonous move. Black has a mass of possibilities, and in most cases they lead to very sharp positions, with chances for both sides. In this book, we will look at the most principled and in my opinion, the strongest continuation for Black: $6...\text{e6 }7.\text{f4 }\text{b6}$ — the glorious Poisoned Pawn Variation.

In my opinion, after all the other standard continuations available to Black (notably $7...\text{e7}$, Polugaevsky’s $7...\text{b5}$, $7...\text{bd7}$, $7...\text{c7}$, $7...\text{h6}$ and one move earlier $6...\text{bd7}$), White has ways to obtain an advantage, or else Black obtains a position which is perhaps not bad, but is very dangerous, and involves him in some difficulties.

The strong side of the move $7...\text{b6}$ is that play assumes a concrete character, and if the black player knows the theory very well, and has in reserve some of his own ideas, then even against a strong opponent he will feel very comfortable.

The line $7...\text{b6}$ first became popular in the 1960s, especially after it was used several times by Bobby Fischer, who was always happy to grab pawns. Later, his example was followed by the other immortal practitioner of the Najdorf Variation, Garry Kasparov. One can also not overlook the contribution to this variation made by the former world champion Mikhail Tal, who played many theoretically important games on both sides of the position.

After $7...\text{b6}$, White has two main continuations: $8.\text{d2}$ and $8.\text{d3}$. Here White can also play the move $8.\text{b3}$, which is not the most principled and does not allow him to fight for an opening advantage. However, the move has its pluses: it avoids forcing variations and permits a long and complicated struggle, where the chances of the two sides are about equal.
Chapter 1

The Poisoned Pawn with 8.d2

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 f6 5.c3 a6 6.g5 e6 7.f4 b6 8.d2

In this chapter we will look at 8.d2. After this, Black takes on b2, White plays 9.b1 and Black plays the only move 9...a3. Here White has two main continuations: the old move 10.f5, after which a forced draw results, or 10.e5, when we reach a very sharp position, with mutual chances.

We will look at the second possibility in the next chapter. In Chapter 3 we will take a closer look at the cautious 8.b3.

The old move, which is probably the most dangerous for Black, although in recent times, many have played 8.d3. The position is always very sharp and interesting, basically dynamically equal, but both sides must know it well and be prepared for unexpected surprises.

8...xb2 9.b3

Here White has an important alternative in 9.b3. This variation has never been very popular, although it was famously used by Spassky against Fischer, and also by Short in his match against Kasparov. However, they did not find many followers, which is understandable when one looks at the position.

Black has a number of ways to repulse the white threats to trap the enemy queen. White starts by shutting off the retreat down the b-file, and introduces the threat of 10.a3, hence the reply 9...a3.

This is my preference. In the oldest recorded game of the Poisoned Pawn, Nezhmetdinov-V.Scherbakov, Riga
1954, Black chose $9...\text{c}6$, intending $10.a3 \text{a}5$. White continued $10.\text{d}3$ ($10.\text{xf}6 \text{gx}f6 11.\text{a}4 \text{a}3 12.\text{b}6 \text{b}8 13.\text{c}4 \text{a}4$ unclear) $10...\text{d}5$ ($10...\text{a}3$) $11.\text{xf}6 \text{gx}f6 12.\text{a}4 \text{a}3 13.\text{b}6 \text{d}4?$ when the surprising $14.\text{b}1! \text{xa}2 15.c3$ would have won material. $13...\text{d}4 14.0-0 \text{b}8$ was the right way to progress.

A) $10.\text{d}3 \text{e}7 11.0-0 \text{h}6 12.\text{xf}6 12.\text{h}4?! \text{xe}4 13.\text{xe}4 \text{h}4 14.f5 \text{ex}f5 15.\text{b}5+ \text{xb}5 16.\text{xd}6+ \text{f}8 17.\text{xc}8 \text{c}6+,$ Spassky-Fischer, 7th match game, Reykjavik Wch 1972. $12...\text{xf}6 13.e5 \text{dxe}5 14.\text{e}4 \text{d}7 14...\text{e}7?! 15.\text{xf}6+ \text{xf}6 16.\text{ae}1 \text{ex}f4 17.\text{xf}4$ and for his two pawns, White has a strong attack, which compensates for the material deficit. $15.f5 \text{ex}f5 16.\text{xf}5 \text{e}7 17.\text{f}2 17.\text{c}4 \text{f}6 18.\text{xf}5 \text{xe}4 19.\text{xf}7+ with equality, Tal-Zaid, Moscow 1973. 17...\text{f}6 18.\text{xf}6+ \text{xf}6 19.\text{xf}6 \text{gx}f6 20.\text{xf}6 \text{g}8 21.\text{h}7 \text{e}7! 22.\text{xe}7+ \text{xe}7 23.\text{xg}8 \text{f}5 24.\text{xf}7 \text{xf}7$ Black is slightly better, as he has the superior pawn structure and rook and bishop tend to be better in the ending than rook and knight;

B) $10.\text{xf}6 \text{gx}f6 11.\text{e}2 \text{c}6 12.0-0$

Here Black has a choice of three main continuations, all of which are OK and lead to the same sort of position, where he has no special problems, but where White's compensation for the pawn gives him chances to equalise:

B1) $12...\text{g}7 13.\text{h}3 0-0$

$14.\text{f}1 14.\text{h}1 \text{f}5!$ (in case of $14...\text{d}8?! 15.\text{g}3$ White has a strong attack, because Black has not played ...f6-f5, opening the long diagonal and so obtaining counterplay: $15...d5 16.\text{xd}5$ f5 $17.\text{d}1\rightarrow$ Kasimdzhanov-Polgar, Moscow 2002) $15.\text{xf}5 \text{ex}f5$
16.\textit{\textbf{N}}\textit{a}f1 \textit{\textbf{N}}e7 – Black has no problems and can fight for the advantage himself: 17.\textit{\textbf{N}}d5 \textit{\textbf{N}}xd5 18.\textit{\textbf{N}}xd5 \textit{\textbf{N}}e6 19.\textit{\textbf{N}}xb7 \textit{\textbf{N}}xa2 20.\textit{\textbf{N}}g3 \textit{\textbf{N}}h8+. Gheorghiu-Quinteros, Cleveland 1975. \textit{\textbf{N}}f5! Although it spoils the black pawn structure, this strong move gives him good counterplay, after which he has no need to fear the white attack. 15.exf5 exf5

16.\textit{\textbf{N}}g3 \textit{\textbf{N}}h8 17.\textit{\textbf{N}}d5 \textit{\textbf{N}}e6 18.\textit{\textbf{N}}xg7 \textit{\textbf{N}}xg7 19.\textit{\textbf{N}}c3+ \textit{\textbf{N}}f6 20.\textit{\textbf{N}}c7 \textit{\textbf{N}}xb3 21.axb3 \textit{\textbf{N}}c5+ 22.\textit{\textbf{N}}xc5 dx\textit{\textbf{N}}c5 23.\textit{\textbf{N}}xa8 \textit{\textbf{N}}xa8 24.\textit{\textbf{N}}f3 \textit{\textbf{N}}d8 25.\textit{\textbf{N}}xc6 bxc6= Volokitin-Areschenko, Eilat tt 2012;

B2) 12...h5 13.\textit{\textbf{N}}b1 \textit{\textbf{N}}b4?! 13...\textit{\textbf{N}}a4! 14.\textit{\textbf{N}}c3 \textit{\textbf{N}}b4 15.\textit{\textbf{N}}c1 \textit{\textbf{N}}d7 16.\textit{\textbf{N}}d2\textit{\textbf{N}}c5 !

14.\textit{\textbf{N}}e3! Here, however, Black has some problems, because the queen stands badly on b4, depriving the knight of that square, from where it would attack the c2-pawn, and open a path back for the queen. 14...d5 15.exd5 \textit{\textbf{N}}e7 16.\textit{\textbf{N}}c3 \textit{\textbf{N}}d5 17.\textit{\textbf{N}}d3 \textit{\textbf{N}}b6+ 18.\textit{\textbf{N}}f2 \textit{\textbf{N}}e3?! 18...\textit{\textbf{N}}d6∞. 19.\textit{\textbf{N}}e4 \textit{\textbf{N}}xd3 20.\textit{\textbf{N}}xd3 \textit{\textbf{N}}c7 21.\textit{\textbf{N}}e1 \textit{\textbf{N}}f8 22.\textit{\textbf{N}}xe6 \textit{\textbf{N}}xe6 23.\textit{\textbf{N}}ec5= Mecking-Tal, Las Palmas 1975;

B3) 12...\textit{\textbf{N}}d7 and now:

B31) After 13.\textit{\textbf{N}}f3 \textit{\textbf{N}}c8 14.\textit{\textbf{N}}d1 h5 15.\textit{\textbf{N}}h1 h4 16.e5 f5 (16...\textit{\textbf{N}}xe5! 17.\textit{\textbf{N}}e4 \textit{\textbf{N}}b4=) 17.\textit{\textbf{N}}xd6 the game has a double-edged character, where the chances are equal: 17...\textit{\textbf{N}}g7 18.\textit{\textbf{N}}e3 \textit{\textbf{N}}f8

B351) 13...h5 14.\textit{\textbf{N}}b1 14.\textit{\textbf{N}}d1 \textit{\textbf{N}}c8 15.\textit{\textbf{N}}e3 \textit{\textbf{N}}b4 (it was also possible to prevent the knight coming to c4 with

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15...\textit{b}5!? when it is not clear how White can continue the attack) 16.\textit{c}3 \textit{w}xe4 17.\textit{d}3 \textit{w}a4 18.\textit{c}4 \textit{c}7 19.\textit{b}6 \textit{w}a3. Now White decides to take a risk and not repeat the position: 20.\textit{ae}1!? \textit{e}7 21.\textit{c}4, but now this exchange sacrifice 21...\textit{xc}4! gives Black the advantage: 22.\textit{xc}4 \textit{h}4± Short-Kasparov, 4th match game, London Wch 1993. 14...\textit{b}4 15.\textit{e}3 \textit{d}5?

A strong move is 15...\textit{e}7!, freeing the square \textit{c}6 for his queen. The position would then be unclear. 16.\textit{exd}5 → \textit{e}7 17.\textit{c}4 \textit{b}5 18.\textit{w}d3± \textit{h}4? 19.\textit{g}4± Spassky-Fischer, 11th match game, Reykjavik Wch 1972;

B352) 13...\textit{xc}8 and now:

B3521) 14.\textit{d}1 is an attempt to transfer the knight to \textit{c}4, but I do not like this idea: 14...\textit{g}7 15...\textit{b}5! Not allowing the knight into \textit{c}4 and solving all his problems in the process;

B3522) 14.\textit{f}3 \textit{h}5! A strong move, which stops White playing \textit{h}3, with the idea of \textit{h}5, while Black himself will play ...\textit{h}5-\textit{h}4 and seize space. 15.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}7;

B3523) 14.\textit{ad}1 \textit{e}7 14...\textit{g}7? 15.\textit{b}1! and the pawn on \textit{d}6 is hanging. 15...\textit{h}5 \textit{g}8?! Black wants to put his rook on \textit{g}7, where it is wonderfully placed, and will defend the pawns on \textit{f}7 and \textit{h}7. Or 15...\textit{f}8 16.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}8! 17.\textit{d}3 \textit{c}7 18.\textit{b}1

18...\textit{a}4 (18...\textit{b}4!? and Black even has the choice of playing for a win) 19.\textit{c}3 \textit{a}3= Luther-Kir. Georgiev, France tt 2003;

B3524) 14.\textit{h}5 \textit{g}7 15.\textit{f}5 But this is another idea: Black is stopped from playing ...\textit{f}6-\textit{f}5, but now instead he obtains the square \textit{e}5 for his knight, where it controls important squares and helps the defence. After 15.\textit{f}3 0-0, despite the fact that White will attack the king with all his pieces, real threats are not to be seen, whilst Black is always ready with the typical blows ...\textit{e}6-\textit{e}5 and ...\textit{f}6-\textit{f}5. The bishop on \textit{g}7 defends all the weak squares on the kingside, for example 16.\textit{af}1 \textit{h}8 17.\textit{h}3 \textit{e}7 18.\textit{e}5 \textit{d}5 19.\textit{g}4 \textit{dxe}4 20.\textit{xd}7 \textit{f}5± Kosteniuk-Karjakin, Cap d’Agde rapid 2006. 15...0-0 16.\textit{f}3 \textit{e}5 17.\textit{g}3 \textit{h}8 Black has the advantage, as he has an extra pawn and two bishops, and although White too has his plusses, his attack is not easy to continue. For example: 18.\textit{f}1 \textit{b}5 19.\textit{e}2 \textit{xa}2 20.\textit{ed}4

20...\textit{b}2! (20...\textit{c}4? 21.\textit{f}4 \textit{e}5 22.\textit{g}4 \textit{g}8 23.\textit{xf}7 \textit{h}6 24.\textit{w}xg8+ 1–0 Kosteniuk-Grischuk, Moscow Wch blitz 2009) and it is not obvious how White should continue his attack. The black knight is needed on \textit{e}5, to defend the important square \textit{g}4. 21.\textit{e}3 \textit{exf}5 22.\textit{exf}5 \textit{fe}8±.
Back to the main line 9.b1.

9...a3

Here the paths diverge; White has a rich choice, but there are many variations he cannot play, because Black is very precisely prepared and knows how to refute the white attack, so probably only one move remains. This is:

10.e5

A) 10.xf6!? gxf6 11.e2 (11.f5 \(\text{h}6\)) and now:

A1) 14.d5 This move looks aggressive, but it is not. Its idea is simple: Black needs to develop his dark-squared bishop, because on e7, it stands very badly. And once ...d6-d5 has been played, the bishop has the diagonal a3-f8, along which it can come into play effectively.

A11) 15.exd5!? cxd5 16.f5 \(\text{d}6\) White wants to open all lines, whilst Black is still undeveloped and has not managed to evacuate his king from the centre. Here Black needs to develop his bishop, and he has two main options: if he could play ...g7 and castle, he would be fine, but this is not possible, because he comes under a strong attack, for example 16...g7?? 17.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{e}7\) 18.fxе6 \(\text{x}6\) 19.\(\text{h}5\)+ \(\text{d}8\) 20.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{c}7\) 21.\(\text{e}3\). For this reason, Black puts the bishop on d6. 17.fxе6 \(\text{xe}6\) Black seeks to consolidate his pieces. White must not forget that Black has an extra pawn and two very strong bishops. 18.xf6 \(\text{e}5\) 19.\(\text{h}6\) \(\text{c}3\) 20.xе6+ \(\text{xe}6\) 21.\(\text{xe}6\)+ \(\text{d}8\) 22.g4 \(\text{a}7\) 23.\(\text{x}d5\)+ \(\text{e}7\)! Not 23...\(\text{e}8??\) 24.\(\text{h}5\)+ \(\text{f}8\) 25.\(\text{d}8\)+
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\( \texttt{g7} 26. \texttt{g5+ \texttt{f8}} \) (Shmuter-Timoschenko, Nikolaevz 1993) because of 27. \( \texttt{f1} \) and White wins: Black must give up the queen to avoid immediate mate, but even then, the computer confirms that he will be mated in another 14 moves. 24. \( \texttt{f1} \) \( \texttt{f6} \) 25. \( \texttt{e6+ \texttt{f8}} \) 26. \( \texttt{xf6+ \texttt{g7}} \) 27. \( \texttt{f1 \texttt{f8=;}} \)
A112) 15.\( \texttt{f5 \texttt{b4}} \) 16.\( \texttt{b3 \texttt{dxe4}} \) and now:

A12) 14.\( \texttt{e7} \) Black wants to complete his development quickly and get his king out of the centre. Now:

A121) 15.\( \texttt{f5 \texttt{h5}} \) Black can exchange e-pawns, and the computer considers 15...\texttt{exf5} to be OK, but quite frankly, I do not like this idea, because I see no reason to spoil the pawn structure and open the e-file in front of the black king. 16.\( \texttt{f3 \texttt{f8}} \) 16...\texttt{d7} 17.\( \texttt{b7 \texttt{h4}} \) 18.\texttt{h3} 17.\( \texttt{b3} \) If we look at the position after 17.\texttt{fxe6 \texttt{xe6}}, we can see that Black has practically completed his development and his king stands very well on \( \texttt{f8} \). Later the queen can occupy the excellent square \( \texttt{e5} \) and Black has an extra pawn, but he also has some weaknesses, which provide White with some compensation. If 17...\texttt{fxe6} 18.\texttt{e5}! is a freeing pawn sacrifice, after which all the white pieces come to life and White’s attack is very dangerous, for example: 18...\texttt{dxe5} 19.\( \texttt{xc6 \texttt{a7}} \) 20.\( \texttt{g5 \texttt{f5}} \) 21.\( \texttt{g6 \texttt{xc3}} \) 22.\( \texttt{b8; or 21...\texttt{c7}} \) 22.\( \texttt{d5 \texttt{exd5}} \) 23.\( \texttt{b8 \texttt{f4}} \) 24.\( \texttt{e8 \texttt{h7}} \) 25.\( \texttt{d7 \texttt{xd7}} \) 26.\( \texttt{xb7+--; 17...\texttt{h4}} \) Black needs a waiting move, which does not spoil his position, and this move also has another small plus – the pawn will not be hanging on \( \texttt{h4} \). Or 17...\texttt{a7} 18.\( \texttt{b8 \texttt{xc7}} \) 19.\( \texttt{xb1 \texttt{d5}} \) – with this move, Black announces that he is not prepared
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to wait passively and see how White strengthens his position. He is also prepared for sharp counterplay;

A122) 15.\( \text{d} \)f3 h5 15...\( \text{a} \)a7 16.\( \text{e} \)e3 (if 16.\( \text{b} \)b8 \( \text{c} \)c7; there is a simple chess principle – if you are material up, exchange pieces) 16...\( \text{b} \)b7!? 17.\( \text{x} \)xb7 \( \text{x} \)xb7 18.\( \text{a} \)a7 \( \text{c} \)c8\( \square \). 16.\( \text{d} \)d3 \( \text{a} \)a7 17.\( \text{e} \)e3 17.\( \text{b} \)b8 \( \text{c} \)c7. 17...\( \text{b} \)b7 18.\( \text{x} \)xb7 \( \text{x} \)xb7 19.\( \text{a} \)a7 \( \text{c} \)c8;

A123) 15.\( \text{d} \)d3 0-0 16.\( \text{f} \)f3 \( \text{h} \)h8 17.\( \text{h} \)h3 f5 18.\( \text{f} \)f3 d5 19.exf5 exf5 20.\( \text{d} \)xd5 cxd5 21.\( \text{e} \)e2 \( \text{h} \)h4 22.\( \text{d} \)d5 f6 23.\( \text{d} \)h4 \( \text{a} \)a7 24.\( \text{d} \)d1 \( \text{g} \)g7 25.\( \text{e} \)e5 \( \text{g} \)g8 26.\( \text{g} \)g3 \( \text{x} \)xg3\( \mp \) Hovhannisyan-Ter Sahakyan, Lake Sevan 2010. Black exploits the opponent’s weak back rank.

A2) 11...\( \text{g} \)g7!? Black decides first to develop his kingside pieces, in order to be able to castle if necessary, but he also has one other strong idea, involving the pawn sacrifice ...f6-f5.

A21) 12.f5 \( \text{h} \)h6 13.\( \text{d} \)d3 \( \text{c} \)c5 14.fxe6 14.\( \text{c} \)c4? \( \text{a} \)a5+. 14...fxe6 15.\( \text{g} \)g4 (15.\( \text{b} \)b3 0-0)

Two games have been played here, both with the move ...\( \text{g} \)g8, which is bad for Black – see the variations below. However, the natural move 15...\( \text{c} \)c6 equalises:

A211) 15...\( \text{g} \)g8? 16.\( \text{x} \)xe6 \( \text{a} \)xg2 17.\( \text{a} \)xc8 \( \text{d} \)d2 18.\( \text{g} \)g3 \( \text{x} \)xd4 18...\( \text{d} \)xd4 19.\( \text{e} \)e5\( \mp \). 19.\( \text{g} \)g8+ \( \text{f} \)f8 20.\( \text{e} \)e2 \( \text{xe} \)2+ 21.\( \text{xe} \)2+- White has an extra exchange and a winning position, and there is no perpetual to be found for Black;

A212) 15...\( \text{c} \)c6\( \text{N} \) This move and the subsequent variation was analysed by Nunn in his book The Complete Najdorf 6.\( \text{g} \)g5. But I have added to his analysis the move 17....b5 (see below), a natural move that leads to equality. I analysed this position a lot on the board, because it seemed to me that White had a big advantage. But when I switched on the computer, I was shocked at the miraculous ease with which it held the position. Despite all my efforts to show an advantage for White, I was unable to
do so. I should like also to commend
Nunn’s magnificent work in his book,
which he wrote back in 1996. Check­
ing his variations today, I was surprised
how he managed to do such work with­
out the help of modern-day computers.

16.\( \text{x}e6 \) \( \text{xe6} \) 17.\( \text{xe6} \) \( b5 \) Not
17...\( \text{b}4? \) 18.\( \text{xb4!} \) \( \text{xb4} \) 19.0-0±
with great attack for White. Now:

\[ A2121) \quad 18.\text{d5} \quad \text{d4} \square \]

\[ 19.\text{h3} \quad \text{xc2+} \quad 20.\text{d1} \quad \text{e}3+=; \text{and} \]

\[ 19.\text{xf6+} \quad \text{d8} \quad 20.\text{b3} \quad \text{f8} \quad 21.\text{f1} \]

\[ \text{c8} \quad 22.c3 \quad \text{xc3}+ \quad 23.\text{xc3} \quad \text{xc3} \]

\[ 24.\text{d5} \quad \text{xf1}+ \quad 25.\text{xf1} \quad \text{c5}= \]

are both equal. 19...\( \text{xe6} \) 19...\( \text{xb3} \)
20.axb3±; the move 19...\( \text{b}4 \) also leads
to equal chances, but it was better to re­
frain from 19...\( \text{xe6} \), which leads to a
forced draw. 20.\( \text{h3} \) 0-0?! Castling is
more solid and leads to a forced draw,
whilst with 20...\( \text{f}4 \), White remains a
pawn down but with excellent com­
ensation: 21.\( \text{xf4} \quad \text{xf4} \) 22.\( \text{e}6+ \)
\( \text{d8} \) 23.\( \text{xf6}+ \quad \text{d7} \) 24.\( \text{g7+} \quad \text{e6} \)
25.\( \text{g4+} \quad \text{e7} \) 26.\( \text{xf6} \quad \text{h8} \)
27.\( \text{h4+} \quad \text{e8} \) is equal. 21.\( \text{h6} \quad \text{h8} \)
22.\( \text{xf6} \quad \text{a7} \) 23.\( \text{h3} \quad \text{b4+} \quad 24.\text{e2} \)
\( \text{c4+} \quad 25.\text{e1} \quad \text{b4+} \quad 26.c3 \quad \text{b1+} \)
27.\( \text{h2} \quad \text{b2+} \quad 28.\text{g1} \quad \text{b1+} \) and
Black keeps the perpetual;

\[ A2122) \quad 18.\text{h3} \quad \text{e3} \quad 19.\text{e2} \]

leads to an interesting position with op­
posite-coloured bishops, where both
kings remain in the centre and cannot
castle. Chances are equal;

\[ A2123) \quad 18.\text{b3}! \] gives chances to
fight for the advantage, but by accurate
play, Black can hold: 18...\( \text{d4} \) 18...\( \text{c8} \)
19.\( \text{d5} \quad \text{b4} \) 20.\( \text{xb4} \quad \text{xb4}+ \)
21.\( \text{e2} \quad \text{c3} \) 22.\( \text{f1} \quad \text{e7} \) 23.\( \text{f5} \)
19.\( \text{f1} \quad \text{c8} \) 20.\( \text{d5} \quad \text{xc2}+ \quad 21.\text{xc2} \)
\( \text{c2} \) 22.\( \text{xf6}+ \quad \text{e7} \) 23.\( \text{d5}+ \quad \text{e8} \)
24.\( \text{xc2} \quad \text{xc2} \) 25.\( \text{a}4 \quad \text{f8} \)

\[ A22) \quad \text{With} \quad 12.0-0 \quad \text{White follows his}
plan and completes his development,
and only then starts active operations:
A222) 13...0-0 14.exf5 14...h1 fxe4. 14...exf5 15.d5 c6 15...c5. 16.exf5 16.c3? 16.bxc6 17.e7+ 17.b6. 17...h8

Here White has several continuations, and a minimal advantage in all, but it is practically impossible to win such opposite-coloured bishop positions:

A2221) 18.xd6 xd6 18...e3+ 19.f1; or 18...xa2?. 19.xd6 e6 20.b7 Visually, White's position looks very attractive, but it is impossible to obtain real advantages from it. 20.c4 e8 21.dxc6 f8 22.g2 c8 23.a5 ½-½ Elent-Blanco Gramajo, corr. 2004; 20.f3 xa2 21.b6 d8 22.xd8 x8 23.dxc6 a8 Figlio-Korosec, corr. 1999. 20...e8 21.xc6 f8 22.c7 xa2=

A2222) 18.xc6 is the only way to avoid a queen exchange and opposite bishops, but now Black has no problems: 18...c5+ 19.d4 19.h1 e6. 19...e8=


A23) 12.b3 a5 13.f5 0-0 14.0-0 This transposes to 13.f5. 14...c6 15.xc6 bxc6 16.xd6 a7 16.exf5!= 17.d3 d7 18.g3 In the event of 18.xc6 c7 19.a4 e5 Black has excellent compensation

A232) 13.e5 dxe5 13...d5 14.xd5 14.cxd5 is extremely risky. 14.xf6 gxf6

An unclear position, in which each side has his pluses, but the position remains roughly equal.

Now let us turn to the move 10.f5, with which White begins an attack at once, without first developing his pieces.

B) 10.f5

10...c6 11.fx e6 This is the most accurate move-order. If instead 11.xc6 bxc6 12.fxe6, Black has 12...xe6! and after 13.e2 e7 14.0-0 (14.xb7 d8) 14...0-0 he has achieved everything – he has completed his development, castled, and White cannot even spoil his pawn structure. Black has the advantage. 11...fxe6 12.xc6 bxc6

B1) 13.e5 dxe5 13...d5 14.xd5 Most Najdorf players have probably analysed this position in detail at some
time. Kasparov has shown how Black should defend here, and to this day, his line remains the correct one and has not been shaken even by the all-powerful computer.

B11) 15.\textit{c}e2? 16.\textit{c}d6 16.\textit{c}e3 Not 16.\textit{c}h5+ \textit{c}e7—+

B111) 16...\textit{c}d4! 17.\textit{cf}3 \textit{cb}4 18.\textit{cx}c6+ 18.\textit{cb}4? \textit{cb}4 19.\textit{cx}c6+ \textit{c}e7—+. 18...\textit{c}e7 19.\textit{ca}8 \textit{cc}3+ 20.\textit{cf}1 \textit{cd}8 and Black is better;

B112) 16...\textit{cc}5?! This interesting move was analysed by Nunn in his book.

B12) 15.\textit{ce}4 As we have seen, 15.\textit{ce}2 does not even give equalising chances. The text suits the position better, as it prevents the black queen from returning to the centre, which is the key to White’s whole play in this line. Black has to be very accurate, to avoid being mated. All the moves are concrete:

B121) 19.\textit{cd}3 \textit{ca}2 20.0-0 \textit{cf}8 20...f5 transposes into 20...\textit{cf}8 after 21.\textit{ch}1 \textit{cf}8. 21.\textit{ch}1 f5 22.\textit{cd}f1 fxe4 23.\textit{ce}e4 \textit{ca}4 24.\textit{cg}4 \textit{cf}4=. 25.\textit{wh}5+ 25.\textit{wh}5+ 26.\textit{cd}xh7 \textit{cd}4 27.\textit{cf}1 \textit{cf}4=. 25...\textit{cf}8 26.\textit{wh}6+ \textit{ce}8 27.\textit{wh}5+=;

B122) 19.\textit{cf}x6+ \textit{xf}6 20.\textit{ch}5+ \textit{dd}8 21.0-0 \textit{dd}7 22.\textit{ch}1

A strange position, where White is a piece and two pawns down, but Black cannot coordinate his forces. Such positions should end in a draw. The silicon monster says that almost all moves end in a draw, so I will give just a sample variation: 22...\textit{cc}8 23.\textit{bd}1 \textit{cf}8 24.\textit{ca}3 \textit{cg}8 25.\textit{g}3 \textit{ce}4+ 26.\textit{g}1 \textit{ce}7 27.\textit{xe}7+ \textit{xe}7 28.\textit{cf}7+ \textit{ce}8 29.\textit{cg}7+ \textit{cf}8 30.\textit{cf}7+=.

B121) 17.\textit{cd}3?! f5 18.0-0 0-0— Not 18...fxe4?? 19.\textit{ce}2 \textit{dd}5 (or 19...h5 20.\textit{cf}c3 \textit{dd}7 21.\textit{xe}5 \textit{h}7 22.\textit{xf}h5+ \textit{dd}8 23.\textit{dd}4 \textit{ca}3 24.\textit{b}6+ \textit{cc}8 25.\textit{xd}7=) when both 20.\textit{h}6 and 20.\textit{a}5!! win for White. 19.\textit{wh}6 If 19.\textit{cf}3, it is possible to make a draw with 19...fxe4 20.\textit{xf}e4+ \textit{xf}e4

23
21. \( \text{w}g5+ \text{h}h8 22. \text{w}f6+ \text{g}g8 23. \text{f}f1 \text{a}3 24. \text{f}7+ \text{h}8 25. \text{f}6+=; \) or 25. \( \text{x}e4 \text{c}5+ 26. \text{h}1 \text{a}7 27. \text{e}8+\text{g}7 28. \text{h}5 \text{g}8. \) But with 19...\text{h}h8, Black can fight for a win: 20. \text{h}6 \text{d}7 21. \text{g}3 \text{f}7 22. \text{g}5 \text{x}g5 23. \text{x}g5 \text{a}5 24. \text{e}2 \text{c}5+ 25. \text{f}1 \text{e}7 26. \text{d}2\text{e}4 27. \text{h}5\text{f}4 28. \text{g}5 – Black has defended well and has a winning position, on account of his three extra pawns, Sophistry-PAKman, playchess.com 2006. 19...\text{f}7 20. \text{f}3 \text{d}7

This position has been seen many times. It has been played by Kasparov, Anand, Gelfand and Karjakin. In most cases, the games have ended in perpetual check. It may all look simple, but this is not the case, and Black needs to know the concrete variations very well.

B122) 17. \( \text{e}2 0-0 18.0-0 \)

23. \( \text{h}1! \text{b}7 24. \text{f}7 \text{b}1+ 25. \text{f}1 \text{xf}1+ 26. \text{xf}1 \text{a}5 27. \text{h}3+=; \) No comment!

B1221) 19...\text{f}5! 19. \( \text{f}3 19. \text{h}6 \text{xc}2 20. \text{d}3 \text{xe}2 21. \text{g}3+ \text{f}7 22. \text{x}f5+ \text{ex}f5 23. \text{g}7+ \text{e}8 24. \text{xc}6+ \text{d}8 25. \text{b}6+=. \)

B1222) 19...\text{f}4!N It is strange that this move has not been seen in practice, since it is not obvious how White can fight for an advantage after this. The move closes the kingside and, most importantly of all, takes control of the key
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square g3: 20.\textit{c}3 \textit{b}8 21.\textit{g}3+ 21.\textit{h}3 \textit{f}7 22.\textit{d}6 \textit{x}d6 23.\textit{xd}6 \textit{b}1+ 24.\textit{d}1 \textit{b}6+ 25.\textit{h}1 \textit{c}7\textit{N}. 21...\textit{fxg}3 22.\textit{xg}3+ \textit{h}8 23.\textit{exe}5+ \textit{g}8 24.\textit{g}3+ 24.\textit{xb}8 \textit{xc}2 25.\textit{g}3+ \textit{h}8 26.\textit{e}5+ = 24...\textit{h}8=

B122) The most precise path to a draw is 18...\textit{a}7! 19.\textit{h}6 19.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}7 20.\textit{g}3+ \textit{h}8 21.\textit{h}6 \textit{xd}1+ 22.\textit{xd}1 \textit{f}7 23.\textit{h}5 \textit{a}5 24.\textit{f}1 \textit{d}8 25.\textit{xf}7 \textit{xd}1+ 26.\textit{f}2 \textit{xc}2+ 27.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}1+ 28.\textit{f}2 \textit{c}2+=. This position is known from the games Vallejo Pons-Kasparov, Moscow 2004, and Azarov-Kasparov Izmir Ech-It 2004. Here Black has two drawing lines, both equally good: 19...\textit{d}7 Or 19...\textit{xc}2 20.\textit{xf}6+ \textit{xf}6 21.\textit{xf}6 \textit{c}5+ 22.\textit{h}1 \textit{g}7 23.\textit{c}4 \textit{e}7 (23...\textit{xc}4?? 24.\textit{xf}8+ \textit{xf}8 25.\textit{f}6+ and mate) 24.\textit{xf}8+ \textit{xf}8 25.\textit{xe}6+ \textit{xe}6 26.\textit{xf}8 27.\textit{d}7 e4 28.\textit{c}7 with a draw after a few more moves in R. Mamedov-Kir. Georgiev, Dubai 2005. 20.\textit{d}3 \textit{xd}3 21.\textit{xd}3 \textit{f}5 22.\textit{g}5 \textit{xf}5 23.\textit{w}5+ \textit{h}8 24.\textit{w}7 \textit{g}8 25.\textit{w}6+ \textit{g}7 26.\textit{xa}6 \textit{xa}6 27.\textit{d}1 \textit{d}3

28.\textit{wd}8+ \textit{g}8 29.\textit{wf}6+ \textit{g}7=

B2) 13.\textit{e}2 is an alternative introduced in the mid-eighties, because 13.e5 leads to a draw, whereas this is relatively fresh: 13...\textit{e}7 14.0-0 0-0 15.\textit{b}3 \textit{c}5+ 16.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}5 17.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}5+ 17...\textit{xe}4?! 18.\textit{exe}4 \textit{exe}4 19.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xf}1+ 20.\textit{xf}1 \textit{f}6 21.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}4+ 22.\textit{e}2 \textit{exe}2+ 23.\textit{exe}2\textit{N}. 18.\textit{h}1

21.\textit{c}4 \textit{c}5 22.\textit{x}c5 \textit{xc}5 23.\textit{h}3 \textit{g}6 24.\textit{g}3?

This looks like an intuitive move, but in

B21) I prefer the move 18...\textit{g}4, which accurately equalises and leads to a draw after a sharp fight: 19.\textit{h}3 \textit{e}5 20.\textit{a}4 \textit{w}7 21.\textit{hx}g4 \textit{xf}4 22.\textit{c}4+ 22.\textit{g}6 \textit{e}6 23.\textit{xa}x\textit{a} \textit{xb}3 24.\textit{xb}3 \textit{xa}x8 25.\textit{a}1= 22...\textit{h}8 23.\textit{c}6 \textit{d}5 24.\textit{ex}d5 \textit{xd}5 25.\textit{xd}5 \textit{b}8 26.\textit{xc}8 \textit{xc}8 27.\textit{h}3 27.\textit{xf}4 \textit{xf}4 28.\textit{w}f4 \textit{f}8 29.\textit{w}e3 \textit{f}1+ 30.\textit{h}2 \textit{c}7+ 31.\textit{g}3 \textit{xc}2+ = 27...\textit{b}6 28.\textit{c}4 \textit{h}6=;

B22) If Black cannot play for equality, he has to choose 18...\textit{d}5, after which White will have an attack on the king and full compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but Black will have the chance to defend and keep his extra pawn: 19.e5 \textit{d}7 19...\textit{e}4 20.\textit{xe}4 \textit{exe}4 21.\textit{c}3 (21.\textit{c}4 \textit{w}5 22.\textit{c}2 \textit{g}5 23.\textit{g}3 \textit{h}8 24.\textit{c}1 \textit{xf}1+ 25.\textit{xf}1 \textit{d}7 26.\textit{xe}4 \textit{f}8 27.\textit{d}3+- Palkövi-Magnusson, Budapest 1987) 21...\textit{wd}5 22.\textit{w}e3 \textit{c}5 23.\textit{d}1 \textit{w}1/2-1/2 Luther-Stratil, Uzhgorod 1988. 20.\textit{a}4 \textit{w}7 21.\textit{c}3 21.\textit{b}3 \textit{c}5 22.\textit{c}4 \textit{b}7 23.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}5 24.\textit{h}6 \textit{xf}1+ 25.\textit{xf}1 \textit{g}6 26.\textit{d}3 \textit{xe}5 27.\textit{w}2 \textit{d}6 28.\textit{w}4 \textit{xc}4+ -- Brinck Clausen-Holst, Copenhagen 2005. 21...\textit{c}5 22.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 23.\textit{h}3 \textit{g}6 24.\textit{g}3?

This looks like an intuitive move, but in
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such positions, one needs to calculate accurately. As White cannot sacrifice on g6 anyway, the rook should have gone to f3, where it fights for the f-file, which is extremely important. 24...\texttt{g7} 25.\texttt{d3 a5? 26.g4 d4 27.gf3 d7 28.h4!± Rodriguez Cespedes-Ernst, Subotica Interzonal 1987.

B3) 13.xf6 gxf6 14.e2 a5 15.0-0 e7 16.h1

White has compensation for the pawn, but Black is slightly better because of his centre and the bishop pair;

C) 10.e2 is not so dangerous. White has not yet decided which pawns to advance, the e- or f-pawn, and so he plans to castle quickly. But the move has its minuses: Black will not just stand and wait, but will continue developing and will thus be more prepared for White’s attacking actions, when they come. 10..bd7 11.0-0 c5 12.h1 e7 12...h6!? 13.h4 e7 13.f5 e5

14.e6 fxe6 15.fxe6 b6 16.xf6 xf6?! 17.xf6 gxf6 18.h5+ d8 A crazy position, where Black is a rook up, but he has no moves, as his pieces are virtually paralysed. 19.e7+ d7! 20.e1 xe7 21.xb6 e6 22.xb7+ d8 23.d5 xd5 24.exd5 g8 25.b1 It seems White is about to give mate, but Black starts active operations in time, which forces White to settle for perpetual check. 25...f2 26.b8+ x8 27.xb8+ d7 28.xb7+=.

10...h6

The move in fashion. Ever since 10..d7 was refuted by 11.f5! in Keres-Fuderer, Gothenburg Interzonal 1955, the continuation 10...dxe5 11.fxe5 d7 has been standard procedure. Initially 12.c4 was the most common reply but White has failed to crack 12...a5, so recently White prefers 12.e4 when 12...h6! 13.h4 (13.b5! is an exciting alternative) 13...xa2 14.d1! leads to wild complications.

11.h4

11.xf6 gxf6 is a sideline, but is interesting, because it has not been analysed as deeply as the main lines, so one can hope to find something new.
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A) 12. \textit{exd6}!? After this capture Black has a choice: either to follow Vallejo (Del Rio Angelis-Vallejo Pons, Spain tt 2006), or to play an interesting novelty. I think that in either case, Black has an acceptable position, but after 12...\textit{xd6} White can give perpetual check, as we will see, so we will also examine the move 12...\textit{f5}, which leads to a sharp battle and an unclear position:

A1) 12...\textit{xd6} 13.\textit{e4} \textit{wd8} 14.\textit{wc3} \textit{e7} 15.\textit{e2} 15.\textit{d1} \textit{d7} (15...\textit{d7}) 16.\textit{e2} \textit{b6} 17.0-0 \textit{f5}=. 15...\textit{d7} 16.\textit{f5} The only way for White to get compensation for the sacrificed pawn. 16.0-0?! b5 17.\textit{f3} \textit{b7} 18.\textit{d6+ xxd6} 19.\textit{xb7} \textit{a7} 20.\textit{c6} \textit{b6} 21.\textit{h1} b4 22.\textit{d2} \textit{c5} 23.\textit{a4} \textit{a5} 24.\textit{c6} \textit{b6} 25.\textit{xd1} (25...\textit{a4}!) 25...0-0 26.\textit{b3} \textit{xd4} 27.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 28.\textit{xd4} \textit{b8} 29.\textit{a4} a5 30.f5=.

16...\textit{e5}

There is no way back, so White must go forward fearlessly. With the black king in the centre and the majority of his pieces unmoved, the following sacrifice is very dangerous: 17.\textit{e6} \textit{fxe6} and now:

A11) 18.\textit{h5+ f8} 19.\textit{xe6 c5} 20.\textit{xc5} and now Black gives back the piece with 20...\textit{d5}, trying to simplify play and keep lines closed:

A111) 21.\textit{d1} \textit{g2} 22.\textit{f3} \textit{h3} 25.\textit{e8}. One does not often have to put a bishop on e8 in the middle of the game, but White has his problems: his king is exposed, which facilitates perpetual check: 25...\textit{g4+} 26.\textit{e1} \textit{h4+} 27.\textit{d1} \textit{g4+}=

A12) 18.\textit{xe6} The check 18.\textit{h5+} gives White nothing and so he decides to delay it. 18...0-0 18...h5 19.\textit{exd7+ xd7} 20.0-0 \textit{c6}! 21.\textit{f3}! 0-0

27
22. $\text{c}3$ $\text{d}4+$ 23. $\text{xd}4$ ex$d4$ 24. $\text{xe}h5\pm$. 19...0-0 19. $\text{h}3$ $\text{a}5+$ (the attempt to defend the h6-pawn at once with 19...$\text{g}7+$ fails, because the rook comes into the attack along the third rank: 20. $\text{g}4+$ $\text{h}7$ 21. $\text{f}5+$ $\text{g}7$ 22. $\text{b}3+-)$. 20 $\text{c}2$ (20. $\text{c}3$ $\text{xa}2$ 21. $\text{d}1$ $\text{c}5$ 22. $\text{xc}5$ $\text{xc}5$ 23. $\text{f}5$ $\text{g}7$ 24. $\text{f}4+$ $\text{h}8$ 25. $\text{g}6$ $\text{xe}6$ 26. $\text{xe}6$ $\text{xe}6$ 22. $\text{g}6+=)$. 20...$\text{c}5$ 21. $\text{h}6$ $\text{xe}6$ 22. $\text{xe}6=$. 19...f5 20.ex$d7$ $\text{xd}7$ 21. $\text{c}4+$ $\text{h}7$ 22. $\text{xe}5$ b5 23. $\text{d}5$ $\text{a}7$ 24. $\text{b}3$ $\text{d}8=$. Black has managed to get his king out from the blows, and has two bishops, but thanks to his activity, White maintains parity.

A2) 12...f5!!N 13. $\text{g}4$! In the event of 13. $\text{e}2$ $\text{xd}6$ 14. $\text{e}3$ $\text{e}7$ 15. $\text{f}3$ $\text{c}6$ Black simply has a healthy extra pawn and two bishops, and has the advantage. 13...$\text{xd}6$ 14. $\text{gf}5$ $\text{g}7$ 15. $\text{d}1$ $\text{c}6$ 16. $\text{xc}6$ $\text{xd}2+$ 17. $\text{xc}2$ $\text{xc}6=$. An approximately equal ending, where Black has a strong bishop on g7, but it is White's move and he can probably equalise.

B) 12. $\text{e}4$? A step in the wrong direction, which involves a further piece sacrifice: 12...$\text{fxe}5$ and now:

B1) 13. $\text{fxe}5$? $\text{dxe}5$

14. $\text{f}5$ $\text{exf}5$ 15. $\text{f}6+$ $\text{e}7$ 16. $\text{d}5+$ $\text{d}8=$. This move was pointed out by Nunn (The Complete Najdorf 6. $\text{g}5$) and I agree that after it, Black is winning. If 16...$\text{e}8$ 17. $\text{c}7+$ $\text{e}7=.$ 17. $\text{b}3$ $\text{c}5$ 18. $\text{b}6+$ $\text{d}7$ 19. $\text{xa}8$ $\text{d}6=-+;

B2) 13. $\text{b}3$ $\text{a}4$ 14. $\text{fxe}5$ $\text{dxe}5$ 15. $\text{f}6+$ $\text{e}7$ 16. $\text{f}5+$

16...$\text{xf}6$! A king march starts – since all the black pieces are on their starting squares, the black king takes on its own defence and itself liquidates the white attack. Instead, after 16...exf5 17. $\text{d}5+$ $\text{e}6$ (17...$\text{e}8=.$ 18. $\text{c}7+$ $\text{e}7$ 19. $\text{d}5+$ $\text{e}8$ 20. $\text{c}7+$) 18. $\text{c}7+$ $\text{f}6$ 19. $\text{d}5+$ $\text{e}6=$. There is nothing other than perpetual check. 17. $\text{d}8+$ $\text{xf}5$ 18. $\text{d}3+$ $\text{e}7$ 19.0-0+

The black player has a choice: he can step back and allow perpetual check:

B21) 19...$\text{g}6$ 20. $\text{f}6+$ 20...$\text{xe}4+$

f5 21. $\text{g}3+$ $\text{f}7=.$ 22. $\text{xf}5+$ $\text{exf}5$ 23. $\text{d}5+$ $\text{e}6$ 24. $\text{xe}6+$ $\text{xe}6+-.$

20... $\text{h}7$ 21. $\text{xe}4+$ A bishop sacrifice which gives White a chance of perpet-
ual check. If 21...exd3 22...xa4 g7 23...xf7 dxc2 24.c4 f8 25.c7 c6 (25...d7?!?) 26.g3 g8 27.xc2 d4 28.f2 a5 29...f7 a6 30.h4 a4 31.g6 e5 32.xa6 bxa6 33.f6 h8 34.g6 f5 35.xa6 and there is some pressure all the same. 21...e4 22.g3 g6 23.xf7+ g7 24.f6 d7 25.xg7+ xg7 26.f7+; but that was not why he marched out and eliminated the enemy knights, so instead, he comes into the centre and will help his army show the advantages of their numerical superiority:

B22) After 19...d5!, Black keeps two extra pieces and two extra pawns. Although his king is under the blows of the white pieces, this is not dangerous: 20...f6+ d6 21.xh8 d7 22.xf7 e7 23.g7 c5 24.e2 xb3 25.cx b3 b4 26.xe7 e1+ 27.f1 e3+ 28.h1 g5 Having given back two pieces and a pawn, with this move, Black forces the exchange of queens and reaches an ending with an extra pawn: 29.xg5 hxg5.

Back to the position after 11...h4.

11...dxe5 12.fxe5 d5!

We will also examine the fashionable 12...g5? (12...fd7 13.e4 transposes to the popular line mentioned after 10...h6 on page 26) 13.exf6 gxh4 14.e2:

A) The main continuation after 12...g5, where the principal discussion is taking place, is 14...a5 15.0-0 c7 16.h1 16.d3?! e5 17.bd1 c5 18.b3 d7 19.h1 d6 20.xh4 0-0-0=. 16...g5 17.f4 e5

White has a rook and knight hanging, and no effective way of defending them, so he has to press on regardless: 18.d5 White sacrifices a knight on d4. Frankly, when I saw this position for the first time, I thought White was winning, as his position looks very threatening and all his pieces are taking part in the attack, whereas Black’s are all at home. But in fact, Black is not so badly off: 18...exd4 and now:

A1) 19.c7+ d8 20.xa8 d3 21 xd3 d6 22.bf1 f2 e5 23.g4 d5+ 24.g1 c5 25.f4 c6= 22...xf4 23.xf4
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

21...b2!!N Only Houdini 3 knows why this move. For a human, this is the last retreat he would consider: 21...d2
\[ \text{fxe7 22...f}xe7 23...g4 e8
\] 24...c4 b6 25...d1+ Kosteniuk–Ju
\[ \text{Wenjun, Nalchik 2011. 21...e5}
\] 22...d4 xe2 23...b6+ e8 24...d5
\[ \text{e7 25...c7+ f8 26...f}xe7+ xe7
\] 27...a5 e5 28...e1 b6 29...e5
\[ \text{xe5 30...xe5 a7 31...d8+ g7}
\] 32...e8+ xe8 33...xe8 e6
\[ \text{34...g8+\#} \]

Although here Black has better chances of a draw, White still has an extra exchange and good winning chances;

A212) 20...e5!N This move was also analysed by Georgiev and Kolev in their book. There can follow: 21...d2
\[ \text{f}xe7 22...f}xe7 23...g4 f5
\] 24...xf5; or 24...xf5 f8 25...d1 e5
\[ \text{26...e1 f6 27...ef1 e5=}
\] A22) 20...d1 h3 21...g3 d6 22...e4
\[ \text{22...b6 c5\# 23...b2 c7\#}
\] 24...xd7 d8 25...xc5 xd1+ 26...xd1 xe5 27...f3 b8
\[ \text{28...d4=. 22...e8?!} \]

Here Black has two possibilities and in both cases, a draw results from correct play. However, White’s play is harder, as he is a piece

A11) 23...h3 24...xh3? 24...d5!
\[ \text{hxg2+ 25...g1 xf6 26...xd7 a1+ 27...g2 xd7 a5+ e8}
\] 29...c7+ f8 30...c5+ g8 31...e6
\[ \text{e6 32...f6+ g7 33...e3 c8}
\] 34...g3+ f8 35...a3+=, 24...d5+
\[ \text{25...g2 d6 26...f2?! e8 27...d4}
\] e6 28...c4? More tenacious was 28...d6. 28...b5 0–1 Bromberger–Areschenko, Germany Bundesliga 2010/11;

A12) 23...e8! is the best move in the position, given by Kiril Georgiev and Atanas Kolev in their book The
\[ \text{Sharpest Sicilian. After this move, the advantage goes over to Black, for example}
\] 24...h3 e6 25...b4 c5\#.

A2) 19...xd4 d8 and now:

A21) 20...e7 Aiming at the black king and at the same time, the most dangerous retreat for the white knight.

A211) An attempt to exchange queens is 20...c5
Chapter 1 — The Poisoned Pawn with $\text{d}2$

down. 22... $\text{c}5\text{N} 23. $\text{w}c3\text{ b}6 24. $\text{c}xb6 $\text{xb}6 25. $\text{w}c6 \text{b}8 26. $\text{e}7 $\text{d}4
27. $\text{xd}4 $\text{b}1+ 28. $\text{d}1 $\text{g}4 29. $\text{ex}d7+ $\text{xd}7 30. $\text{a}8+ $\text{c}7 31. $\text{w}a7+ =. 23. $\text{b}6 $\text{xe}4 24. $\text{w}xe4 $\text{w}c5 25. $\text{xa}8 $\text{xf}6 26. $\text{d}3 $\text{e}7
27. $\text{f}3\text{ h}5 28. $\text{w}e2+? 28. $\text{d}4!=.

A) 14. $\text{c}4\text{?!N} $\text{e}7! 14... $\text{dxc}4?? 15. $\text{b}5+ =. 15. $\text{xe}7 $\text{xe}7 16. $\text{xd}5 $\text{xe}5+ 17. $\text{e}2 $\text{c}6 18.0-0 0-0
19. $\text{f}4 $\text{e}7 20. $\text{be}1 $\text{g}5 21. $\text{h}4
$\text{hx}4 22. $\text{b}4 $\text{e}6 23. $\text{xe}6 $\text{xe}6 24. $\text{wb}7=;

B) 14. $\text{b}3 $\text{a}4\text{□} There are simply no other retreats.

B1) 15. $\text{e}6 $\text{xe}6 16. $\text{f}2 16. $\text{f}4\text{ g}5 17. $\text{w}f6 (17. $\text{w}e5 $\text{c}6 18. $\text{xc}6
$\text{g}8!\text{□}) 17... $\text{d}7 18. $\text{w}h8 0-0-0 19. $\text{d}3+ $\text{c}5 20. $\text{g}7 $\text{b}4 21. $\text{xe}6
\text{fx}e6 22. $\text{d}1 $\text{hx}4\text{□}. 16... $\text{d}7
17. $\text{e}2 $\text{d}6\text{□};

B2) Since the bishop will be hanging in the subsequent play, White has a good chance here to bring the bishop back: 15. $\text{f}2\text{?!N} $\text{c}6 16. $\text{e}6 16. $\text{xc}6
$\text{xc}6 17. $\text{e}2 $\text{c}5 18.0-0 0-0\text{□}. 16... $\text{xe}6 16... $\text{fx}e6 17. $\text{xc}6 $\text{xc}6 18. $\text{d}3 $\text{e}7 19. $\text{g}6+ $\text{d}7 20. $\text{c}3
$\text{f}6 21. $\text{c}5 $\text{e}7=. 17. $\text{xe}6 $\text{xe}6 18. $\text{d}3 0-0-0 19.0-0 $\text{d}6 20. $\text{xe}2
$\text{he}8 21. $\text{c}4 $\text{a}5 22. $\text{c}3 \text{d}4 23. $\text{cc}2
\text{c}5\text{□}

14... $\text{xe}6$

The dangerous white pawn needs to be eliminated, so it cannot cause Black trouble in the future. Thus, 14... $\text{e}7?!$
15. $\text{ex}f7+ $\text{xf}7 16. $\text{xe}7 $\text{xe}7+ 17. $\text{e}2\text{□}.

23... $\text{d}4 24. $\text{xc}5 $\text{xb}5 25. $\text{axb}5
\text{xc}5= 13. $\text{d}5 \text{ex}d5

14. $\text{e}6\text{?}$

14. $\text{e}6\text{?}$
It is interesting that the move 15.\texttt{exe6} has so far not been seen in practice, because 15.\texttt{txe6}, which has been played in all the games, does not give White anything clear. The game can continue:

A) 15...\texttt{c5!?} 16.\texttt{exe6} fxe6 17.\texttt{d3 0-0 18.\texttt{d1 e5 19.e1 e4 20.g3}}

The mate threat has to be met. With the following knight sacrifice, Black deflects the white rook, and after this, the b2-square is freed for the black queen: 20...\texttt{d7 21.xd7 b2 22.xe4 dxe4 23.b3+ xxb3 24.axb3 a5=}.

B) 15...\texttt{d7}

B1) 16.b5 The white knight needs the square b5 and for this, White does not even begrudge his bishop. Now:

B11) 16...\texttt{c5?! Black should take on b5 and sacrifice his queen: 16...axb5 17.xb5 c5 (17...b4 18.c7+}

\texttt{xf8 \texttt{xb4 xa2 20.xa8! a1+ 21.f2 xh1 22.b6} 18.xa3 xxb7 19.b5 a4 with some counterplay. 17.xe6 axb5 After Black’s inaccuracy on move 16, White has a good choice between two continuations:}

B111) 18.c7+ \texttt{f8}

19.d1!! a4 20.e1 g8 21.xb5 xa2 22.c3 a1+ 23.e2 e4+ 24.xe4 a6+ 25.c4 xb7 26.xc5 xc5 27.xd5 – White is slightly better, but objectively speaking, such positions are extremely difficult to win and are close to a draw;

B112) 18.xc5 xc5 19.e2+ f8 20.xd7 b4+ 21.d1! d4+ 22.c1 a1+ 23.d2 d4+ 24.d3 xh4 25.f1 f6 25...g5+

B12) 16...axb5 17.xb5

26.e1!! e8+ 27.f2 d4 28.g1! f6 29.xd4+ 26.c1 e8 27.xd5 g5+ 28.b2 xd5 29.xd5 f7 30.f3=}

B12) 16...axb5 17.xb5
Chapter I — The Poisoned Pawn with $8.\text{d}2$

17... $\text{e}7!!$ I had found this brilliant sacrifice and hoped to use it, but have not been able to play it. Black only gets two bishops for the queen, but he has a very strong initiative, as we shall see:

B121) 18.$\text{xe}7$ $\text{xe}7$ 19.$\text{c}7+$ $\text{f}8$
20.$\text{xa}8$ $\text{g}4+$ 21.$\text{f}2$ $\text{f}6+$ 22.$\text{g}3$
$\text{e}5+$ 23.$\text{xc}4$ 23.$\text{f}4$ $\text{c}3+$ 24.$\text{f}2$
$\text{xe}2+$ 25.$\text{g}1$ $\text{d}1+$ 26.$\text{f}2$ $\text{c}2+$
27.$\text{g}3$ $\text{c}3+=. 23 ... $\text{f}6+$

24.$\text{f}3$ $\text{h}5+\text{d} 25.$ $\text{e}3$ $\text{g}5+$
26.$\text{d}3$ $\text{g}6+$ 27.$\text{d}4$ $\text{g}4+-$

The white king has no way out of perpetual check, because the white queen stands badly and is vulnerable to a fork with the king.

B122) 18.$\text{xa}3$ $\text{hx}4+$ 19.$\text{g}3$ $\text{g}5$
B1221) 20.$\text{c}3$ 0-0! and now:
B12211) 21.0-0 $\text{d}4!$ 22.$\text{xd}4$ The strong pawn must be eliminated, even at the cost of the knight on a3, which will help the black pieces land a decisive blow at the white king: 22.$\text{f}3?$ $\text{e}3+--;$

22.$\text{b}4$ $\text{e}3+$ 23.$\text{g}2$ $\text{xa}3$ 24.$\text{xd}7$
$\text{c}3$ 25.$\text{xd}4$ $\text{xc}2+$ 26.$\text{f}3$ $\text{xd}4$
27.$\text{xd}4$ $\text{hx}2!!? (27 ... $\text{xa}2=)$ 28.$a4$
$\text{e}8!$. 22.$\text{xa}3$ 23.$\text{e}1$ $\text{f}6$ 24.$\text{c}5$
$\text{f}3+$ — the three minor pieces are stronger than the queen, and the weak white king settles it;

B12212) 21.$\text{b}5!$

21... $\text{h}3!! A very important moment. Black stops his opponent castling, but he has only two minor pieces for the queen, and so he must play actively and create threats. 22.$\text{f}2$ 22.$\text{c}7$ $\text{xa}2$
23.$\text{xd}5$ $\text{f}6$ 24.$\text{e}7+$ $\text{h}8$. 22.$\text{f}6$
23.$\text{e}1$ $\text{e}4+$ 24.$\text{xe}4$ $\text{dxe}4$ 25.$\text{d}6$
$\text{e}3+$ 26.$\text{f}3$ $\text{h}5!$ The black bishop needs g4 to promote the black pawn, and there is no better way than this.

27.$\text{b}5$ $\text{g}4+$ 28.$\text{g}2$ $\text{e}7+$

B1222) If White allows castling, as we know, he comes under a terrible attack, so he prevents it with 20.$\text{b}4!$
$\text{e}7$ 21.$\text{b}5$
B12221) 21...\textit{\&}xa3! \(\Rightarrow\) 22.0-0 \(\triangleleft\) e7
23.\textit{\&}e1 This move leads to play with all three results possible. If White is satisfied with a draw, he can play 23.\textit{\&}xd7+ \(\triangleleft\) xd7 24.\textit{\&}xd5 \(\triangleleft\) e6! 25.\textit{\&}b7+ \(\triangleleft\) d6 26.\textit{\&}b6+ \(\triangleleft\) e7 27.\textit{\&}b7+ \(\triangleleft\) d6 28.\textit{\&}d1+ \(\triangleleft\) e5 29.\textit{\&}e1+ \(\triangleleft\) d6=. 23...\textit{\&}hd8\(\Box\) 24.\textit{\&}c6 \textit{\&}ab8 25.\textit{\&}a7 \(\triangleleft\) d6 26.a4 \(\triangleleft\) b4\(\Rightarrow\) The battle between three minor pieces and the queen is always very interesting, especially when almost all the pieces are still on the board, both sides’ kings are weak and White has a very dangerous passed a-pawn;

B12222) 21...\textit{\&}xa3 22.0-0\(\Box\) \(\triangleleft\) c5+ 23.\textit{\&}h1 0-0\(\Box\) Black cannot stay pinned any longer and sacrifices two pieces for the white rook. White will have a choice of which bishop to take, together with the knight. In both cases, the position is equal. 24.\textit{\&}xd7 \(\triangleleft\) xd7 25.\textit{\&}xd7 25.\textit{\&}xc5 \textit{\&}xa2 26.\textit{\&}xd5 \(\triangleleft\) e6 27.\textit{\&}d3 \(\triangleleft\) c8=. 25...\textit{\&}xa2 26.c3 \(\triangleleft\) c2 27.\textit{\&}f3 \textit{\&}a8 28.\textit{\&}xf7+ \(\triangleleft\) h8=

B2) 16.\textit{\&}xe6 fxe6

This may not seem such an important moment, but the choice of square to develop the white bishop is extremely important, as is the subsequent check.

B21) 17.\textit{\&}e2 \(\triangleleft\) e7 Mate was threatened, and Black defends by freeing the d8-square for his king.

B211) 18.\textit{\&}h5+ \(\triangleleft\) d8 19.\textit{\&}xe7+ \textit{\&}xe7 20.\textit{\&}d4

Now the king has to wander again:

B212) 18.\textit{\&}xe7 \textit{\&}xe7 19.\textit{\&}d4 \textit{\&}a5+ 20.c3 \(\triangleleft\) d6 21.0-0 \textit{\&}hb8 22.\textit{\&}xd7+ \(\triangleleft\) xd7 23.\textit{\&}xg7+ \(\triangleleft\) d6 23...\textit{\&}c6? 24.c4!\(\pm\). 24.\textit{\&}g3+ \(\triangleleft\) e7=.

B22) 17.\textit{\&}d3 \(\triangleleft\) e7 18.\textit{\&}g6+ \(\triangleleft\) d8 19.\textit{\&}xe7+ \textit{\&}xe7 20.\textit{\&}d4! And again, 20...\textit{\&}d6! (the only difference with line B211 being that the white bishop is on g6 instead of h5) 21.\textit{\&}xg7 (21.\textit{\&}b6+ \textit{\&}xb6 22.\textit{\&}xb6+ \(\triangleleft\) d7 23.\textit{\&}b7+ \(\triangleleft\) d6 24.\textit{\&}b6+ \(\triangleleft\) e5 25.\textit{\&}c7+ \(\triangleleft\) f6 26.\textit{\&}f7+ \(\triangleleft\) e5 27.\textit{\&}c7+=. 21...\textit{\&}e3+ 22.\textit{\&}d1 \textit{\&}hd8\(\Box\)

Both sides’ kings are very weak and both are attacking; the chances are roughly equal. 23.\textit{\&}e8 \textit{\&}a7\(\Box\) 24.\textit{\&}b3 \textit{\&}e5 (24...\textit{\&}f4?!) 25.\textit{\&}xd7 \textit{\&}axd7 26.\textit{\&}b2!\(\rightarrow\) 25.\textit{\&}xe5+ \textit{\&}xe5 26.\textit{\&}b6+ \(\triangleleft\) e7 27.\textit{\&}e1 \(\triangleleft\) f6 28.\textit{\&}f1+
\( \text{e7 29.} \text{h5} \text{c8=} \) White has a bishop and play on both wings, so he should be better, but alas – the powerful black knight in the centre is no worse than the bishop.

**15...fxe6**

Now White needs to bring his last fighting units into play.

**16.\text{e2}**

**16.\text{d3} \text{e7} 17.\text{g6+ d8} 18.\text{xe7+ xc7} 19.0-0**

White has a mass of threats and ideas, such as \text{f7, a5+, d4} and the move c2-c4.

A) **19...b5N 20.c4!!** The lines must be opened! **20...bxc4 21.\text{f7 c5+} 22.\text{h1 d7\square} 23.\text{b7 e5\square}** Other moves lose at once, but the knight move aims to eliminate the white bishop. **24.\text{xg7 xg6} 25.\text{e1 f8} 26.\text{g6 c6} 27.\text{gg7 c3\square} 28.h4 d6\square 29.h5 d4**

**30.\text{g1!!}** An incredible move, after which Black turns out to be in zugzwang; his pieces are excellently placed, and any move worsens his position. The king move also has one other plus: it takes control of the square f1, and frees the white queen. The same king move would have followed after 29...a5, for example: **30...c2 31.\text{c3 d4} 32.\text{xc2 d3} 33.\text{c3+} 30...\text{f4\square} 31.\text{bd7+ e8} 32.\text{c7+ xc7} 33.\text{xe6+ b7} 34.\text{xc7+ xc7} 35.\text{c4+ b7} 36.\text{d5+ c7} 37.\text{xd4\pm}**

B) **19...d7!** One should not be mean, as Tartakower said. If Black does not give back the material, he can lose at once, so we listen to the great master’s advice.

B1) **20.\text{xb7 c5+ 21.h1**

**B11) 21...f8 22.xf8+ xf8 22...\text{xf8!} 23.a5+ e7 24.d3 c8\pm.**
23.\texttt{d3} After 23.\texttt{xg7?!N} Black can give back all the material and then exchange the last minor piece, with an equal position: 23...\texttt{b8D} 24.\texttt{c1} \texttt{xg6} 25.\texttt{g6} \texttt{b6} 26.\texttt{h6} \texttt{b1} 27.\texttt{g1} \texttt{xg1}+ 28.\texttt{xg1} \texttt{e7}=.

After 23.\texttt{c1} \texttt{xg6} 25.\texttt{h6} \texttt{b6} 26.\texttt{h6} \texttt{b1} 27.\texttt{g1} \texttt{xg1}+ 28.\texttt{xg1} \texttt{e7}=.

23...\texttt{e7}! 24.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{e7} 25.\texttt{xb8}+ \texttt{xb8} 27.\texttt{e5} \texttt{d7} 28.\texttt{xg7} \texttt{e5}= Bok-Schut, Enschede 2009;

B12) 21...\texttt{a7}! The white rook on b7 stands wonderfully, so it must be exchanged off or driven away.

B121) 22.\texttt{b3} \texttt{f8}! 23.\texttt{xf8}+ \texttt{xf8} 23...\texttt{xf8}?! 24.\texttt{a5}+ \texttt{c7} 25.\texttt{f3} \texttt{c5} 26.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{c6}+. 24.\texttt{b8}+ \texttt{e7} 25.\texttt{h5} \texttt{g6}

26.\texttt{h6} It is better to play 26.\texttt{f4}?!N and make a draw, than enter a slightly worse endgame, in which there have been two games, both of which ended in Black’s favour: 26...\texttt{d7} 27.\texttt{h8} \texttt{g6} 28.\texttt{h7}+ \texttt{e8} 29.\texttt{h8}+=.
23.\textit{\textbf{f7}}!N (23.\textit{\textbf{e1}} \textit{\textbf{d4}}? (23...\textit{\textbf{d6}}!\infty))
24.\textit{\textbf{e7}} e5 25.\textit{\textbf{c4}} \textit{\textbf{d8}} 26.\textit{\textbf{h7}} was seen in T. Kosintseva-Forsaa, Gibraltar 2011.
White has a large advantage) 23...\textit{\textbf{e7}}
24.\textit{\textbf{c3}} + \textit{\textbf{d8}} 25.\textit{\textbf{h5}}±. 23.\textit{\textbf{d3}}
23.g8 \textit{\textbf{f8}} 24.\textit{\textbf{g7}} is a draw. 23...\textit{\textbf{f8}}
24.\textit{\textbf{h7}} \textit{\textbf{c8}} 25.\textit{\textbf{a5}} + \textit{\textbf{c7}}

26.\textit{\textbf{h8}} \textit{\textbf{w}}xh8 27.\textit{\textbf{x}}b7 \textit{\textbf{f1}} + 28.\textit{\textbf{xf1}}
\textit{\textbf{c3}} 29.\textit{\textbf{xc7}} + \textit{\textbf{xc7}} 30.\textit{\textbf{xc7}} \textit{\textbf{xc7}}
31.\textit{\textbf{a6}}±. Black has the central pawns and the active king, but White has a bishop and two outside pawns, which I don't think Black can stop.

22) A better defence is 21...\textit{\textbf{c8}}! and now:

B22) 22.\textit{\textbf{xb7}} N Now the rooks decide to come in from the left flank as well, but this also fails to the strong move 22...\textit{\textbf{c7}}!, which offers the exchange of rooks and defends the seventh rank. 23.\textit{\textbf{b1}} If White exchanges rooks and tries to activate his queen, he runs into a counterattack from queen and knight, with which Black obtains perpetual check: 23.\textit{\textbf{xc7}} \textit{\textbf{xc7}}
24.\textit{\textbf{f4}} + \textit{\textbf{d8}} 25.\textit{\textbf{a4}} (25.\textit{\textbf{h4}} + \textit{\textbf{c7}}
26.\textit{\textbf{f4}} + \textit{\textbf{d8}} =) 25...\textit{\textbf{e5}}
26.\textit{\textbf{b7}} \textit{\textbf{c3}} 27.\textit{\textbf{h4}} \textit{\textbf{e1}} + 28.\textit{\textbf{h2}}
\textit{\textbf{f3}} + 29.\textit{\textbf{h3}} \textit{\textbf{g1}} + 30.\textit{\textbf{g4}} \textit{\textbf{e2}} +
31.\textit{\textbf{g3}} \textit{\textbf{e5}} + 32.\textit{\textbf{f2}} \textit{\textbf{h3}} + 33.\textit{\textbf{gxh3}}
\textit{\textbf{f8}} + 34.\textit{\textbf{xf7}} \textit{\textbf{f5}} =. 23...\textit{\textbf{e5}}
24.\textit{\textbf{b8}} + \textit{\textbf{c8}} 25.\textit{\textbf{xc8}} + \textit{\textbf{xc8}}
26.\textit{\textbf{xg7}} \textit{\textbf{f8}} 27.\textit{\textbf{e1}} White has established material equality and it seems he should have the advantage, but he has not managed to make luft for his king, and so his back rank is weak, which Black exploits, equalising the game.

27...\textit{\textbf{a5}} 28.\textit{\textbf{g1}} \textit{\textbf{c3}} 29.\textit{\textbf{b1}} \textit{\textbf{b4}} =
B3) Since the black king is in the centre and his rooks are not yet playing, while all White's pieces are in the battle, he must open lines, even at the cost of a further pawn sacrifice: 20.\textit{\textbf{c4}} N \textit{\textbf{f8}}
21.\textit{\textbf{x}}d5 \textit{\textbf{c5}} + 22.\textit{\textbf{h1}} \textit{\textbf{xf1}} +
23.\textit{\textbf{xf1}} \textit{\textbf{xd5}} 24.\textit{\textbf{b2}} \textit{\textbf{c8}}! 25.\textit{\textbf{g7}}

25...\textit{\textbf{c5}}! and Black is at least not worse, thanks to his centralised pieces.
16...\texttt{e7}

16...\texttt{c5}.

17.\texttt{h5+ d8} 18.\texttt{xe7+}

18.\texttt{f2 g5} 19.\texttt{e2 c3}+ 20.\texttt{f1 f8} 21.\texttt{f3 d7} 22.\texttt{xe6 c6?}

18...\texttt{xe7} 19.0-0 \texttt{d7}!

If 19...\texttt{b5}?

White sacrifices a third pawn and opens all the lines, for an attack which Black is not able to repulse: 20.\texttt{c4!N} This move wins the game. Or also 20.\texttt{f7 c5}+ 21.\texttt{h1 d7} 22.\texttt{c4}!. 20...\texttt{c5}+ 20...\texttt{bxc4} 21.\texttt{f7 c5}+ 22.\texttt{h1 d7} 23.\texttt{b7 e5} 24.\texttt{xe7+}. 21.\texttt{h1 bxc4} 22.\texttt{f7 d7} 23.\texttt{b7 e5} 24.\texttt{xe7 d3} 25.g3 \texttt{f8} (25...\texttt{c8} 26.\texttt{e2}) and now 26.\texttt{f3}!!+-.

22.\texttt{f7}!

20.\texttt{xb7}?! \texttt{c5}+ 21.\texttt{h1 a7} 22.\texttt{bb1 c7} 23.\texttt{f1 c6} 24.c4 d4.

20...\texttt{c5}+ 21.\texttt{h1 f8}!

Again, on 21...\texttt{b5}? White has 22.\texttt{c4!N} 22.\texttt{g7 c8} 23.\texttt{a5+ c7} 24.\texttt{x6 axc2} 25.\texttt{a8+ c8} 26.\texttt{a5+ c7} 27.\texttt{a8+ c8} 28.\texttt{a5+ c7} \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} Carlsson-Andriasyan, Dubai 2011. I was glad to draw the game, because I had mixed up my analysis, and could have ended up in a bad position, but my opponent missed his chance. 22...\texttt{f8} 22...\texttt{bxc4} 23.\texttt{b7+}. 23.\texttt{xf8+ \texttt{xf8} 24.cxd5 \texttt{c8} 25.dxe6+ \texttt{e7} 26.\texttt{d1 wxh5} 27.\texttt{d6+ e8} 28.e7 \texttt{xd1+ 29.\texttt{e1 xe7 30.h3=}.}

22.\texttt{g7}

On 22...\texttt{f6}?! White turns out to have 23.\texttt{g8+! 23.g3?! c8 24.\texttt{xb7 c7} 25.\texttt{xc7 c7} 26.h3 \texttt{d6} with an equal position, Wang Hao-Sutovsky, Ningbo Wch-tt 2011. 23...\texttt{f8} 23...\texttt{f8}
In this chapter, we have examined the move 8.\textit{d2}, which is one of the two main continuations. It is the main continuation nowadays, and many top players have tried to find some advantage in this line, as we can see from the great number of games where it is employed. In the main, White retains the initiative, but he should not underestimate Black's counterchances, since in such positions, play assumes a double-edged character, which allows Black the possibility of taking over the initiative.

I would advise players who play the black side of this variation to go over the lines regularly and follow the latest games. One must also be up to date when playing such sharp lines!
Chapter 2

The Poisoned Pawn with 8. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}}_3 \)

1. e4 c5 2. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_3 \) d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}} \texttt{d4} \) \( \texttt{f6} \) 5. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}}_3 \) a6 6. \( \texttt{g} \texttt{5} \) e6 7. f4 \( \texttt{b} \texttt{6} \) 8. \( \texttt{d}_3 \)

After the second possibility 8. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}}_3 \), there is also a variation with 8... \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}} \texttt{xb2} \) 9. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{r}}} \texttt{bl} \) \( \texttt{a} \texttt{3} \), but now White must play 10.f5, since the alternative 10.e5 makes no sense, since after 10...dxe5 11.fxe5 \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}} \texttt{d7} \), White does not have the follow-up 12.\( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}} \texttt{4} \). White has given up a pawn for the initiative, and will try to increase it. Sometimes he even goes for further material sacrifices, giving a second pawn, a third, and sometimes even a piece. We will also show you how to defend such attempts correctly as Black, how to neutralise the initiative, sometimes by returning the pawn, and if possible himself trying to take the initiative, since White's king is also in the centre.

1. e4 c5 2. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_3 \) d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}} \texttt{d4} \) \( \texttt{f6} \) 5. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}}_3 \) a6 6. \( \texttt{g} \texttt{5} \) e6 7. f4 \( \texttt{b} \texttt{6} \) 8. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}}_3 \) \( \texttt{xb2} \) 9. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{r}}} \texttt{bl} \) \( \texttt{a} \texttt{3} \) 10.f5

If White does not want to attack at once, then there is only one way to continue developing his pieces, but unfortunately, in this case Black also finishes his development, and the queen on d3 can come under attack from the knight at c5: 10.\( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}} \texttt{2} \)?! \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}} \texttt{d7} \) 11.0-0 \( \texttt{e} \texttt{7} \) 12. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}} \texttt{1} \) \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}}_5 \) 13. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}} \texttt{3} \) b5 14. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{b} \texttt{7} \) 15. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}} \texttt{8} \) 16. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}} \texttt{1} \) b4 17. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}} \texttt{5} \) exd5 18. exd5 \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}} \texttt{8} \) 19. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}} \texttt{6} \)? (he had to play 19. \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}} \texttt{5} \) with compensation, whereas after the text, he has nothing, and Black simply has an extra piece) 19... \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}} \texttt{8} \) Van der Tuuk-Timman, Utrecht 1986.

As noted above, the as yet untried 10.e5? is ineffective here, due to 10...dxe5 11.fxe5 \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}} \texttt{d7} \).

10... \( \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}} \texttt{7} \)

A) In the encounter Gashimov-Grischuk (see below), the latter chose
10...\(\mathcal{A}e7\), but I personally prefer another move, which I have played myself, and after which, frankly, I do not see any problems for Black: 10...\(\mathcal{W}a5\)!

A1) 11.\(\mathcal{A}xf6\) \(gx\!f\!6\) 12.\(\mathcal{W}c4\) 12.\(\mathcal{W}\!xe6\) \(fxe6\) 13.\(\mathcal{W}c4\) \(\mathcal{A}c6\) 14.\(\mathcal{A}xc6\) \(bxc6\) 15.\(\mathcal{W}xc6+\) \(\mathcal{A}d8\). White is pinned and all his dark squares are weak, whilst Black has two strong bishops. His position is preferable.

A21) 11...\(\mathcal{A}xe4\) 12.\(\mathcal{W}xe4\) \(\mathcal{W}xc3+\) 13.\(\mathcal{A}d2\) \(d5\) 14.\(\mathcal{W}f4\) \(\mathcal{A}d6\) 15.\(\mathcal{W}xd6\) \(\mathcal{W}xd4\) 16.\(\mathcal{Ex}\!f\!6\)\(+-\).

A22) 11...\(\mathcal{A}c6\) 12.\(\mathcal{A}xc6\) It favours White to exchange on \(c6\), so that after castling, Black cannot himself exchange on \(d4\), bringing the white queen to the same diagonal as the king, with chances of a queen exchange. If 12.0-0?! \(\mathcal{A}xd4\) 13.\(\mathcal{W}xd4\) \(\mathcal{A}e7\) 13...\(\mathcal{W}c5\) 14.\(\mathcal{W}xc5\) dxc5 15.\(\mathcal{A}xf6\) \(gx\!f\!6\) 16.\(\mathcal{Ex}\!f\!6\) \(fxe6\) 17.\(\mathcal{A}a4\)\(+=\) 14.\(\mathcal{A}e3\) 0-0 15.\(\mathcal{W}d2\) \(b5\) 16.\(\mathcal{A}d5\) \(\mathcal{W}d8\) 17.\(\mathcal{Ex}\!f\!6\) \(fxe6\) 18.\(\mathcal{A}xe7+\) \(\mathcal{W}xe7\)\(=\). 12...\(\mathcal{B}xc6\) 13.0-0 13.\(\mathcal{A}d2\) \(\mathcal{W}c7\) 14.0-0 \(\mathcal{X}\!f\!5\) 15.\(\mathcal{A}h1\) \(\mathcal{A}e7\) 16.\(\mathcal{Ex}\!f\!5\) 0-0 17.\(\mathcal{W}g3\) \(\mathcal{E}8\) 18.\(\mathcal{A}d3\) \(\mathcal{W}d8\). 13...\(\mathcal{A}e7\) 14.\(\mathcal{A}e3\) 14.\(\mathcal{A}d2\) \(\mathcal{W}d8\) 15.\(\mathcal{A}a4\) \(\mathcal{Ex}\!f\!5\) 16.\(\mathcal{Ex}\!f\!5\) 0-0\(=\). Now if Black wants a draw, he can simply castle 14...0-0, when we get a perpetual attack on the queen with 15.\(\mathcal{A}b6\) \(\mathcal{W}e5\) 16.\(\mathcal{A}d4\) \(\mathcal{A}a5\)\(=\). Instead, Black himself avoids this and plays a move which stirs up the battle anew:

A23 11...\(\mathcal{A}bd7\) 12.0-0 and now:

A231) 12...\(\mathcal{A}c5\) 13.\(\mathcal{W}e3\) \(\mathcal{A}e7\) 14.\(\mathcal{W}xe6\) \(\mathcal{A}xe6\) 14...\(\mathcal{A}xe6\)\(?\) 15.\(\mathcal{A}xf6\) \(\mathcal{A}xf6\).

16.\(\mathcal{A}xf6\)! The strong bishop needs to be eliminated, and the black pawn formation spoiled, after which the white
Knight jumps to d5, and he will have a large advantage. 16...gxf6 17.\(\text{\textit{d5}}\) \(\text{\textit{w5}}\) c5. 18.\(\text{\textit{xf6}}\) \(\text{\textit{f7}}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{c3}}\) ±. 15.\(\text{\textit{d5}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd5}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{exd5}}\) 0-0 17.\(\text{\textit{f5}}\) ±

A232) 12...\(\text{\textit{e5}}\)! Now it is clear that the battle is taking place on the kingside and the knight comes to the defence of the king. 13.\(\text{\textit{h3}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\;\)

A2321) 14.\(\text{\textit{fxe6}}\) \(\text{\textit{c5}}\)! 15.\(\text{\textit{e3}}\) \(\text{\textit{fxe6}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{xf6}}\) With 16.\(\text{\textit{a4}}\) \(\text{\textit{g4}}\)± 17.\(\text{\textit{xc5}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe3}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{xe3}}\) dxc5 19.\(\text{\textit{b3}}\) b6 20.\(\text{\textit{d2}}\) White can probably equalise.

16...\(\text{\textit{xf6}}\)

This time the sacrifice does not win, but helps to stabilise the position. 17.\(\text{\textit{xf6}}\) gxf6 18.\(\text{\textit{a4}}\) \(\text{\textit{c7}}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{b6}}\) \(\text{\textit{b8}}\) 20.\(\text{\textit{h5}}\) \(\text{\textit{f7}}\) 21.\(\text{\textit{h6}}\) 21.\(\text{\textit{xc8}}\) \(\text{\textit{xc8}}\) 22.\(\text{\textit{g4}}\) \(\text{\textit{d8}}\) 23.\(\text{\textit{h5}}\) \(\text{\textit{f7}}\) 24.\(\text{\textit{g4}}\) \(\text{\textit{d8}}\); or 23...\(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 24.\(\text{\textit{h6}}\) \(\text{\textit{f7}}\) 25.\(\text{\textit{xf7}}\) \(\text{\textit{xf7}}\) 26.\(\text{\textit{f1}}\) \(\text{\textit{d8}}\) 27.\(\text{\textit{h3}}\) \(\text{\textit{c7}}\) 28.\(\text{\textit{h5}}\) \(\text{\textit{f8}}\) 29.\(\text{\textit{h6}}\) ± All roads lead to Rome, and in this case, all variations lead to a draw! 21...\(\text{\textit{c5}}\) 22.\(\text{\textit{xf6}}\) 0-0

23.\(\text{\textit{d5}}\) The saving sacrifice, after which White forces perpetual check. 23...\(\text{\textit{exd5}}\) 24.\(\text{\textit{xf7}}\) e7 25.\(\text{\textit{g5}}\) \(\text{\textit{xf7}}\) 26.\(\text{\textit{d8}}\) \(\text{\textit{g7}}\) 27.\(\text{\textit{g5}}\)=; A2322) 14.\(\text{\textit{h1}}\) 0-0 15.\(\text{\textit{fxe6}}\) Not 15.\(\text{\textit{f4}}\)?

A2323) 14.\(\text{\textit{b3}}\)! Another white piece goes to the kingside, to take part in the attack. Admittedly, after this move, Black obtains the advantage with accurate defence, but he will not survive the position without good preparation. 14...0-0! 15.\(\text{\textit{h1}}\) \(\text{\textit{f8}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{exe6}}\) \(\text{\textit{h8}}\)

Back to the position after 10...\(\text{\textit{a5}}\).

A3) 11.\(\text{\textit{c4}}\) \(\text{\textit{bd7}}\) 11...\(\text{\textit{bd8}}\) 12.\(\text{\textit{d2}}\) \(\text{\textit{c5}}\) 13.\(\text{\textit{a4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xc4}}\) 14.\(\text{\textit{xc4}}\) \(\text{\textit{c6}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{fxe6}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{a5}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{b6}}\) \(\text{\textit{fxe6}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{xa8}}\) \(\text{\textit{xc2}}\)+ 19.\(\text{\textit{e2}}\) b5 20.\(\text{\textit{d3}}\) \(\text{\textit{d4}}\) + 21.\(\text{\textit{e3}}\) \(\text{\textit{c6}}\) 22.\(\text{\textit{c3}}\) \(\text{\textit{b7}}\) 23.\(\text{\textit{b6}}\) \(\text{\textit{d8}}\) 24.\(\text{\textit{xc1}}\) Black is an exchange down, but he has two pawns and the black knight on b6 does not have any moves. For this reason, Black has the advantage, Jadoul-Nunn, Brussels 1985. 12.\(\text{\textit{fxe6}}\) \(\text{\textit{xg5}}\) 13.\(\text{\textit{exf7}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 14.\(\text{\textit{e6}}\) \(\text{\textit{d8}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{e8}}\) + 16.\(\text{\textit{e6}}\)+ \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{fxe8}}\) \(\text{\textit{+e8}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{xg5}}\) \(\text{\textit{xa7}}\) 18...\(\text{\textit{c5}}\)±N. During the game, I could not remember which of these two moves I considered strongest,
but I was happy that there is not a great
difference, and even in the event of
choosing the less strong move, the
position is equal. 19...c4 c5
19...e7. 20.e6 xe6 21.xe6 d7
22.d4 c6 23.xc6 bxc6 24.b8
b7 25.e8 d7 Because this was a
club event, and a draw on my board
suited us at that moment, I decide to
force the draw, but for the sake of com­
pleteness, I should point out that even if
we had continued, the position is abso­
lutely equal, for example: 25...g6
26.0-0 g7 27.f7+ b6 28.a4+ b5 29.xg7 xg7 30.xh8 xa4
31.f2=. 26.b8 c7 with a draw,
Gao Rui-Andriasyan, China tt 2012.
A4) 11.d2 This is the principled
and strongest reply to my favourite
move 10...a5.

[Diagram]

A4) 11...c7 12.e2 fxe6 fxe6
13.e2 c6 transposes. 12...c6
13.fxe6 13.xc6 bxc6 14.0-0 exf5
This idea has been seen several times in
these lines; the point is not to give
White the choice of when to exchange
on e6, opening the f-file. Now if White
replies 15.exf5, then the f-file remains
closed, and instead the e-file is opened.
But that shouldn’t be a problem since
Black has already castled. 15.e3
(15.exf5 d5=; 15.h1 e7 16.exf5
0-0 17.g3 h8 18.d3 e8=)

We have already seen what happens af­
ter the recapture with the pawn on c6.
In all cases Black is OK, but even so, if
one looks at it from a purely practical
viewpoint, it is very hard for Black to
play those lines if he does not have
good analysis checked sufficiently
deeply with a strong computer:
A41) 14..xc6 15.0-0 15.e5 dxe5
transposes. 15...e7 16.e5 dxe5
17.h3 With 17.e4! White has
compensation for the pawn, but it is not
more than enough to equalise, since
Black can play the position quietly:
17...0-0 18.xf6+ xf6 19.e4 d7
20.h4 e8 21.h5 d6 22.e3 d5
23.g4 e4 24.b4 c5 25.c4 xh5
26.xe6+ xh8 27.e4—Black has an
extra pawn and every chance of win­
ing, Goh Weiming-Lu Yijie, Kuala
Lumpur Open 2010. 17...0-0 18.d3
a5 19.e4 e4 20.e4 and now:
A411) Black has two extra pawns,
but for the moment, he has some pieces
undeveloped, and needs to think about
how to bring them into play as quickly
as possible, even if this is at the cost of a
pawn: 20.g6 21.e3 and now:
21..f5 In case of 21.a6 22.xf8+ xf8
23.xe6+ g7 24.xc6 xc6

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25. \( \text{Bxc6 b4} \), Black's position is slightly more pleasant, but chances are equal. 22. \( g4 \) After 22. \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{exf5} \) 23. \( \text{Bb6} \) \( \text{wxd6} \) 24. \( \text{Bfd1} \) \( \text{We6} \) Black cannot be worse, because his pawn line on the e- and f-files is very strong. But Black has one problem: how to develop the light-squared bishop, and then bring the rook into play. 22... \( \text{Bxf1} + \) 23. \( \text{Bxf1} \)

It is interesting that the computer assesses the position as absolutely equal, and gives the same assessment after almost every move. In my opinion, White is slightly better here, because of his connected passed pawns and more active pieces;

A4112) 20... \( \text{Bxf1} + \) 21. \( \text{Bxf1} \) and now:

A41121) 21... \( g6 \) 22. \( \text{Bg4} \) \( \text{Kh5} + ! \) 22... \( \text{Bb8} \) 23. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{Bd7} \) 24. \( \text{Be3} \) \( \text{Bb4} \) 25. \( \text{h5} \)→ 23. \( \text{Bh1} \) and now:

A411211) 23... \( \text{Bb8} \) Black tries to exploit the weakness of White's back rank, but this fails, because White starts an attack on the king with the move \( h4 \), which at the same time makes luft for the king. 24. \( h4 \) \( \text{g7} \square 25. \text{h5} \) \( \text{g5} \square 26. \text{Bxc6} \) 26. \( \text{Bxg5} \) \( \text{Bb4} \)

23... \( \text{Ba6} \) If 23... \( \text{Bd6} \) 24. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{Bb8} \) 25. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{c5} \) 24. \( \text{Bf7} ! \) 24. \( \text{Bxg6} \) \( \text{hxg6} \) 25. \( \text{Bh6} \) \( \text{Bg5} \) 26. \( \text{Bxg6} + \text{g7} \) 27. \( \text{Bxe6} + \text{h8} \) 28. \( \text{Bf3} \) \( \text{Bxe3} + \) 29. \( \text{Bxe3} \) \( \text{Ba7} \) 30. \( \text{Bh6} + \text{g8} \) 31. \( \text{Bg6} + \text{g7} \) 32. \( \text{Bxc6} \) \( \text{Bb7} \) 33. \( \text{Bxe6} + \text{f7} \) 34. \( \text{Bxe5} \) \( \text{Bd5} \)→ 24. \( \text{Bxf7} \) 25. \( \text{Bxh7} + \text{e8} \) 26. \( \text{Bg8} + \text{d7} \) 27. \( \text{Bxa8} \) \( \text{Bc4} \) 28. \( \text{Bxg6} \) \( \text{Bd8} \square \) Black should cut off the queen's path to the kingside, because if the white queen gets there, his position will be winning. If 28... \( \text{Bxa2} \) 29. \( \text{Bxe8} + \text{Bd6} \) 30. \( \text{Bxe6} + \) \( \text{g5} \)

27. \( \text{c4} \) A nice decoy. 27... \( \text{Bxc4} \) (it is a shame that 27... \( \text{Bxe7} \) does not work, because of the cosmic reply 28. \( \text{Bg6} ! \) and the subsequent variation 28... \( \text{hxg6} \) 29. \( \text{Bxe7} \) \( \text{Bxe7} \) 30. \( \text{Bxg6} + \text{h8} \) 31. \( \text{Bh6} + \text{Bg8} \) 32. \( \text{Bf6} + \) \( \text{g4} \) 28. \( \text{Bh7} \) 29. \( \text{Bxh7} \) \( \text{Bxh7} \) 29. \( \text{Bxg4} \) \( \text{Bxh5} + \) 30. \( \text{Bh4} \) \( \text{Bxh4} + \) 31. \( \text{Bh4} \) \( \text{Bd4} \) 26. \( \text{Bd6} \) 27. \( \text{Bxa5} \) \( \text{e4} \) 28. \( \text{Bd2} \); A411212) 23... \( \text{Bg7} \) ! 24. \( \text{Bxc6} \) \( \text{Bb8} \) 25. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 26. \( \text{e4} ! \) White is a pawn down, but his position is clearly better, on account of his strong and active pieces, the weak black king and all his hanging pawns, plus White's passed
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...c-pawn, which will soon start to advance.

A41122) 21...\( \mathcal{d} \)c5+ 22.\( \mathcal{h} \)h1 \( \mathcal{g} \)6\# 23.\( \mathcal{w} \)g4! In this position, the queen stands very well on g4, where it helps the advance of the white h-pawn, and also attacks the black pawns at e6 and g6, tying down the opponent's pieces.

23...\( \mathcal{w} \)g7 24.\( \mathcal{x} \)c6 \( \mathcal{a} \)a7 24...\( \mathcal{b} \)b8 25.\( \mathcal{e} \)xe5±.

23...\( \mathcal{g} \)g7 22.\( \mathcal{h} \)h1 \( \mathcal{f} \)f8\# 23.\( \mathcal{g} \)g7+ \( \mathcal{e} \)e7 24.\( \mathcal{w} \)xe5±. 17.\( \mathcal{e} \)e3 \( \mathcal{w} \)xe5 18.\( \mathcal{d} \)d4 \( \mathcal{g} \)g5

19.\( \mathcal{h} \)xf6 As is well known, the knight is the king's best defender. When one starts an attack, one should always neutralise the enemy knights, so as to strengthen the attack as much as possible.

A4121) 19...\( \mathcal{g} \)xf6? 20.\( \mathcal{e} \)e4 \( \mathcal{g} \)g6\# 20...\( \mathcal{w} \)f5?? 21.\( \mathcal{f} \)f1+++. 21.\( \mathcal{h} \)xf6 \( \mathcal{d} \)d5\# 21...\( \mathcal{g} \)g8? 22.\( \mathcal{h} \)h5 \( \mathcal{w} \)xh5 23.\( \mathcal{x} \)xe7 \( \mathcal{w} \)g6 (23...\( \mathcal{g} \)g6 24.\( \mathcal{g} \)g5++) 24.\( \mathcal{g} \)g5 \( \mathcal{d} \)d5 25.\( \mathcal{a} \)a3 \( \mathcal{g} \)g7 26.\( \mathcal{f} \)f6+ \( \mathcal{f} \)f7 27.\( \mathcal{f} \)f1++. 22.\( \mathcal{x} \)xe7 \( \mathcal{w} \)xe4\# 23.\( \mathcal{a} \)a3

16.e5! Without the sacrifice of the e-pawn, White's preceding moves make no sense. 16...\( \mathcal{w} \)c5+ 16...\( \mathcal{d} \)xe5? 17.\( \mathcal{h} \)xf6 White's beautiful sacrifices destroy the enemy bastions and lead to a clear advantage. 17...\( \mathcal{x} \)xf6\# 18.\( \mathcal{h} \)h5+ \( \mathcal{g} \)6 19.\( \mathcal{g} \)g6+ \( \mathcal{h} \)xg6 20.\( \mathcal{w} \)xg6+ \( \mathcal{d} \)d7\# (20...\( \mathcal{e} \)e7?? 21.\( \mathcal{e} \)e4++) 21.\( \mathcal{w} \)xf6

23...\( \mathcal{e} \)e5\# 23...\( \mathcal{w} \)xe2 24.\( \mathcal{g} \)g5!! \( \mathcal{d} \)d7 25.\( \mathcal{w} \)e7+ \( \mathcal{c} \)c6 26.\( \mathcal{f} \)f4!!++. 24.\( \mathcal{h} \)h4! \( \mathcal{w} \)d4+\# 25.\( \mathcal{f} \)f2 \( \mathcal{e} \)e5\# 26.\( \mathcal{g} \)g3 \( \mathcal{d} \)d4+ Or 26...\( \mathcal{g} \)g5 27.\( \mathcal{b} \)b4±. 27.\( \mathcal{h} \)h1++; A4122) 19...\( \mathcal{x} \)xf6! 20.\( \mathcal{x} \)xf6 \( \mathcal{x} \)xf6 20...\( \mathcal{x} \)xf6?! 21.\( \mathcal{e} \)e4 \( \mathcal{w} \)e5 22.\( \mathcal{d} \)d6+ \( \mathcal{f} \)f8 23.\( \mathcal{c} \)c4 \( \mathcal{c} \)c5+ 24.\( \mathcal{h} \)h1 \( \mathcal{b} \)b5 25.\( \mathcal{f} \)f3 \( \mathcal{g} \)g7 26.\( \mathcal{x} \)xa8 (26.\( \mathcal{g} \)g3+ \( \mathcal{f} \)f8

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27. \textit{\texttt{f3}} \textit{\texttt{g7} =)} 26...\textit{\texttt{bxc4}} 27. \textit{\texttt{f3}} h5 28. \textit{\texttt{g3}}+ \textit{\texttt{h7} \infty}. One does not see such a position every day: the players have made 28 moves, only three pieces remain on the board (excluding pawns), and two of Black’s three pieces have not moved. But, as they say, to return to our mutton: Black has an extra pawn, but White’s pieces are more active and he has sufficient compensation.

\textbf{21.} \textit{\texttt{e4}} \textit{\texttt{e5}} \square 22. \textit{\texttt{d6}}+ \textit{\texttt{e7}} \square At first glance, Black should win, as he stands excellently in material terms, but he has the problem that his king is in the centre and all his pieces at home.

\textit{\texttt{d1}} 23. \textit{\texttt{xb7}} \textit{\texttt{xb7}} 24. \textit{\texttt{xb7}}+ \textit{\texttt{f8}} 25. \textit{\texttt{d7}} \textit{\texttt{a1} +} 26. \textit{\texttt{f1}} \textit{\texttt{f6}} 27. \textit{\texttt{d6}}+ \textit{\texttt{g8}} 28. \textit{\texttt{c4}} \textit{\texttt{a1} +} 29. \textit{\texttt{f1} =}. 23...\textit{\texttt{b5}} 24. \textit{\texttt{a3}} \textit{\texttt{xe2}} 25. \textit{\texttt{xc8+}} \textit{\texttt{f6}} \square Not one step back! This is the only move, which forces White to take the draw. 26. \textit{\texttt{c3}}+ \textit{\texttt{g6}} 27. \textit{\texttt{e1}} \textit{\texttt{xe1} +} 28. \textit{\texttt{xe1}} \textit{\texttt{hxc8}} 29. \textit{\texttt{xe6+}} \textit{\texttt{g5} =}.

\textbf{A42) 11...e5??N}

\textbf{A421) 12. \textit{\texttt{d5}} \textit{\texttt{xa2}} 13. \textit{\texttt{c3}} \textit{\texttt{a5}} 14. \textit{\texttt{d5}} \textit{\texttt{d8}?!} This is what Black plays if he wishes to avoid a draw and to continue the battle (14...\textit{\texttt{xa2}} 15. \textit{\texttt{c3}} \textit{\texttt{a5} =});

\textbf{A422) 12. \textit{\texttt{b3}} \textit{\texttt{c7}} and now:}

\textbf{A4221) 13. \textit{\texttt{e2}} b6 14. g4 h6 15. h4 A battle is taking place for the d5-square, and both sides are in a decisive mood. White’s idea is very simple: he wants to drive the knight from f6 with his pawns but he has a problem having to spend a tempo defending the rook on h1, and Black exploits this to create counterplay on the queenside. 15...\textit{\texttt{b7}} and now:

\textbf{A42211) 16. \textit{\texttt{f3}} \textit{\texttt{c6}}!} In the Najdorf in general, the knight stands very well on d7, but of course there are exceptions. Here Black threatens to bring the knight to b4, attacking the queen and pawn, and also continuing the fight for d5. 17. g5 White goes va-banque, as he has no time for moves such as a2-a3. He must go forward without taking a step back; for example 17.a3 \textit{\texttt{e7}!} 18. g5 \textit{\texttt{hxg5}} 19. \textit{\texttt{hxg5}} \textit{\texttt{b4+}} 20. \textit{\texttt{b1}} \textit{\texttt{d7}}. 17...\textit{\texttt{b4}!} 18. \textit{\texttt{e2}} \textit{\texttt{hxg5}} 19. \textit{\texttt{hxg5}} \textit{\texttt{c1+}} 20. \textit{\texttt{f1}} \textit{\texttt{d7}} 21. \textit{\texttt{b2}}

\textbf{21...a5!!} A very strong computer move. A human player’s hand would not weaken the light squares in his own camp in this way. But the main thing is to free a6 for the knight and bishop. 22. a3 \textit{\texttt{ca6}} 23. g6 \textit{\texttt{fxg6}} 24. \textit{\texttt{fxg6}} \textit{\texttt{c7}} Black has an extra pawn and his king is not weaker than White’s. The position is very interesting, reminding one of Fischer’s play!;

\textbf{A42212) 16.0-0 \textit{\texttt{c6}} 17. \textit{\texttt{f3}} 17. g5? \textit{\texttt{hgx5}} 18. \textit{\texttt{hxg5}} \textit{\texttt{exe4}} 19. \textit{\texttt{f3}} d5 20. \textit{\texttt{fe1}} \textit{\texttt{h4}! +}.

\begin{capacity_tracker}
\textbf{17...\textit{\texttt{e7}} 18. \textit{\texttt{f2}}}
\end{capacity_tracker}
18.g5 hxg5 19.hxg5 ♘h7! 20.g6 ♘f6!! 18...♗bd7 19.g5

19...♘g8 The idea is simple: to continue the fight for the square d5 by bringing the knight to e7, which the bishop will free by moving to d8. Black will then be fine. 20.♗g2 After 20.♗d5 hxg5 21.hxg5 ♘c8 22.♗g2 ♘d8! 23.♗g3 ♘e7= Black should gradually realise his advantage. 20...hxg5 21.hxg5 ♘d8!= Black just has an extra pawn and he should start exchanging pieces, after which his advantage will be obvious.

A42 13.g4! is a strong attacking move. There is really no time for quiet moves such as ♘e2 or ♘g1, White must immediately start the battle for the d5-square, and every tempo is precious. 13...b5 13...h6 14.♗g2 ♘e7 15.h4 ♘c6 16.g5 ♘b4 17.♗e2 hxg5 18.hxg5 ♘xh1+ 19.♘xh1 ♘d7 20.♗c1 ♘b6 21.a3 ♘c6 22.♗d5 ♘xd5 23.exd5 ♘a7 24.♗e4 ♘d7 25.c4. 14.g5

14...♗b4! 15.♗xf6 ♘xc3 16.♗xc3 and now 16...g6! 17.♗a5 ♘c6 18.♗c4 ♘b7 Black is fine, whilst White is less so, since all his pawns are hanging.

B) 10...♗c6 Black obliges White to force matters. 11.fx e6 fxe6 12.♗xc6 bxc6

B1) Now White can develop quietly here, or demolish Black’s structure right away with a second pawn sacrifice: 13.e5 dxe5 14.♗xf6 gxf6 15.♗e2 ♘e7 16.♗h5+ ♗f8 17.0-0. This transposes to a line thoroughly examined below (page 52, line B21):

B2) 13.♗e2 The idea of this is to exploit the fact that Black’s pieces still stand on their original squares and there is also an interesting tactical motif: the bishop check on h5.

B21) 13...♗e7 14.♗h5+

B211) 14...g6? If Black takes on h5 with the knight, then he reaches a bad endgame, but the text fails to a tactical blow, that gives White the advantage:
15. e5! dxe5 15... \(d5 \) 16. \(b3 \pm \).
16. \(b3 \) e4 17. \(d4?! \) 17. \(h3! \pm .
17... \(d6 \) In this game, Black did not find the most tenacious defence and lost at once. It was necessary to seek drawing chances in an inferior endgame with 17... \(c5! \) 18. \(xf6 \) \(f8 \)
19. \(xc5 \) \(xc5 \) 20. \(xe4 \) gxh5 21. \(f1 \) and White’s advantage isn’t that big.
18. \(xf6 \) 0-0 19. \(e2 \) \(xf6 \) 20. \(xd6 \)
(B212) 14. \(xh5 \) 15. \(xe7 \) \(f4 \)
16. \(d4! \) Looking at the games which have reached this position, it is obvious that the only hope of an advantage is the text, after which we reach a very interesting endgame, whereas after the move \(g3 \), Black saves himself tactically: 16. \(g3 \) e5! 17. \(d1 \) \(g4 \)
18. \(xd6 \) \(a5 \) 19. \(d2 \) (19.0-0 \(xd1 \) 20. \(g5 \) \(a7\+-) 19... \(d8 \)
20. \(h3 \) \(xd6 \) Black cannot castle, as his bishop is hanging, whilst he cannot move the bishop away, because he loses the g7-pawn and with it, the game. 21. \(xd6 \) \(a3 \) (the point of Black’s play. Now White must part with the exchange, after which chances are equal) 22. \(xg4 \) \(xd6 \)
23. \(xg7! \) (23. \(c8+ \) \(f7 \) 24. \(xh8 \)
\(d4 \) 25. \(e2 \) \(e3 \) 26. \(d1 \) \(xe2 \)
27. \(f1+ \) \(f4 \) 28. \(e1 \) \(d4 \) 29. \(c1 \)
\(a1\+=) 23... \(f8 \) 24. \(f1 \) \(d4 \)
25. \(f3 \) \(d3 \) 26. \(xd3 \) \(xc3 \)+
27. \(e2 \) \(b2 \) 28. \(e1 \) \(c3 \+.
16... \(e5 \) 17. \(xe5 \) \(c1 \+) This move is probably stronger than 17... \(g2 \+ ,
but in both cases, White is better, and will obtain an ending with some advantage due to his more active pieces:
17... \(xg2 \+ 18. \(f2 \) dxe5 19. \(xa3 \)
\(f4 \)
20. \(a4! \) ! Theory used to consider this position to be equal, but after this idea was found it became clear that White has the advantage, on account of his strong pieces and the fact that he does not permit Black to castle. 20... \(g4 \) (20... \(h3 \)
21. \(b6 \) \(d8 \) 22. \(c4 \) c5 23. \(xc5 \) \(e6 \)
– the only move that does not lose at once. White threatened 24. \(b7 \), after which the threat of 25. \(d6 \+ \) is decisive, but the bishop move forces the knight to come to \(d6 \) at once, without the inclusion of the rook. 24. \(xe5 \) \(c8 \) 25. \(a3 \)
\(xc2 \) 26. \(e3 \) \(g6 \) 27. \(b6 \) \(xe5 \)
28. \(xe6+ \) \(f7 \) 29. \(e7+ \) \(g6 \) 30. \(g1+ \)
\(h6 \) 31. \(c1 \) \(g6 \) 32. \(d7 \) \(hc8 \)
33. \(d2 \) \(e5 \) 34. \(e2+ \) g5 35. \(d6 \+ and \White wins) 21. \(b6 \) \(d8 \) 22. \(c4 \) \(g6 \)
23. \(g3 \) \(c8 \) 24. \(d6+ \) \(d7 \) 25. \(f7 \) and \White won in Carlsson-Claro Egea, Malaga 2010. 18. \(xc1 \) \(dxe5 \) 19. \(d6 \)
\(xg2 \+ 20. \(f2 \) \(f4 \) 21. \(b1 \) \(h5 \)
21... \(a7! \) 22. \(c4 \) \(g4 \) 23. \(d7 \) \(d8 \) and \White has a large advantage, Carlsson-Eriksson, Vasteras ch-SWE 2011.

(B22) 13... \(a5! \) As we will see from the variations that follow after 13... \(e7 \), the queen on \(a3 \) is constantly under threat from White’s pieces, whereas with the text Black transfers the queen with tempo, to a necessary defensive post.

(B221) 14. \(xf6 \) \(xf6 \) 15.0-0 \(e7 \)
16. \(g4 \)
Chapter 2 — The Poisoned Pawn with $8. \textit{d3}$

B221 1) 16...0-0!? 17.\textit{e2} $\textit{g5}$
18.\textit{h3} d5 19.\textit{f4} dxe4 20.\textit{xe4} $\textit{c5+}$ 21.\textit{h1} f5 22.\textit{e2} $\textit{f6}$ 23.g4 e5
24.\textit{h5} with an extremely powerful attack, in which all White’s fighting units are taking part. There can be no doubt about his advantage, Solodovnichenko-Zakhartsov, Cappelle la Grande 2009;

B221 2) 16...\textit{g8} 17.\textit{h3} \textit{g5}
18.\textit{e2} \textit{b5} An alternative is 18...\textit{c5+} 19.\textit{h1} a5.

We have reached an extremely interesting position, where White has the initiative for his sacrificed pawn. Black has problems defending the pawn on e6 and his king remains in the centre. In return, he has the good square e5 and the white pawn structure is damaged.

B221 1) 19.\textit{bd1} \textit{c5}?! 19...\textit{b4}!
The rook has achieved miracles, travelling all the way from h8 to b5, where it has fought and won the battle for the open b-file. Now it helps Black start counterplay by attacking the pawn on e4.
20.c3 $\textit{b2}$ 21.\textit{d4} $\textit{e5}$ 22.\textit{c4} $\textit{f7=}$
20.\textit{h1} 20.\textit{d4}! 20...\textit{b5} 21.\textit{f3} $\textit{d7}$
22.\textit{f4} $\textit{c4}$ 23.\textit{b1} $\textit{b5}$ 24.\textit{b3} $\textit{f7}$
25.a4 $\textit{xb3}$ 26.cxb3 $\textit{c5}$ 27.\textit{g4};

B222 1) 19.\textit{d4}!? $\textit{N}$ A move which involves the sacrifice of a second pawn. White understands that he is already one pawn down and needs to undertake decisive measures. 19...\textit{xb1} 20.\textit{xb1}
\textit{xa2} 21.c4 d5 22.exd5 $\textit{c5=}$ 23.dxe6 $\textit{xd4+}$ 24.\textit{h1} \textit{a7}$\Box$ The pawn h7 is hanging and Black cannot afford to lose it, because he will be mated. With the text move he defends it, but gives White the chance to regain his piece and equalise the position: 25.\textit{f1} $\textit{e5}$
26.e7 $\textit{xe7}$ 27.\textit{xc8}$\mathbf{=}$.

B223 1) 16...\textit{g5}!? $\textit{N}$ Looking at Black’s other moves, it is clear that these also lead to a reasonable position, but we must not forget that he has an extra pawn and the better pawn structure, so he should fight for the advantage.
17.\textit{c4} $\textit{f7}$ 18.\textit{xc6} \textit{a7} 19.\textit{b8}
\textit{xe4} 20.\textit{xc8} $\textit{xc8}$ 21.\textit{xe8} \textit{g8}
Black’s position is the more pleasant, because of the structure and his good pieces. The exchange of queens will increase his advantage.

B222 2) 14.\textit{d2}!? He does not want to exchange this bishop, because his dark squares are all weak and the bishop defends them. 14...\textit{c7}
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

B2221) 15.0-0 \( \text{Be}7!! \) 16.e5 dxe5
17.\( \text{Be}4 \) 0-0! 18.\( \text{Bxf6+ Bxf6} = \)
B2222) 15.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{c}7 \) 16.0-0 \( \text{Be}5 \)
17.\( \text{Bh3} \) \( \text{b}8 \) 18.\( \text{Bxb8} \) \( \text{Bxb8} \) 19.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{g6} \)
20.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{c}xg4 \) 21.\( \text{Bxg4} \) \( \text{Bb6+} \) 22.\( \text{g2} \)
\( \text{g7} \) 23.\( \text{Aa4} = \)- Pap-Tosic, Pozarevac 2012;
B2223) 15.e5 dxe5 16.\( \text{Be}4 \) 16.\( \text{g5} \)
\( \text{Be}7 \) 17.\( \text{Bxf6+} \) \( \text{Bxf6} \) 18.\( \text{Bxe4} \) 0-0
19.0-0 \( \text{Bb8} \) 20.\( \text{Bbd1} \) \( \text{c}5 \) 21.\( \text{Bh3} \) \( \text{c}4 \) 22.\( \text{g5} \)
\( \text{Bc5+} \) 23.\( \text{h1} \) \( \text{Bxg5} \) Black is winning
Apryshko-Gabuzyan, Albena jr 2011.
16...\( \text{Be}7 \) 17.\( \text{Bxf6+ Bxf6} \) 18.\( \text{h5+} \) \( \text{g6} \)
19.0-0 0-0

![Diagram](image)

White is two pawns down and this is
beginning to tell, so he has to sacrifice
the piece and give perpetual check:
20.\( \text{Bxg6} \) \( \text{hxg6} \) 21.\( \text{h6} \) \( \text{Bg7} \) 22.\( \text{Bxf8+} \)
\( \text{Bxf8} \) 23.\( \text{f1}+ \) \( \text{g8} \) 24.\( \text{Bxg6} \) \( \text{Bb6+} \)
25.\( \text{h1} \) \( \text{a7} \) 26.\( \text{Bxg7} \) \( \text{Bxg7} \) 27.\( \text{e8+} \)
\( \text{h7} \) 28.\( \text{Bxc8} \) \( \text{Bb5} \) 29.\( \text{Bf8} \) \( \text{Be2} \)
30.\( \text{f3} = \) .

11.\( \text{Be2} \)
11.\( \text{Bxe6} \) \( \text{Bxe6} \) 12.\( \text{Bf2} \) 12.\( \text{Bc4} \) 0-0!
13.\( \text{Bxe6} \) \( \text{b5} \) 13.\( \text{Bxe6} \) \( \text{a5} \) 12.\( \text{Bb5} \)
13.\( \text{Bc7} \) 14.0-0 0-0 15.\( \text{Bc4} \) \( \text{d7} \)
16.\( \text{Bb3} \) \( \text{Bb5} \) 17.a4 \( \text{c6} \) 18.\( \text{Bxb5} \) \( \text{cxd4} \)
19.\( \text{Bxd4} \) \( \text{a5} \) 20.\( \text{Bxb5} \) \( \text{Bb7} \) By giving
back the pawn, Black rids himself of
all his problems and easily equalises.
Although a lot of pieces remain on the
board, in my opinion, the draw is not
far away, Kiran-Ju Wenjun, Olongapo
2010. 13.\( \text{Bd2} \) \( \text{Bc7} \) 14.g4 \( \text{h6} \) (transposing
to 11.\( \text{Be2} \)) 15.e5 dxe5 16.\( \text{g6+} \)
\( \text{Bf8} \) 17.\( \text{Bf3} \) \( \text{Bd7} \) 18.g5 \( \text{Bc8} \) 19.\( \text{Bd3} \)
\( \text{hxg5} \) 20.\( \text{Bxg5} \) \( \text{Bd7} \) The strongest
move of the many possibilities at Black's
disposal, and one which gives him
good chances of achieving mutual play.
20...\( \text{Bg8} \); 20...\( \text{Bf7} \) 21.\( \text{Bxf7} \) \( \text{Bxf7} \)
21.\( \text{Bc3} \) \( \text{Bf7} \) 22.\( \text{Bc1} \) \( \text{g8} \)
23.\( \text{Bxf7} \) \( \text{Bxf7} \) 24.\( \text{Bc6+} \) \( \text{Bc8} \) 25.\( \text{h5} \)
\( \text{Bc8} = \) Adhiban-Gao Rui, Mashhad
Ach 2011.

11...\( \text{Bc5} \)
A) The black queen cannot afford to
remain in White's camp any longer, and
must return home to help its side in a
difficult defence. If 11...\( \text{Bc5} \) 12.\( \text{Bc3} \)
\( \text{Bc7} \) 13.\( \text{Bxe6} \) Black wants to close the
position with the move e5, whilst
White must prevent this. After 13.g4 \( \text{h6} \)
14.\( \text{fxe6} \) \( \text{fxe6} \) 15.0-0 0-0 16.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{d5} \)
17.e5 \( \text{h7} \) White has compensation,
13.\( \text{Bxe6} \) 14.0-0 14.\( \text{Bc4} \). 14...\( \text{c6} \)
14...0-0 15.\( \text{Bc4} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 16.\( \text{Bxf4} \) \( \text{c6} \)
17.\( \text{Bxe6+} \) \( \text{Bxe6} \) 18.\( \text{Bxe6} \) \( \text{Bf7} \)
19.\( \text{Bxb7} \) 15.\( \text{Bc4} \) \( \text{Bd7} \) 16.\( \text{Ba4} \) \( \text{d5} \)
17.\( \text{Bb3} \) \( \text{d8} \) 18.\( \text{Bb6} \) 18.\( \text{Bxf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \)
19.\( \text{Bh5+} \) \( \text{g6} \) 20.\( \text{Bg4} \) \( \text{Bf8} \)
21.\( \text{Bh5} = \) 18.\( \text{Bxb6} \) 19.\( \text{Bxb6} \) 0-0
20.\( \text{Bg5} \) White exchanges Black's cen-
central defender, the bishop on e7, after which he has a strong initiative on the dark squares;

B) 11...c6? 12.fxe6 fxe6 13.xc6 bxc6

B1) 14.0-0 White has other, possibly slightly better possibilities, whereas castling grants Black time to return the queen to his own camp. The better lines are mentioned in the variations 14...wa5 14...xf8 15.e3 wa5 16.d4 f7 17.wc4 c5 18.f2 wc7 19.f3 b8 with compensation for White, as seen in a correspondence game Marcotulli-Myaikutin.

B11) 15.wd2=;

B12) Or 15.xf6 gxf6 15...xf6? 16.xf6! gxf6 17.wxd6 xg7 18.xd1 xg8 19.xh5+ Van der Linde-Zsu, Polgar, Utrecht 1986. 16.g4 White makes the standard bishop transfer to h3, from where it will exert pressure on the e6-pawn, at the same time freeing the e2-square for his knight, which will add to Black's problems when it reaches either d4 or f4:

B121) 16...0-0 17.wh1 17.wc4!= d5 18.wxc6 wc5+ 19.wxc5 xc5+ 20.wh1 dxe4 21.xe4 xe4 22.h∞. 17...wh8 18.de2 ½-½ Lastin-Areschenko, St Petersburg Chigorin Memorial 2002;

B122) 16...h5 17.wxh3 xf7 18.wxh1 ½-½ Nataf-Marjanovic, Budvatt 2003;

B123) 16...g8 17.wxh3 and now:

B1231) 17...g5 We have seen this idea several times already: the rook uses the fifth rank to help defend the weak squares in his camp and the weak pawns which need constant defence. 18.e2 wc5+ 18...xb5 19.dbd1 c5 20.wxh1 wb5 21.wf3 d7 22.xf4 wc4 23.xb1 xb5 24.xb3 xf7 with compensation, Gashimov-Areschenko, Lausanne 2006. 19.wxh1 a5 (Sambuev-Kochaev, St Petersburg 2002) 20.c4 h5 21.cd4 e5 22.0e6 exe6 23.xe6 wa7 24.wf3 h4 25.wxh3 a6 26.wxh4+-. Brandenburg-Kodentsov, Dieren 2009;

B1232) 17...wf7 18.wxh1 a7 19.de2 ad7 20.e5 f5 21.xd4 White has a very strong attack, although later, he did not find the best moves and lost in Van der Ploeg-Kozlowicz, IECG 2003 Telechess 105.

B13) 15.cd2 wc7 16.e5 dxe5 17.ca4 db8 18.xxb8 wb8 19.wxg3 0-0 20.xd3 cd5 - Black beats off the white attack and keeps two extra pawns. He is winning, Van der Linde-Zsu, Polgar, Utrecht 1986.

B2) 14.e5!
The move 14...\(d5\) does not work, for several reasons: firstly, White exploits the bad position of the black queen, secondly, the black king remains in the centre, and thirdly, the black pieces are still on their starting squares: 15.\(\text{e}\text{d}5\) \(\text{a}5\) \(\text{f}7\) 16.\(\text{c}7\) 17.\(\text{x}d3\) \text{+-}. 16.\(b4\) \(\text{x}g5\) 17.\(h5\) \text{g}6 18.\(\text{x}g6\) \text{hxg6} 19.\(w\text{g}6\) 20.\(w\text{g}7\) \text{e}7 21.\(\text{e}\text{d}6\) \text{g}5 22.\(w\text{h}8\) \text{b}7 23.\(\text{h}3\) \text{c}5 24.0-0-+. 15.\(\text{x}f6\) \(\text{g}6\) 15...\(\text{x}f6\)? 16.\(h5\) \text{g}6 17.\(\text{x}g6\) \text{hxg6} 18.\(w\text{g}6\) \text{e}7 19.0-0+- 16.\(h5\) \text{f}8

B21) 17.0-0 and now:

B211) 17...\(e4\) 18.\(w\text{h}3\) 18.\(w\text{d}4\) \(w\text{c}5\) 19.\(\text{a}6\) \(w\text{g}8\) 18...\(f5\) 19.\(w\text{h}1\) \(w\text{g}8\) 20.\(\text{b}3\) \(w\text{c}5\) 21.\(\text{x}e4\) \(w\text{e}5\) 21...\(w\text{c}2\) 22.\(w\text{f}3\) \(w\text{xa}2\)? (this is already a bit too much. The queen should retreat, rather than worsening its position: 22...\(w\text{c}4\)!

23.\(\text{d}1\) \text{fxe}4 24.\(w\text{xh}7\) \(w\text{xb}3\) 25.\(w\text{h}6\) \(w\text{g}7\) 26.\(\text{e}\text{xb}3\) \(w\text{e}3\) 27.\(w\text{h}8\) \(w\text{f}7\) 28.\(w\text{h}5\) \text{++} 23.\(w\text{xh}7\)? (23.\(w\text{h}6\) \(w\text{g}7\) \(w\text{f}1\) \text{±}) 23...\(w\text{xb}3\) 24.\(w\text{h}5\) \text{e}5 25.\(w\text{xf}5\) \text{+} (there is nothing better than this exchange sacrifice, after which White can give perpetual check)

25...\(w\text{xf}5\) 26.\(w\text{xf}5\) \(w\text{g}7\) 27.\(w\text{g}6\) \(w\text{f}8\) 28.\(w\text{f}5\) \text{+} ended in a draw by perpetual in Van der Wiel-Gavrikov, London play-off 1985 22.\(\text{e}3\) \(w\text{g}7\) 23.\(w\text{f}3\) \(w\text{b}3\)

24.\(w\text{g}3\) \(w\text{c}5\) 25.\(w\text{e}2\) \(w\text{g}8\) 26.\(w\text{e}5\) \(w\text{a}7\) 27.\(w\text{e}6\) \(w\text{e}6\) 28.\(w\text{e}6\) \(w\text{h}8\)

B22) 17...\(w\text{g}7\) 18.\(w\text{b}3\) \(w\text{c}5\) 19.\(w\text{g}3\) \(w\text{g}8\) 20.\(w\text{e}4\) \(w\text{a}5\) \text{+} 21.\(w\text{c}3\) \(w\text{g}8\) 22.\(w\text{h}3\) \(w\text{a}4\) 23.\(w\text{xf}6\) \(w\text{xf}6\)

24.0-0 \(w\text{d}4\) \text{+} 25.\(w\text{h}1\) \text{e}4--

Pyhälä-Tella, Finland tt 1993.
Chapter 2 – The Poisoned Pawn with $\text{d}3$

B223) 17...$\text{g}8$ 18.$\text{h}6+$ $\text{g}7$

B23) 17.$\text{d}2$ $\text{g}7$ 18.$\text{b}3$ Sadly, the knight sacrifice does not work. White therefore has to start the attack immediately with the move $\text{b}3$, but this has its minuses 18.$\text{d}5$ $\text{d}8$! (18...exd5 19.$\text{b}3$ $\text{xb}3$ 20.$\text{cxb}3$∞) 19.$\text{b}3$
$\text{xd}5$ 20.$\text{xa}3$ $\text{xd}2$ 21.$\text{g}3+$ $\text{h}6$+.

18...$\text{a}5$ Here we see the drawback of 18.$\text{b}3$: the black queen comes to a5 and does not allow the white knight to escape, even at the cost of a piece. If 18...$\text{d}6$ 19.$\text{d}5$! $\text{g}8$ 20.$\text{g}3+$ $\text{h}8$
21.$\text{xg}8+$ $\text{xg}8$ 22.$\text{xf}6$ $\text{h}8$
23.$\text{xd}6$ (23.$\text{h}6$ $\text{b}4$+) 23...$\text{xd}6$ 24.0-0 (24.$\text{e}4$ $\text{a}3$+) 24...$\text{a}7$ 25.$\text{e}4$ $\text{a}3$=. 19.0-0 $\text{g}8$
20.$\text{h}1$ $\text{h}8$ 21.$\text{h}6$ The lesser evil is 21.$\text{d}8$ 22.$\text{e}4$ f5 23.$\text{f}7$
White also loses after 23.$\text{h}3$ $\text{g}5$! and 23.$\text{d}3$ $\text{f}8$ 24.$\text{d}2$ fxe4+. 23...$\text{f}8$
24.$\text{h}5$ $\text{g}7$ 24...$\text{g}4$++. 25.$\text{e}8$ a5
26.$\text{xc}6$ $\text{a}6$ 27.$\text{f}2$ Or 27.$\text{b}5$ a4!
28.$\text{bb}1$ $\text{xb}5$ 29.$\text{xb}5$ $\text{c}8$! 30.$\text{g}3$
f4 31.$\text{e}2$ $\text{c}6$++. 27...$\text{d}8$ 0-1
Nunn-Kasparov, Brussels 1986;

B3) 14.$\text{h}5+$ $\text{g}6$ Or 14...$\text{xh}5$?
15.$\text{xe}7$ $\text{f}4$ 16.$\text{d}4$ $\text{g}2$+ 17.$\text{f}2$
$\text{e}5$ 18.$\text{xe}5$ dx$\text{e}5$ 19.$\text{xa}3$ $\text{f}4$ – we've seen this endgame earlier in the game Carlsson-Claro Egea: after 20.$\text{a}4$ White has an edge.

15.$\text{e}5$ An excellent tactical nuance, which gives White a large advantage. Once again, the bad position of the black queen on a3 tells.

B31) 15...dx$\text{e}5$? 16.$\text{xf}6$ $\text{xf}6$
17.$\text{xg}6+$ $\text{hxg}6$ 18.$\text{xg}6+$ $\text{d}7$
18...$\text{e}7$?+– 19.0-0 $\text{f}8$ 20.$\text{e}4$+–.
19.0-0 $\text{e}7$ 20.$\text{e}4$+–;

B32) 15...$\text{d}5$ 16.$\text{b}3$ $\text{a}5$ 17.$\text{xe}7$ $\text{xe}7$ The best option, although it still leaves White with a much better position. Not 17...$\text{xe}7$?
18.ex$\text{d}6$+ $\text{xd}6$ 19.0-0+–. 18.ex$\text{d}6$
$\text{f}5$ 19.$\text{f}3$ $\text{d}7$

20.$\text{d}2$!± Now White regains the pawn and shatters the black position, leaving him with all his dark squares weak, as well as White having a strong passed pawn.

12.$\text{d}2$

12.0-0 is slow, and Black manages to develop his knight, after which rather
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

than thinking about attacking, White has to concern himself with how to prevent the exchange of queens:

A) After 12...0-0 White has a choice between 13...e3; 13...d2 c7 14.g4 bbd7 15.g5 c5; and 13.h1 c6 14.xc6 bxc6 15...d2 (15...d2 c7 16.f4 c8 17.bbd1 a7 18.xe7 cxe7 19.d3=) 15...f5 16.d5 c6 17.xe7+ cxe7 Black still has an extra pawn, but White has the two bishops, which I think should be enough for equality;

B) 12...bd7?!N In this position, it seems to me that Black should bring his knight to e5. But this can only be done via d7, because if the knight comes to c6, White exchanges it. From e5, the knight controls the important squares c4, g4, and f3, which are very important for the defence. However, the move runs into a specific and concrete retort: 13.fxe6! 13...h5 c5 (13...c5) 14.d3 (14...d2 c4 (or 14...f5) 15.d3) 14...fg4 15.xg4 dxc4 16.d2 xg5 17.xg5 xc3 18.xg7+ 13...xg5

Here White has three continuations, but the most logical is to take back the piece with check. After this, White has a clear advantage, because of his strong knights and, the biggest factor of all, the black king has not castled. In the other lines, White does not have an advantage:

B1) 14.f5? c5 15.xf7+ xf7 16.xc5=; B2) 14.f5+ xf5 15.c4+ 15.f5 c5 16.f4 c6 17.c4+ 15.d5 c5=. 15...e8 16.f5 e5=; B3) 14.exd7+! xd7 14...xd7? 15.f5± and now:

B31) 15.f5 16.xd6+ f8 Black lacks one tempo to finally castle, as a result of which he comes under an extremely powerful attack. If 16...xd6 17.xd6 c7 (17...h3 18.f2 d8 19.a3 d7=) 18.d4; or 18.xe7+ xe7 19.d5+ d6 20.b6+ c5 21.d1±. 17.d5

17...f3+ 18.xf3 xd5 19.exd5 xd6 20.e4 c5 21.d6± The passed pawn and very active pieces give White a large advantage.;

B32) 15.c5 16.c4! xf5 16...e6 17.d5 xd5 18.xd5 0-0 19.h4 f6 20.b6±. 17.xf5 e3+ 18.f1! f6 19.a4!± As we know, with opposite bishops, having the attack is often more important than material. In this case, it is White.

C) 12...c6! A strong move, causing White a lot of trouble. 13.xc6 bxc6 14.d2 14.e3 0-0 15.g4 (15.b6 we5 16.d4=) 15...exf5 16.exf5 d7!±. 14...d8 15.a4 0-0 Black has
an extra pawn and an excellent position. Soon, he will take on f5 and play ...d6-d5, after which he will have a great advantage.

12...\textit{c7}

Risky is 12...\textit{c6}!? 13.\textit{fxe6} \textit{fxe6} 14.\textit{xc6} bxc6 15.\textit{d5} \textit{d8} 15...\textit{xa2}!? 16.\textit{xf6}+ \textit{xf6} 17.0-0 0-0 18.\textit{g5} \textit{a5} 19.\textit{xf6} gxf6 20.\textit{g3}+ \textit{g5} 21.\textit{xd6} \textit{e5}=

13.\textit{fxe6}

13.0-0 13.\textit{g4}!? e5 14.\textit{b3} h6\textbf{=} 13...\textit{c6} 13...\textit{e5}!? 14.\textit{b3} b5; whereas with 14...0-0? Black would step into a dangerous attack: 15.\textit{g4}! d5 16.g5 dxe4 17.\textit{e3}!±. 14.\textit{xc6} and now:

A) How should Black recapture? Both options have their plusses and minuses: if Black takes with the pawn, he has the possibility of ...d6-d5, obtaining a strong pawn centre, but the downside is that he opens the b-file for the white rook. Taking with the queen starts pressure on the e4-pawn, but deprives him of the chance of a strong pawn centre.

14...\textit{bxc6} 15.\textit{g3} \textit{f8} 16.\textit{d3} \textit{xf5}

17.e5 dxe5 18.\textit{e3} e4 19.0-0\textbullet\textit{a7}! If Black does not exchange queens, he can be mated quickly. But even after the exchange, White would retain pressure, despite the fact that he is two pawns down.

In such situations, Black is preparing ...e6-e5, closing the position, and White has to do something concrete, because in a closed position, his development advantage would be of little consequence.

17.\textit{e3} 17.\textit{xf5} h5! 17...\textit{b8}! 18.\textit{xb8} \textit{xb8} 19.\textit{exf5} h5 Black has a strong pawn and his position is very firm, whilst the strong idea of advancing the h-pawn forces White to tie his pieces down.

B) 14...\textit{xc6} 15.\textit{g3} \textit{g6}! The best move. Black cannot castle because of \textit{h6}, after which he loses the exchange, whilst playing 15...\textit{f8} and losing castling rights is also unattractive.

B1) 16.\textit{exe6} \textit{xe6} 17.\textit{h6} 17.\textit{g5} \textit{h5} 18.\textit{xh5} \textit{xg5}

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19...\textit{d}d5 \textit{d}d8 20...\textit{g}4 \textit{x}g4 21...\textit{g}4 0-0=+. 17...\textit{e}xe4 18...\textit{e}xe4 \textit{w}xe4 19...\textit{f}3 \textit{w}d4+. 20...\textit{h}1 \textit{h}4! 20...\textit{h}4 21...c3! \textit{x}g3 22...\textit{xd}4 \textit{h}4 23...g3 \textit{f}6 24...\textit{xb}7=, but White has some pressure.

B2) 16...\textit{h}1 0-0! 16...\textit{e}xe4 17...\textit{xe}4 \textit{w}xe4

18...\textit{fx}e6 \textit{fx}e6 19...\textit{be}1!→. 17...\textit{e}5 \textit{dxe}5 18...\textit{fx}g6 \textit{fx}g6 19...\textit{h}6 \textit{f}7 20...\textit{we}5 White has compensation for the pawn, but this suffices only for equality.

14...\textit{g}4

A) 14...\textit{h}3 This move has two ideas: an attack on the e6-pawn and check from the bishop on h5. 14...\textit{c}6 and now:

A1) 15...\textit{xe}6 \textit{xe}6 16...\textit{xe}6 \textit{d}4 17...\textit{h}3 17...\textit{c}4? \textit{xc}4 18...\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}2+=. 17...\textit{e}2 18...\textit{xe}2 0-0=; A2) 15...\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 16...\textit{h}5+ \textit{xe}h5 17...\textit{xe}h5+ \textit{g}6 18...\textit{h}6 \textit{f}6=+ 19...\textit{e}2 \textit{d}7 20.0-0 \textit{ff}8 21...\textit{b}3 \textit{e}7?!

22...\textit{bf}3 \textit{xf}3 23...\textit{xf}3 \textit{we}4 24...\textit{g}3? \textit{wd}4+ 25...\textit{e}3 \textit{h}8! 26...\textit{g}5 \textit{c}6 27...\textit{f}2 \textit{sg}5 28...\textit{sg}5 \textit{we}5 29...\textit{h}4 \textit{g}7! 30...\textit{g}4 \textit{we}7 31...\textit{e}2 \textit{d}7→ Bezgodov-Naer, Elista ch-RUS 2001;

B) 14.0-0 0-0 15...\textit{c}4 \textit{d}7 In the event of 15...\textit{xc}4 16...\textit{xc}4 b5 17...\textit{xe}6+ \textit{xe}6 18...\textit{xe}6 \textit{c}8 19...\textit{a}4 White has a minimal advantage. 16...\textit{b}3 With the idea of taking on e6 with the knight, and if ...\textit{we}6, then \textit{xc}4. 16...\textit{h}8 17...\textit{c}4 17...\textit{a}4! \textit{c}6! 18...\textit{e}3 \textit{xd}4 19...\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}6=.

13...\textit{fx}e6 17...\textit{d}5! 18...\textit{exd}5 \textit{b}5 18...\textit{c}6!?. 19...\textit{e}2 \textit{c}5 20...\textit{h}1 \textit{exd}5! 20...\textit{xd}4? 21...\textit{b}4! A double attack! After this, the advantage swings to White. 21...\textit{e}3? 21...\textit{g}5! with compensation for the sacrificed pawn. 21...\textit{c}6 21...\textit{e}8!=+. 22...\textit{e}6 \textit{we}6 23...\textit{xc}5 \textit{e}8 24...\textit{f}3 \textit{sb}7 25...\textit{a}4 \textit{a}5 26...\textit{b}4 \textit{c}4 27...\textit{bd}1
\[ \text{A1}) \ 19.\text{...}\text{\texttt{h5}}!? \ 20.\text{gxh6} \ \text{\texttt{c6}} \linebreak 21.\text{\texttt{e4}} \ \text{\texttt{d8}} \ 22.\text{\texttt{c3}} \ \text{\texttt{b5}} \ 22.\text{...}\text{\texttt{xe6}} \linebreak 23.\text{\texttt{xe6}} \ \text{\texttt{gxh6}} \ 24.0-0 \ \text{\texttt{g8}} \ 25.\text{\texttt{e3}}. \linebreak 23.\text{\texttt{a4}} \ \text{\texttt{b4}} \ 24.\text{\texttt{c4}} \ \text{\texttt{b6}} \ 25.\text{\texttt{xa6}} \ \text{\texttt{xa6}} \linebreak 26.\text{\texttt{e6}}=; \linebreak \text{A22}) \ 19.\text{...}\text{\texttt{xg5}} \ 20.\text{\texttt{e5}} \linebreak \text{Black faces a choice: the move 20...\texttt{g7} is bad because it is too defensive. That leaves two other options: I do not like the king move, because the pawn on e6 remains under attack. I think the strongest move is 20...\texttt{c8}, which defends the e6-pawn and does not reveal Black's plans.} \]

\[ \text{A221}) \ 20...\texttt{xf7}? \ 21.\texttt{xf7} \ \texttt{xf7} \linebreak 22.\texttt{e4} \ \texttt{f8} \ 22.\texttt{d8}. \]
26. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}xe6+ \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f7 27. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xf7+ \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xf7 28. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}xg5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f6 29. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}6+ \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}e6 30. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h4+ 31. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f2 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h7 32. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g2 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}}a7 33. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h3= 34. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}xf6+. 23. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}xe5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d6 24. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}e4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xh2 25. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f6 26. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g2 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d4 27. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}xe6+ \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f8 28. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c3 White is winning, as mate, the queen and the bishop are all threatened. There is no way to defend all three at once. R. Mamedov-Cernousek, Pardubice rapid 2009; A23 20 ... \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c8!? 21. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g1 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g8 22. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}g3


29... \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}xe2+ This exchange sacrifice and the unlikely variation that results ends in threefold repetition: 30. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}xe2 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xc2 31. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}xe5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}}b5+ 32. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}}xb5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c4+ 33. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}e1 axb5 34. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h1+ \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g7 35. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h7+ \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g8 36. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h6=.

B) 15. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g5 hxg5 16.e5 dxe5 17. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f3 e4 18. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}xe4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}xe4 19. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}xe4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{o}}}}0-0 20. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xg5 20. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f5 21. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}e2 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g4 22. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}xf5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}f5 23. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d4 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h4+ 24. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d1 and Black has a large advantage, although he managed to lose in Guseinov-Kotanjian, Dubai 2010. 20 ... \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xg5 21. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xg5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c6 22. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}}b3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}e5 23. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}xe5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}xe5 24. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g3 b5 25. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h1 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}}a7 26. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}e3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d7 27. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h6 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f7 28. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h7 29. \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xf7 An equal endgame, and a draw was agreed in a couple more moves, Gashimov-Grischuk, Nice blind 2010.

15...0-0

A) 15...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}h7? Sometimes one has to play a bad move, in order to win a brilliant game.
after which we offer a sample variation, leading to a draw: 23...\texttt{d}d6 24. \texttt{b}b4 \texttt{h}h4+ 25. \texttt{e}e2 \texttt{f}f6 26. \texttt{xf}f6 \texttt{g}xf6 27. \texttt{xf}f6 \texttt{g}2+ 28. \texttt{e}e1 \texttt{g}1+ with perpetual 23. \texttt{f}4 \texttt{b}4+ 24. \texttt{c}3 \texttt{xc}3 25. \texttt{d}2 \texttt{d}5 26. \texttt{f}7+ \texttt{c}6 27. \texttt{c}1 \texttt{b}6 28. \texttt{e}3+ \texttt{a}5 Gashimov-Grischuk, Bursa Wch-tt 2010. This game is one of the most beautiful of recent years, and reminds one that there is still some romanticism left in chess. Grischuk’s king march is phenomenal, and brought him a no less phenomenal victory.

A2) \textbf{16.g5!N} This novelty is one that many players have known about for a while, but are unlikely ever to get to use, because it is only possible after 15...\texttt{h}h7, which nobody is going to repeat. 16...\texttt{x}e6 17.\texttt{d}e6 \texttt{c}6 18.\texttt{f}f5 \texttt{xe}6 19.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{h}h4 20.0-0 \texttt{bd}7\texttt{e}1+. B) 15...\texttt{c}6?! Not the best move in this position, as it gives White the chance to obtain a strong initiative, thanks to a nice pawn sacrifice.

\textbf{16.\texttt{xc}6} 

B1) 16...\texttt{xc}6 Or 16...bxc6 17.e5 \texttt{d}xe5 18.g5 \texttt{d}5 19.\texttt{h}h5+ \texttt{d}8 20.\texttt{e}e4 \texttt{b}8 21.\texttt{c}d1 \texttt{b}2 22.\texttt{g}xh6 gxh6 23.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{b}6 24.\texttt{x}e5±. 17.g5 and now:

B11) 17...\texttt{xe}4? 18.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{d}5 19.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{d}xe4 20.\texttt{h}5+ \texttt{d}7 21.\texttt{f}1 21.0-0?! – in the majority of cases, castling and getting the king out of the centre is considered good, but here we have an exception to the rule, and the king was much more comfortable in the centre. 21...\texttt{f}8 21...\texttt{e}3? 22.\texttt{a}5+--; 21...\texttt{x}g5? 22.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{c}7 23.\texttt{f}7 \texttt{c}5 24.\texttt{g}3+ e5 25.\texttt{g}5+--; 22.\texttt{x}f8 \texttt{x}f8 23.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{c}7 24.\texttt{g}3+ e5 25.\texttt{xe}5+ \texttt{d}6 26.\texttt{x}g7+ \texttt{d}7

B111) 27...\texttt{f}8? 28.\texttt{c}c3!! \texttt{e}3 29.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{xe}5 30.\texttt{xe}5+ \texttt{c}8 31.\texttt{d}5+--; B112) Black needs to offload his e4-pawn, which prevents him starting counterplay. However, sacrificing it still doesn’t save him: 27...\texttt{c}3 28.\texttt{xe}3 \texttt{h}1+ 29.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{xh}2+ 29...\texttt{d}5+ 30.\texttt{d}4++. 30.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{h}5 31.\texttt{d}4 \texttt{a}3+ 32.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{b}5+ Black has an extra piece, both players have open kings, but the white pawn on h6 is very strong, and Black has to give back the piece, to avoid mate. If 32...\texttt{d}8 33.\texttt{f}4+ \texttt{c}8 34.\texttt{h}7 \texttt{c}5 35.\texttt{h}8 \texttt{h}8 36.\texttt{xc}5+ \texttt{c}6 37.\texttt{f}5+ \texttt{d}7 (37...\texttt{d}7 38.\texttt{a}5++) 38.\texttt{d}6+. 33.\texttt{a}1 \texttt{b}2+ 34.\texttt{xb}2 \texttt{xb}2+ 35.\texttt{xb}2±
B12) 18.gxh6 Now Black needs to solve the problem of the white pawn on h6, but in addition, his king is very weak and comes under checks from the white pieces.

B121) 18...\(\text{\textit{f}}/5\)

19.hxg7 This cannot really be called a queen sacrifice, because the white pawn promotes in a few moves. 19...\(\text{\textit{x}}/3\) 20.g8\(\text{\textit{w}}+\) \(\text{\textit{d}}/7\) 21.\(\text{\textit{b}}/3\) \(b/5\) 22.\(\text{\textit{g}}/7\) White threatens \(\text{\textit{g}}/5\) and \(\text{\textit{d}}/5\), whilst the bishop on e7 is not easy to defend, but Black finds an exchange sacrifice, after which he is slightly worse but has compensation. 22...\(\text{\textit{f}}/3\) if 22...\(\text{\textit{x}}/3\) 23.\(\text{\textit{x}}/3\) White is slightly better. 23.\(\text{\textit{x}}/3\) \(\text{\textit{x}}/3\) \(\text{\textit{e}}/2\) \(\text{\textit{d}}/2\)

B122) 18...\(\text{\textit{g}}/6\) 19.\(\text{\textit{x}}/6\) \(\text{\textit{f}}/6\) 20.\(\text{\textit{b}}/3\) \(\text{\textit{e}}/4\) 21.\(\text{\textit{f}}/3\) \(\text{\textit{h}}/4+\) 21...\(\text{\textit{f}}/5\) 22.\(\text{\textit{f}}/1\) \(\text{\textit{f}}/8\) 23.\(\text{\textit{g}}/7\) \(\text{\textit{h}}/4+\) 24.\(\text{\textit{e}}/2\) 0-0-0 (the only move not to lose at once. The knight is pinned, and the other pieces have to defend it, so the king needs to escape the centre to avoid mate) 25.\(\text{\textit{x}}/4\) \(\text{\textit{d}}/8\) 26.\(\text{\textit{w}}/7+\) \(\text{\textit{x}}/7\) 27.\(\text{\textit{b}}/7\) \(\text{\textit{x}}/4\) 28.\(\text{\textit{e}}/4\) \(\text{\textit{x}}/4\) 29.\(\text{\textit{d}}/3\) \(d/5\) 30.\(\text{\textit{c}}/3\) 22.\(\text{\textit{e}}/2\) \(\text{\textit{x}}/3\) \(\text{\textit{g}}/4\) 24.\(\text{\textit{x}}/8\) \(\text{\textit{w}}/4+\) 25.\(\text{\textit{w}}/2\)

B123) Also playable is the exchange sacrifice 18...\(\text{\textit{x}}/6\) 19.\(\text{\textit{x}}/6\) \(\text{\textit{g}}/6\), when White retains a slight edge:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
20.0-0 \(\text{\textit{e}}/5\) 21.\(\text{\textit{h}}/1\) \(\text{\textit{g}}/5\) 22.\(\text{\textit{b}}/3\)
\end{array}
\]

16.\(\text{\textit{g}}/5\) \(\text{\textit{h}}/5\) 17.\(\text{\textit{x}}/6\)

The black queen hangs, but Black has a beautiful possibility to put the queen on another square, where she will be attacked but not able to be taken because of the pin, and from where the queen can be transferred to e5. 17...\(\text{\textit{c}}/5\) ?

A) 18.\(\text{\textit{c}}/5\) \(\text{\textit{x}}/3\)=;

B) 18.\(\text{\textit{b}}/7\) \(\text{\textit{c}}/6\) 19.\(\text{\textit{d}}/5\) 19.\(\text{\textit{c}}/5\) \(\text{\textit{x}}/3\) 19...\(\text{\textit{d}}/5\) 20.\(\text{\textit{c}}/5\) From this move, mass exchanges start, leading to an equal endgame. 20...\(\text{\textit{h}}/3\) 21.\(\text{\textit{d}}/5\) 21.\(\text{\textit{c}}/5\) \(d/5\) 22.\(\text{\textit{d}}/5\) \(\text{\textit{h}}/8\) 23.\(\text{\textit{c}}/6\) \(\text{\textit{a}}/8\)=. 21...\(\text{\textit{d}}/4\) 22.\(\text{\textit{e}}/7\) \(d/5\) 23.\(\text{\textit{g}}/1\) \(\text{\textit{a}}/8\) 24.\(\text{\textit{e}}/3\) \(\text{\textit{c}}/2+\) 25.\(\text{\textit{d}}/2\) \(\text{\textit{a}}/3\) 26.\(\text{\textit{a}}/3\) \(\text{\textit{b}}/8\)=;

C) 18.\(\text{\textit{f}}/5\) ! \(\text{\textit{f}}/5\) 19.\(\text{\textit{f}}/5\) \(\text{\textit{e}}/6\) 20.\(\text{\textit{x}}/6\) \(b/5\) 21.\(\text{\textit{f}}/3\) \(\text{\textit{a}}/7\) 22.\(\textit{a}/4\) \(g/4\) 23.\(\text{\textit{g}}/2\) \(\text{\textit{b}}/4\)
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24.h3 The black pawn on g4 is very strong. White needs either to exchange it or force its advance. The exchange is not favourable for Black because it opens the h-file, and Black can be mated, whilst after g3, the pawn will be undefended. 24...g3 24...gxh3 25...xh3+ 25.0-0 e8 26.d5 exd5 27...xd5±

18.f1

A) The white pawn on e4 was hanging, and needs to be defended, whilst this move may also help the white knight reach d5. 18.f5 e8

A1) 19.h4 g4!? White was trying to open the h-file, which would be extremely dangerous for Black, and the text is a typical device for avoiding this. 19...f8 20.hxg5 xe6 21.f4 bd7 22.h4 f7 23.gxf6 xf6 24.h5+ e7 25.xe8 xe8 26.d1. 20.d5

21.g6 is threatened, and if Black then takes ...xe6, then after the move h6 White gives mate. Black has to react and there is only one way to do this: 20.d8 21.xd8 xf5 22.xf6+ gxf6 23.xc6 xe4 24.g1 xc6 25.xg4+ f7=;

A2) 19.g1?! f8 He needs to defend g7, since the threat was g5. In addition, Black attacks the knight on e6 and obtains the advantage: 20.d4 xf5 21.xc6 xe4±;

A3) 19.0-0 f8

The knight on e6 is hanging, and it is not easy to see how White can defend it, so White is ready to sacrifice it for the sake of the attack: 20.d5 xe6 21.xf6+ gxf6 22.g6+ g7 23.xf6 d7 White's attack looks very strong and in order to repulse it, Black has to return the piece and complete the development of his pieces. If 23...xa2 24.b3 xb3 25.cx b3 xe4 26.c4+ d5 27.f7+ h7 28.h5+ g8 with equality. 24.xe6 e5 25.xe8+ xe8 26.xg5 xe6 27.d8+ xe8 28.g5 xe4 29.e3 and the resulting position is equal, because the black knight on e5 is not weaker than the white bishops;

A4) 19.d5 d8 20.xd8 xf5 21.xf6+ gxf6 22.xc6
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

A41) 22...\textit{\texttt{x}}\textit{e}4 23.\textit{\texttt{xf}}\textit{b}8 \textit{\texttt{h}x}1 24.\textit{\texttt{f}f}2 \textit{\texttt{xb}}\textit{b}8 25.\textit{\texttt{h}x}1 \textit{\texttt{e}4} 26.\textit{\texttt{d}d}3, Brkic-Palac, Zagreb 2010. The ending is very interesting, because the black rook and two pawns are fighting two bishops, which is always interesting. Generally, these positions are not worse for the side with the rook, and in this case, the computers assess the chances as equal. Still, I think White can fight for the advantage. It does not surprise me that White did eventually win, as I reckon he will do so in every other game, on average, in such positions;

A42) 22...\textit{\texttt{xe}4}!N 23.\textit{\texttt{d}d}4 23.\textit{\texttt{xb}}\textit{b}8 \textit{\texttt{g}4} 24.\textit{\texttt{d}d}7 \textit{\texttt{xe}2}+ 25.\textit{\texttt{f}f}1 \textit{\texttt{f}f}7. 23...\textit{\texttt{xd}}\textit{d}4 24.\textit{\texttt{f}f}1 \textit{\texttt{g}4} 24...\textit{\texttt{xc}2} 25.\textit{\texttt{cl}}. 25...\textit{\texttt{g}x}\textit{g}4 \textit{\texttt{g}x}\textit{g}4 26.\textit{\texttt{xb}}\textit{b}7 \textit{\texttt{c}6} 27.\textit{\texttt{xf}6} \textit{\texttt{e}5}=

B) 18.0-0 This move again leads to a forced draw and the sides have no way to avoid this. 18...\textit{\texttt{d}5} 19.\textit{\texttt{xd}5} \textit{\texttt{xd}5=} 20.\textit{\texttt{d}d}5 20.\textit{\texttt{g}4}?! \textit{\texttt{c}5}+ 21.\textit{\texttt{xc}5}! \textit{\texttt{xc}5}+ 22.\textit{\texttt{h}h}1 \textit{\texttt{f}f}4 23.\textit{\texttt{xf}4} \textit{\texttt{c}6}+ 24.\textit{\texttt{d}d}2 \textit{\texttt{x}g}4 25.\textit{\texttt{d}d}5 \textit{\texttt{h}h}3 26.\textit{\texttt{e}7}+ \textit{\texttt{f}f}7 27.\textit{\texttt{xc}6} \textit{\texttt{x}g}2+ 28.\textit{\texttt{x}g}2 \textit{\texttt{xc}6} 29.\textit{\texttt{g}x}5= 20...\textit{\texttt{xf}6} This game, between two top players, one a leading expert on the variation, confirms the drawing tendency of this type of position. 21.\textit{\texttt{d}d}3 21.\textit{\texttt{g}4} \textit{\texttt{xf}1}+ 22.\textit{\texttt{xf}1} \textit{\texttt{xd}2} 23.\textit{\texttt{f}3} \textit{\texttt{f}6} 24.\textit{\texttt{b}3} \textit{\texttt{h}8} 25.\textit{\texttt{h}3}+ \textit{\texttt{g}8} 26.\textit{\texttt{b}3}=. 21...\textit{\texttt{xf}1}+ 22.\textit{\texttt{xf}1} \textit{\texttt{c}5}+ 23.\textit{\texttt{e}3} \textit{\texttt{xe}3}+ 24.\textit{\texttt{xe}3} \textit{\texttt{e}6} 25.\textit{\texttt{c}4} \textit{\texttt{xc}4} 26.\textit{\texttt{e}8}+ \textit{\texttt{h}7} 27.\textit{\texttt{h}5}+ \textit{\texttt{g}8} with a draw by perpetual in Gashimov-Karjakin, Nice rapid 2010.

Back to the position after 18.\textit{\texttt{f}1}. Here Black has four continuations. Many games have been played, between strong players, and have finished in draws, in many different ways.

18...\textit{\texttt{g}4}? Although here Black had other ways to equalise, Grischuk showed how to do so best. See his next game against Gashimov, at Linares 2010, given below.

A) 18...\textit{\texttt{e}8} 19.\textit{\texttt{d}5} \textit{\texttt{d}8=} 20.\textit{\texttt{xf}6} 20.\textit{\texttt{d}d}8 \textit{\texttt{c}3} 21.\textit{\texttt{xc}6} \textit{\texttt{xd}5}=. 20...\textit{\texttt{xf}6} 20...\textit{\texttt{xf}6} 20...\textit{\texttt{g}x}6? 21.\textit{\texttt{g}4}± 21.\textit{\texttt{xf}6}+ 21.\textit{\texttt{g}4} \textit{\texttt{d}7}. 21...\textit{\texttt{g}x}6 22.\textit{\texttt{f}5} \textit{\texttt{xe}6} 23.\textit{\texttt{g}6}+ \textit{\texttt{f}8} 24.\textit{\texttt{xf}6}+ \textit{\texttt{f}7} 25.\textit{\texttt{xe}6} \textit{\texttt{g}x}5 26.\textit{\texttt{h}8}+ \textit{\texttt{g}8} 27.\textit{\texttt{f}6}+ \textit{\texttt{f}7}=
Chapter 2 — The Poisoned Pawn with 8. \( \text{Nd}3 \)

B) 18...d5?! is the only continuation where White, after a forcing spell of play, obtains a small advantage: 19.exd5 \( \text{exd5} \) 20.\( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{wxd5} \)

\[
\begin{align*}
21.\text{c7!} & & 21.\text{xf8+} & & 22.\text{c7} \\
\text{exh3} & & \text{exd5} & & \text{b5} \\
24.\text{c4} & & \text{d6} & & \text{25.\text{b3}} \\
\text{e6} & & \text{26.e3} & & \text{xd5} \\
27.\text{cxd5} & & \text{Black has} & & \text{an extra pawn, but the two strong bishops give White compensation, and a draw is the most likely outcome, Krivoborodov-Womacka, Schwarzach 2010.} \\
21...\text{exh3} & & 22.\text{xd5} & & \text{Black is slightly worse, but because of the reduced material, White does not have great winning chances.} \\
22...\text{xf1?} & & 22...\text{f6?!} & & 23.\text{f3} \\
\text{g2} & & 24.\text{xf6+ gxf6} & & 25.\text{g3} \\
\text{c6} & & 26.\text{h4=} & & 23.\text{xe7+ f7} \\
24.\text{xf1 e8} & & 25.\text{gxg5 b5} & & 26.a4 \\
26.\text{d2!?} & & \text{exe7} & & 27.\text{exe7} \\
28.\text{g2} & & \text{a7} & & 29.a4= \\
26...\text{c6=} & & \text{Kurnosov-Nepomniachtchi, Irkutsk 2010;} \\
\text{C) Also good is 18...\text{xe4}?!N} \\
\end{align*}
\]

19.\( \text{xf8+} \) 20.\( \text{b6} \) \( \text{e8=} \) 21.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 22.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 22...\( \text{e7} \) 23.\( \text{xg5} \) \( \text{hxg5} \) 24.\( \text{xg5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 25.\( \text{xd6} \) — an interesting fighting position with mutual chances. White has the two bishops, but his king is in the centre and his pawns are broken. 23.\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{c6} \) 24.\( \text{gxg5} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 25.\( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{xa2} \)

Black is slightly worse, but because of the reduced material, White does not have great winning chances.

27...\( \text{h1}!! \) The fearless bishop finds the only square in the back of the enemy position, where it can avoid the chasing of the white pieces.

28.\( \text{h7+} \) \( \text{h8} \) 29.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 30.\( \text{gxg6} \) \( \text{g7} \) 31.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 32.\( \text{e4=} \)

19.\( \text{g4} \)

And now the long-awaited Gashimov-Grischuk game. I think both players had analysed the position very thoroughly and knew the final assessment of the position, but Gashimov decided to test his opponent all the same.

20.\( \text{xf8+} \)

20...\( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) and now:

A) 21.\( \text{xf8+} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 22.\( \text{h8+} \) \( \text{f7=} \) 23.\( \text{d5} \) 24.\( \text{h5+} \) \( \text{g8} \) (23...\( \text{f8} \) 24.\( \text{h8=} \) 25.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 26.\( \text{hxg4} \) \( \text{g4} \) 27.\( \text{e8+} \) \( \text{h7} \) 28.\( \text{f6+} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 29.\( \text{f7+} \) \( \text{g7} \)

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It is perpetual in any case, but it was possible to make it prettier by first sacrificing the rook: 26.\texttt{\textendash}b7+ \texttt{\textendash}b7 27.\texttt{\textendash}h5+ \texttt{\textendash}f8 28.\texttt{\textendash}h8+=.

B) 21.\texttt{\textendash}d5 \texttt{\textendash}xc2 22.\texttt{\textendash}c3 22.\texttt{\textendash}xf8+ \texttt{\textendash}f8 23.\texttt{\textendash}h8+ \texttt{\textendash}f7 24.\texttt{\textendash}h5+=.

22...\texttt{\textendash}c6 23.\texttt{\textendash}xf8+ 23.\texttt{\textendash}c1?

23...\texttt{\textendash}f2!! 24.\texttt{\textendash}h5 \texttt{\textendash}d3+ 25.\texttt{\textendash}e2 \texttt{\textendash}xc1+ 26.\texttt{\textendash}xc1 \texttt{\textendash}d4+ 27.\texttt{\textendash}e3 \texttt{\textendash}b2 28.\texttt{\textendash}b1 \texttt{\textendash}a3 29.\texttt{\textendash}xd4 \texttt{\textendash}c5++. 23...\texttt{\textendash}xf8 24.\texttt{\textendash}h8+ \texttt{\textendash}f7 25.\texttt{\textendash}h5+ g6 26.\texttt{\textendash}h7+ \texttt{\textendash}f6 27.\texttt{\textendash}h8+ \texttt{\textendash}f7 28.\texttt{\textendash}h7+=

Conclusion

With 8.\texttt{\textendash}d3, White sacrifices a pawn and tries to seize the initiative. This move has several pluses. In many variations, White has interesting ideas involving \texttt{\textendash}h5 and \texttt{\textendash}d5, which show that the black queen on a3 is not very well-placed. The queen on d3 can quickly come to the kingside, to the squares g3 or h3, from where she will attack the enemy king, something which is not possible if the queen instead goes to d2.

Black can neutralise White's initiative, in the main by sacrificing the pawn back, which stabilises the position. The games of top players confirm this.
This is not a principled move, nor the strongest one, but it has been played many times by Gata Kamsky. The idea is to avoid the theoretical debate surrounding the sacrifice of the b2-pawn, and simply to play a dynamically roughly equal position. But if Black plays very accurately, he has no problems.

Black just needs to castle to complete his development, but if we think a little further, it becomes clear that he has no need to hurry, as he has other strong moves, which pose problems for White.
12...b4!

In case of 12...\texttt{b7} we have:

A) 13.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{wh}}h3} \texttt{b4} 14.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{de}}}2 14...\texttt{b1} e5 15.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}1d2 a5 16.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}c4 a4 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}bd2 0-0=.

\textbf{C 1) 15...0-0-0!?} 16.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf}}}f6 \texttt{xf6} 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}}e3 \texttt{b8} 18.c3 d5 19.e5 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}}d7=;

C2) 15...0-0N 16.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}xh6 gxh6. The provoked sacrifice looks winning, but when we analyse further, it turns out that White has no more than perpetual:

C2 1) 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}xh6 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}}f8 18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}}}g5+ \texttt{e}f8 18...\texttt{h}h8 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}h4+ \texttt{g}g7 20.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}g5+=. 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}}}h6+ \texttt{g}g8 19...\texttt{e}e8 20.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}ed4 leads to a sharp position, in which White has good compensation for the sacrificed piece, but Black also has his plusses. The position is dynamically equal. 20.e5 White can also avoid the draw. 20...\texttt{d}xe5 21.\texttt{fxe}5 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}x e5 21...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}xe5 22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}g5+ \texttt{f}f8 23.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}h6+ \texttt{g}g8 24.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}ed4 (24.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}g5+=) 24...\texttt{d}d5 25.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}}e3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}eg4 26.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}}g3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}d6 27.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}xf6 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}}xg3 28.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}g5+ \texttt{f}f8 29.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}xg3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}f2 30.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}}}f1 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}}xd3 31.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}xd3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}e7 32.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}e5 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}c7= Black keeps an extra exchange, but White's attack is enough for perpetual check. 22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}f4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}e4 23.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}}}g6 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}}}xg6 24.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}xg6+ \texttt{f}f8 25.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}}xe4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}}xe4 26.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}}xe4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}f5 27.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}h6+ \texttt{g}g8 28.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}}d3 28.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}}de1 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}}}f8 29.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}d2 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}c5 30.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}}}xb4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}}}xb3 31.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}}}xb3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}}}g7=. 28...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}}}g5 29.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}xe6+ \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}x e6 30.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}xe6=.

C2 2) 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}}ed4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}}}f8 17...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}}}f8 18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}x}}}xe6 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}}}xe6 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}xe6+\texttt{e}e5 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}}e5 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}}xe5 20.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}xh6 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}}d5 transposes to 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}}xh6.

D) If there is a chance to prevent the move ...\texttt{b5}-\texttt{b4}, then one should take it,
because after it the white knight on c3 lacks a good retreat square. 13.a3 h6
13...0-0-0 14.f5 e5 15.\(\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 16.d5 \textit{xd}5 17.exd5 \textit{b}8 18.g3
\textit{c}8 19.h4 \textit{f}6 20.\textit{b}1 \textit{b}6. 14.\textit{h}3
and now:

D1) 14...\textit{c}8 and now:

D11) 15.\textit{d}4 \textit{b}6 16.\textit{xe}6 \textit{xe}6
17.e5 dxe5 18.\textit{g}6+ \textit{d}8 19.\textit{xe}5 \textit{d}5
20.\textit{xe}7+ \textit{xe}7 21.\textit{e}4! The only
move which gives White the possibility
to continue the attack, although even
here, Black has many normal continu­
tions and the assessment is one of
dynamic equality. 21.\textit{f}7?! \textit{xc}3
(21...\textit{c}6?!?) 22.\textit{xc}3 \textit{d}5 23.\textit{h}5
\textit{f}8 24.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}7 25.\textit{b}4 \textit{g}5 26.\textit{d}6
\textit{xf}3 27.gxf3 \textit{xd}6 28.exd6 \textit{f}5,

An unusual position, in which two
white rooks fight against two knights
and a bishop. The position is approxi­
mately equal, although I would slightly
prefer White. 21.\textit{xe}4 22.\textit{xe}4 \textit{e}8
22...\textit{xc}3 23.\textit{xc}3 \textit{f}8\infty. 23.\textit{ed}4
\textit{c}5 24.b4 \textit{b}7 25.\textit{d}6 \textit{xd}6 26.\textit{xd}6
\textit{c}6 27.d7+ 27.\textit{xe}6 \textit{c}7!! This had
to be foreseen in order for Black to go
in for this position. The rook remains
under attack, and defends the square e7,
and both knight and rook are untouch­
able because of the pin. 27...\textit{f}7
28.dxc8\textit{xc}8=.

D12) 15.\textit{b}1! A strong prophylactic
waiting move. Black cannot castle
queenside, whilst castling kingside is
extremely dangerous because of \textit{h}6.
And so it is not obvious what useful
moves Black has left. 15...\textit{b}8 A move
with the idea of sacrificing the ex­
change on c3. The strange 15...\textit{f}8 is
the computer’s first choice, but I do not
even want to look at it, as it is a very
weak move, after which White can con­
tinue how he likes and will have a clear
advantage. 16.\textit{xf}6! If 16.g4 \textit{xc}3!
17.bxc3 \textit{c}7 18.\textit{xf}6 gxf6! 19.\textit{f}1
\textit{b}6 Black has excellent compensation
for the sacrificed exchange. 16...\textit{xf}6
17.e5 dxe5 18.\textit{g}6 \textit{f}8\quad 19.\textit{xe}5
\textit{dx}6 20.\textit{xf}6 0-0 21.\textit{d}4=

D2) 14...0-0-0

15.\textit{xf}6! 15.\textit{h}4 \textit{g}5 16.\textit{f}2 \textit{xf}4\infty.
15...\textit{xf}6 After 15...\textit{xf}6?!N 16.\textit{xb}5
\textit{xc}3 17.\textit{xd}7+ \textit{xd}7! 18.bxc3 \textit{e}7!
19.\textit{e}3 Black has some advantage
because of the pawns, but if he exchanges
queens he will have an excellent posi­
tion, and can even look to take the ad­
vantage. 16.a4!N We have a position
with a great deal of play. It is very strange
that this move has not been played yet,
because it is White’s only chance to fight
for an advantage. If 16.\textit{b}1 \textit{b}8 17.f5
e5 18.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}8 19.\textit{d}5 \textit{xd}5 20.\textit{xd}5
\textit{b}6 21.\textit{g}4 \textit{c}7 22.h4 \textit{d}7 23.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}6
24.\( \text{Re}4 \) \( \text{Dc}5 \) 25.\( \text{Dxc}5 \) \( \text{Dxc}5 \) 26.\( \text{Dxe}2 \), Akopian-Van Wely, Cap d’Agde 1996; or 16.\( \text{Dd}5 \) \( \text{Dxd}5 \) 17.\( \text{exd}5 \) \( \text{Dxd}5 \) 18.\( \text{Dxb}5 \) \( \text{Db}7 \), which is quite unclear, but I like Black’s position on account of the two bishops and central pawns. 16...\( \text{bxa}4 \) 17.\( \text{Dxa}4 \) \( \text{Db}8 \) 18.\( \text{Db}1 \) \( \text{Cc}8 \) 19.\( \text{We}3 \).

13.\( \text{Dc}2 \)

No good is 13.\( \text{Dd}5 ? \) \( \text{exd}5 \) 14.\( \text{exd}5 \) \( \text{f8}! ? \).

13...\( \text{Db}7 \) 14.\( \text{Db}4 \)

After 14.\( \text{Dd}1 \) \( \text{h6} \) 15.\( \text{Db}4 \) \( \text{Cc}5 ! \) 16.\( \text{Dxc}5 \) (16.\( \text{Dg}3 \) \( \text{Dxd}3 \) 17.\( \text{Dxd}3 \) \( \text{g5} \) 18.\( \text{f}x\text{g}5 \) \( \text{Dd}7 \) 19.\( \text{Wd}2 \) \( \text{e}5 \)) 16...\( \text{Dxc}5 \) we get a very interesting position, where Black is at least not worse.

14...\( \text{Cc}5 \) 15.\( \text{Db}1 \) 15...\( \text{h6} ! \)

The alternative is 15...\( \text{0-0} \) and now:

A) 16.\( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{Dxd}3 \) 16...\( \text{Da}c8 \) 17.\( \text{Wh}3 \) \( \text{Dxd}3 \) 18.\( \text{exd}3 \) \( \text{a5} \) 19.\( \text{Dxf}6 \) \( \text{Dxf}6 \) 20.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{Dxe}7 \) 21.\( \text{We}3 \) \( \text{Da}6 \) 22.\( \text{Cc}1 \) 17.\( \text{Wxd}3 \)

17.\( \text{cx}d3 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 17...\( \text{Dxg}4 \) 18.\( \text{Dxe}7 \) \( \text{We}7 \) 19.\( \text{Dg}1 \) \( \text{Df}6 \) 20.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{dx}e5 \) 21.\( \text{fxe}5 \) \( \text{Dc}4 \) 22.\( \text{Dde}1 \) \( \text{Cc}5 \) 23.\( \text{Wh}3 \) \( \text{Dxb}3 \) 24.\( \text{axb}3 \) \( \text{Dd}5 \) 25.\( \text{Dg}3 \) \( \text{g6} \) 26.\( \text{Wh}6 \) \( \text{Dad}8 \) 27.\( \text{Dg}1 \) \( \text{Db}7 \) 28.\( \text{Wh}3 \) \( \text{f5} \) 29.\( \text{Dxe}6+ \) \( \text{Dxg}6 \) 30.\( \text{Wh}8+ \) \( \text{Df}7 \) 31.\( \text{Dh}7+ \) \( \text{Df}8 \) 32.\( \text{Dxe}7+ \) \( \text{Dxe}7 \) ! After what has been in some sense a forced period of play, we have a position with a white queen against two black rooks, but Black has the advantage, thanks to his passed f-pawn. However, the problem for him is his very weak king;

B) 16.\( \text{Dxc}5 \) \( \text{Dxc}5 \) 17.\( \text{Wh}3 \) ! \( \text{c4} ! \) 18.\( \text{e}5 ! \) 18.\( \text{Df}1 \) \( \text{Dad}8 \) 18...\( \text{ex}d3 \) 19.\( \text{Dxf}6 \) \( \text{Dxc}2+ \) 20.\( \text{Dxc}2 \) \( \text{Da}c8 \) 21.\( \text{Dd}4 \) \( \text{Cc}5 \) 22.\( \text{Dx}f7 \) \( \text{Df}8 \) 23.\( \text{Dc}3 \) \( \text{Dxd}4 \) 24.\( \text{Dxd}4 \) \( \text{Dc}2+ \) 25.\( \text{Da}1 \) \( \text{a}5 \)

16.\( \text{Dh}4 \) 0-0 17.\( \text{Df}2 \) \( \text{Dxd}3 \) 18.\( \text{cx}d3 \) \( \text{Dfc}8 \)

The position is very sharp, but in my opinion, Black is slightly better.

16...\( \text{h}6 \) !

Here too, Black is slightly better, because of the bishop pair, central pawns and the advance of the a-pawn.

Conclusion

With 8.\( \text{Db}3 \), White does not sacrifice the b2-pawn, but wishes to complete his development and play a position with equal material. But this line is not dangerous for Black and there are practically no forcing lines that need to be remembered. The important thing is just to fight!
Part II
The Dangerous 6.\texttt{c}4

The move 6.\texttt{c}4 was preferred by the great Bobby Fischer himself. Fischer’s handling of the position was quite original. He is the only great player who preferred, in the Sicilian Defence, to retain the light-squared bishop, rather than the dark-squared one.

Let us go on to the specific position. The bishop move to \texttt{c}4 is one of the most aggressive, dangerous and principled continuations here. After this move, White has two possible and equally sharp continuations, which are distinguished by where he castles.

After queenside castling, we reach a position very similar to that which arises after 6.\texttt{g}5.

But I prefer kingside castling. This is because if we choose 6.\texttt{c}4 instead of 6.\texttt{g}5, then it makes sense to continue with moves that fit into the general concept of the move 6.\texttt{c}4. White’s idea is quite simple and, in my opinion, quite logical. White puts his bishop on \texttt{b}3, and his knight on \texttt{d}4, attacking the square \texttt{e}6. After kingside castling, White’s idea is to advance his \texttt{f}-pawn. The pawn aims to reach \texttt{f}5, and then there is a choice of further continuations, depending on how Black reacts.

In the variation with 6.\texttt{c}4, White has problems defending the \texttt{e}4-pawn, due to the fact that his light-squared bishop is on the \texttt{a}2-\texttt{g}8 diagonal, and so cannot help to defend the \texttt{e}4-pawn, which instead comes under pressure from the enemy light-squared bishop. The advance \texttt{e}4-\texttt{e}5 is generally considered a strategic mistake, because Black exchanges his \texttt{d}6-pawn for the \texttt{f}4-pawn, after which White has three pawn islands and the pawn on \texttt{e}5 becomes weak. But \texttt{e}4-\texttt{e}5 is also a concrete move, and if White finds a concrete way to make use of it, then he has the right to play it, although it does contain a definite element of risk.
Chapter 4

White Retreats the Bishop to b3

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 \(f_6\) 5.e3 a6 6.e3 e6 7.b3

In this chapter, we will examine the variation involving the transfer of the bishop to b3, which is the way Fischer preferred to play this line from 1959 onwards. White moves the bishop away from the twin threats of ...d6-d5 and ...\(f_2\)xe4. At the same time, he prepares the march of the f-pawn and for the moment, does not spend a tempo on kingside castling and retains the possibility of castling queenside. But Black understands the dangers he faces, and decides immediately to neutralise the bishop by bringing his knight to d7 and c5; after the exchange of the bishop, Black will have no problem with the defence of e6, or along the a2-g8 diagonal.

A) This move is one of the most principled and dangerous for Black, who in several lines obtains a position similar to those arising after 6.e3. The danger of the line consists in the fact that White places his pieces aggressively, whilst retaining the option of castling on either side, which retains a degree of flexibility and danger for Black. 8.0-0 \(e_5\) and now:
Chapter 4 — White Retreats the Bishop to b3

A1) 9.\(\text{Be}1\) \(\text{Be}7\) 10.f4 10.\(\text{Wf}3\) 0-0 11.\(\text{Wg}3\) transposes to line D: 8.\(\text{Wf}3\).

A10) 9.lf3 10.\(\text{Wf}3\) transposes to line D: 8.\(\text{Wf}3\).

A2) 9.\(\text{Wf}3\) \(\text{Be}7\) again transposes to line D: 8.\(\text{Wf}3\);

A3) 9.f4 transposes to line F: 8.f4;

A4) 9.\(\text{We}2\) \(\text{Be}7\) 10.f4 0-0 11.\(\text{Wb}1\) and now:

A41) 11.\(\text{Wd}7\) 12.\(\text{We}3\) After 12.e5 \(\text{Qxb}3\) 13.\(\text{Qxb}3\) \(\text{Qd}5\) 14.\(\text{Qf}3\) \(\text{Qxc}3\) 15.\(\text{Qxc}3\) b5 Black has an excellent position, although White also has his trump, with the active rook on the third rank and attacking prospects. 12...\(\text{Qxe}4\) 13.\(\text{Qxe}4\) \(\text{Qxe}4\) 14.f5 d5 15.\(\text{Qxe}6\) 15.c4? e5!\(\text{f}3\), for example 16.\(\text{Qc}2\) \(\text{Qd}6\) 17.\(\text{Qb}4\) dxc4 18.\(\text{Qc}2\) f6 19.\(\text{Qd}5\) \(\text{Qd}8\) 20.\(\text{Qb}6\) a5 21.b3 \(\text{Ma}6\) 22.\(\text{Qxd}8\) \(\text{Qxd}8\) 23.\(\text{Qxc}4\) \(\text{Qc}6\) 24.\(\text{Qad}1\) b6 25.\(\text{Qf}3\) \(\text{Qa}6\) 26.\(\text{Qh}3\) Black is winning. TomczakNegi, Cappelle la Grande 2012.

A42) 11.\(\text{Wb}6\) 12.e5 \(\text{Qxb}3\) 13.\(\text{Qxb}3\)

A421) Black has eliminated the \(\text{Qb}3\), but he has concrete problems, associated with his development, so he needs to play some accurate moves. It seems to me that Maxim did not manage to solve all the problems he faced in the opening. 13.\(\text{Qc}8\) 14.a4 \(\text{Qd}7\) 15.\(\text{Qe}3\) \(\text{Qc}7\) 16.a5 \(\text{Qc}8\) 17.\(\text{Qad}1\) d5 18.\(\text{Qb}6\) \(\text{Qc}4\) 19.\(\text{Qe}3\) f6 20.\(\text{Qg}1\) \(\text{Qxe}5\) 21.\(\text{Qxe}5\) \(\text{Qc}7\) 22.\(\text{Qxf}8\) 23.\(\text{Wd}3\) \(\text{Qxd}3\) 24.\(\text{Qxd}3\) \(\text{Qc}8\) 25.\(\text{Qc}5\) — Black’s opening troubles are now behind him, thanks to his accurate play in the middlegame. The position is absolutely equal, Kuzubov-Vachier-Lagrave, Spain tt 2011;

A422) 13...\(\text{Qxe}5!\) Black has eliminated the \(\text{Qb}3\), but he has concrete problems, associated with his development, so he needs to play some accurate moves. It seems to me that Maxim did not manage to solve all the problems he faced in the opening. 13.\(\text{Qc}8\) 14.a4 \(\text{Qd}7\) 15.\(\text{Qe}3\) \(\text{Qc}7\) 16.a5 \(\text{Qc}8\) 17.\(\text{Qad}1\) d5 18.\(\text{Qb}6\) \(\text{Qc}4\) 19.\(\text{Qe}3\) f6 20.\(\text{Qg}1\) \(\text{Qxe}5\) 21.\(\text{Qxe}5\) \(\text{Qc}7\) 22.\(\text{Qxf}8\) 23.\(\text{Wd}3\) \(\text{Qxd}3\) 24.\(\text{Qxd}3\) \(\text{Qc}8\) 25.\(\text{Qc}5\) — Black’s opening troubles are now behind him, thanks to his accurate play in the middlegame. The position is absolutely equal, Kuzubov-Vachier-Lagrave, Spain tt 2011;
superior development, Black needs to exchange a pair of pieces and simplify. The text, followed by ...\( \text{d5} \), successfully solves his problems. 14.\( \text{fxe5} \) \( \text{d5} \) 15.\( \text{e4} \) a5 16.\( \text{d3} \) 16.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{xg5} \) 17.\( \text{xg5} \) \( \text{e3} \) 18.\( \text{h5} \) h6 19.\( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{h} \) 20.\( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 21.\( \text{f1+} \) \( \text{g8} \) 22.\( \text{e8+} \) \( \text{h7} \) 23.\( \text{h5=} \). 16...f5 17.\( \text{exf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 18.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d8} \) 19.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 20.\( \text{exe4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 21.\( \text{xd5} \) exd5=.

B) The bishop sacrifice 8.\( \text{xe6?} \) is premature, because all the white pieces are still on their initial squares, and with such pieces, White is not ready for active operations. 8...\( \text{fxe6} \) 9.\( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{b6} \) 10.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{c5} \)

11.\( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 12.0-0 \( \text{e6=} \). Despite the fact that he has an extra piece, Black’s position is not yet winning, because White has a very strong pawn structure, Black cannot castle kingside and he has a weak pawn on d6.

C) 8.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{c5} \)

C1) 9.\( \text{f3} \) b5 This position has arisen six times, with Black winning all six. Even without the computer, it is clear that Black is better, as the white queen is bad on f3, and Black intends ...\( \text{b7} \), when it will not be clear how to defend the pawn e4: 10.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{b7} \) 11.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 12.\( \text{xf6} \) exf6 13.f3 h5 14.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{h6} \) 15.a4 b4 16.\( \text{a2} \) a5 17.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{e7} \) 18.\( \text{f2} \) (White’s position is strategically lost, and Black only has to conduct the game accurately to a conclusion. White cannot take on d6, because Black plays \( \text{a6} \) and \( \text{hd8} \)) 18...\( \text{hd8} \) and Black is winning Edvardsen-l’Ami, Reykjavik 2012;

C2) 9.\( \text{f3} \) As I have said several times already, the combination of the move f2-f3 with the transfer of the bishop to b3 is not very good; White needs either to play \( \text{b3} \) and f4-f5, or else play f2-f3 and leave the bishop on f1. 9...\( \text{e7} \) 10.\( \text{d2} \) 10.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{c7} \) 11.g4 b5 12.g5 \( \text{d7} \) and now:

It’s wise for White to prevent the ...b5-b4 push here: 13.a3 (13.h4 b4?N 14.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{xh3} \) 15.axb3 \( \text{c5=} \)) 13...\( \text{xb3} \) 14.\( \text{xb3} \) 0-0 and Black is slightly better. 10...0-0

C2.1) 11.\( \text{b0} \) This move is not even worth examining in detail, as it is so toothless. After castling, Black is simply better and plays 11...\( \text{c7} \) with the idea of ...b5 and ...\( \text{b7} \).
C22) 11...g4 This move is also not dangerous for Black, but it is stronger than 11.0-0, since it is obvious that White should castle queenside and attack on the kingside, even though Black is faster.

11...d6! 12.g5 c7 13.0-0-0 b5 Black has an excellent position; he wants to play ...b7, with the idea of ...b5-b4 and ...d6-d5 and, depending on circumstances, either take the bishop on b3 or trap it by ...a6-a5. 14.b1 b6 15.a3 b8 16.h4 ca4 17.ca4 bxa4 18.a2 d5 19.exd5 cxd5 20.bxd5 c6 21.f4 d6 22.xd6 xd6 23.a1 d7 24.h5 b6 25.h6 and Black won in Akylbekov-Amanov, Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010.

D) 8.f3?! c5 9.0-0 9.e3? b5 10.0-0 (10.e5 b7) 10.0-0-0? b7 as Black will take on e4, Gdanski-Jasiukowski, Warsaw 1990) 10...b7 11.e2 e7! If Black plays ...fxe4 White takes with the knight on e4 and in case of a b5, after which a dynamically equal position arises, but after the simple developing move e7 Black has the advantage. 9...e7 and now:

D1) 10.e1 is not dangerous for Black, because it is very slow and Black manages to complete his development favourably. He has many ways to obtain good play, and can even fight for the advantage: 10...0-0 11.g3 and now:

D11) 11...d7 12.f3N 12.a3?! xb3 13.cxb3 c8 14.h6 c8 15.ad1 f4 16.g4 f5 17.exf5 exf5 18.wf3 gxh6 and White didn’t have enough for the piece: 19.e6 xe6 20.xe6 d7 21.xd6 c8 22.d5 g7 23.h3 h8 24.d4 g4 0-1 Tissir-Anastasian, Abu Dhabi 2010.

12...e5 13.g5 c6 14.d5 e6 with balanced play;

D12) 11...h8!? 12.g5 h6 13.d2 d7 14.ad1 b5 15.a3 b6 16.c3 cxb3 17.cxb3 e5 18.c4 c6 19.b4 g8 20.h3 c7 21.h2 b5 22.g3 Black is slightly better and after the correct exchange sacrifice 22...xc3 23.xc3 d4xe4, he retains a small but stable plus, thanks to his strong light-squared bishop and mobile pawn centre. De Firmian-Ivanchuk, Lucerne Wch-tt 1999;

D2) 10.g3 0-0 11.h6 e8 12.e3 12.ad1? xb3 13.axb3 e4 14.g4 f5 Again this trick. This hidden trap is not so obvious, at a brief glance at the position. It turns out that the white queen has no squares on the g-file and if she leaves the g-file, then the bishop on h6 is lost. 15.exf5 exf5 16.h5 gxh6=. 12...h4! 13.g4 h6! I had looked at all of this before the game. The bishop on f6 is very important, as I can force the queen away from the dangerous square g3 and play b5 in peace. 14.c3 b5 15.ad1 In case of 15.a3 b7 16.a5 cxb3 17.axb3 c7 Black is slightly better. 15...c7 16.d3 b7 17.f3 dxb3 18.cxb3 c7 19.c1 c7 20.d1 c6 21.a5 d8 22.b3 e8 23.a5 d7 24.d2 c8 25.c1 d8 26.e2 26.a4 d5 27.e5 cxb4. 26...h6 27.c3 e5 A dynamically equal position, in which both sides have their chances.
White's advantage is that he controls the square d5 and does not allow Black active counterplay. Black has the plus that he has the better pawn structure and a strong light-squared bishop. Tomic-Andriasyan, Plovdiv Ech 2012;

E) 8.g4? is not a very logical move, as with the bishop on b3, White should be advancing the f-pawn, so as to create a weakness on e6. 8...c5 9.e2 h6

10.f3

10...d7N Because there have not been many games in this line, I have analysed the position further myself. I believe the text move is the strongest here, with the idea of ...c8 and the advance of the b-pawn, and this plan can be carried out quite rapidly. 11.e3 c8 Black is better, as the b3 does nothing. Black will soon play ...b7-b5 and ...b5-b4, whilst White will have to play d2, to free the e2-square for the king;

F) 8.f4 c5 This move is the strongest and most principled to my mind, and it is no surprise that this is the move preferred by all the players from the top echelons. At first sight, it looks extremely dangerous, but when one looks at the games of the best players and analyses the resulting positions, it becomes clear that Black will have no problems, if he knows what he is doing:

F1) 9.f3 e7 9...e5?! 10.fxe5 dxe5 11.f5 xb3 12.axb3 xf5 13.xf5 10.0-0 0-0 11.e3 c7 12.g4 b5 13.g5 d7 14.d5 b7 (14...xb8) 15.xb7 xb7 16.h5 b4

We have reached a position very similar to those typical of the Scheveningen, with the sole difference that the light-squared bishops have left the board. In my opinion, this position is one of dynamic equality.

F2) 9.0-0 fxe4 9...c7 10.e2 e7 11.e5 dxe5 12.fxe5 d7 13.f4; 13.xf7 xf7 +. Of course, White was not obliged to sacrifice the rook, and could have played f4, after which he has a strong initiative. 10.xe4 xe4 11.f5 e5 12.h5

This is probably one of the sharpest positions which can arise in this variation. 12...d5 This move looks perfectly correct, mainly because it closes the diagonal of the bishop on b3, and opens that of the black bishop on f8, which will develop with tempo. After 12...e7 13.f3 c5 14.c6 a big fight is beginning. White's task is to open the centre at all costs, since he has already lost his central pawn, and has nothing to lose, so he seeks a way to keep on sacrificing. 14...e7 15.d5 a5 16.g5 a6 17.d8 f6 18.f7 g8 19.e3 g6 20.g5 g7 21.fxg6 xg6
Despite White’s threatening position, Black has an extra exchange. Admittedly, White has a pawn for it, but Black is still a little better, Topalov-Short, Amsterdam 1996. 18...\texttt{h8} 19.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{c7} 20.\texttt{c4}! 20.c3?! \texttt{d7}? 21.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{ab8} 22.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{xb2}\textsuperscript{f} Tatar Kis-Likavsky, Salgotarjan 2003. 20...\texttt{d7}? 21.\texttt{f2} and White must fight for a draw;

F2122) 15.\texttt{xd4}! \texttt{b6}! The only move that does not lose. Black does not rush to take the rook, since it is pinned anyway and is not going anywhere. With the text, he wins an important tempo, which he needs for breathing space. 16.\texttt{c3} \texttt{exd4} 17.\texttt{e2}+ \texttt{f8} 18.\texttt{e5} \texttt{h6}?!N A strong prophylactic move, which has several ideas: firstly opening a bolthole for the king, and secondly taking control of g5, and thirdly playing \ldots \texttt{xf6} and after the exchange on f6, the white bishop will not have the important square h6. 18...\texttt{f6} 19.\texttt{xd5}! \texttt{h6} 20.\texttt{xf4} \texttt{xf5} 21.\texttt{f1}! (21.\texttt{e5} \texttt{g6} 22.\texttt{f1} \texttt{g8} 23.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e4} 24.\texttt{xf7}+ \texttt{h7} 25.\texttt{g3} \texttt{xf7} 26.\texttt{xh7} led to a draw in Dembo-Prentos, Greece tt 2006) 21...\texttt{d8} 22.\texttt{c5} \texttt{g8} 23.\texttt{g3} \texttt{g6} 24.\texttt{e5} and White’s position is better because Black’s king on g8 is weak, his rook on h8 does not take part in the game and it is not clear how this rook can be brought into active play) 19.cxd4 \texttt{f6} 20.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xf5} 21.\texttt{e3} \texttt{xe6} 22.\texttt{c5}+ \texttt{e7} 23.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xe3}+ 24.\texttt{h1} \texttt{e7} 25.\texttt{f1} f6 26.\texttt{c1} and White has a good initiative;

F213) 14...0-0 15.\texttt{g4} 15.\texttt{e1}?! \texttt{xf4}+ 16.\texttt{h1} \texttt{g6} 17.\texttt{fxg6} \texttt{hxg6} 18.\texttt{h6} \texttt{e4} 19.\texttt{g5} \texttt{g7} 20.\texttt{xd8} \texttt{hx6} 21.\texttt{a5} \texttt{e6} 22.\texttt{ad1} \texttt{fc8} 23.c3 b6 24.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{cb8} 25.\texttt{c7} \texttt{h5} 26.\texttt{d4} a5. It is clear just from a glance at the position that the coordination of
the white pieces has been disrupted and Black’s pieces occupy excellent positions, whilst his strong pawn centre will soon start to advance. 15...\texttt{\textbackslash}xd4+ 16.\texttt{\textbackslash}h1 \texttt{e}4

The position reached is very interesting. White is attacking with all his pieces, but Black’s strong dark-squared bishop defends its king on its own. 17.c3!N 17.\texttt{\textbackslash}h6 \texttt{\textbackslash}h8 18.c3 transposes to 17.c3. 17...\texttt{\textbackslash}f6 18.\texttt{\textbackslash}h6 \texttt{\textbackslash}h8 19.\texttt{\textbackslash}e3 d4 20.cxd4 \texttt{\textbackslash}d7 21.c4±.

F22) 13...\texttt{\textbackslash}c7 This move is stronger than developing the bishop, as we will see. After 13...\texttt{\textbackslash}c5 White retains a small but stable advantage.

F221) 14.\texttt{\textbackslash}xd5 \texttt{\textbackslash}f6 15.\texttt{\textbackslash}xf7+ \texttt{\textbackslash}xf7 16.\texttt{\textbackslash}xe5+ \texttt{\textbackslash}e7 17.\texttt{\textbackslash}e2 \texttt{\textbackslash}f8 18.\texttt{\textbackslash}g5 and now:

F2211) 18...\texttt{\textbackslash}d6 19.\texttt{\textbackslash}e6+ \texttt{\textbackslash}xe6 20.fxe6

20...\texttt{\textbackslash}c7!N It is strange that, despite the fact that he is under a very strong at-
In principle, the older move 14...\(\text{d}6\) and the new knight move are equally good, but I always prefer to play something new and force the opponent to play a position that I am more familiar with and which suits my style more. 14...\(\text{d}6\) 15.\(\text{e}6\) \(\text{xe}6\) 16.\(\text{fxe}6\) 0-0 (16...\(\text{f}6!\) 17.\(\text{ef}7+\) \(\text{xf}7\) 18.\(\text{xf}7+\) \(\text{e}8\)) 17.\(\text{ef}7+\) \(\text{e}8\)? (18.\(\text{xe}4!\) \(\text{dxe}4\) 19.\(\text{h}1!\)) 18...\(\text{f}6!\) Papp Zhigalko, Plovdiv Ech 2012. 15.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{d}6\) 16.\(\text{f}4\) and now:

- F2221) 16...\(\text{e}4\) 17.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{xh}2+\) 18.\(\text{h}1\) \(\text{e}5\) 19.\(\text{xd}5\) 0-0 20.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 21.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{h}8\) An approximately equal position, but I prefer Black: he has the two bishops, although White has all his pieces centralised, and does not let Black develop;

- F2222) It is also possible not to give up the pawn and instead play like a computer with 16...\(\text{d}7?!\), but then White sacrifices a second pawn and has a strong attack. This may not frighten a computer or a player sitting at home in his armchair, but it seems to me that over the board, it is not so harmless. So we have a choice, either to hang onto the pawn and play like the computer, or to return the pawn for a normal position. 17.\(\text{f}6\) \(\text{gxf}6\) 18.\(\text{f}5\)

F3) 9.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{dxe}5\) 10.\(\text{fxe}5\) \(\text{fd}7\) 11.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{b}5!\) This is the way! It is important to develop the black queenside quickly!

12.\(\text{e}2\) 12.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{h}5\) 13.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{h}4\) 14.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{g}5\) 15.0-0-0 \(\text{gxf}4!\) (15...\(\text{e}7?\) 16.\(\text{c}6\) \(\text{xb}3\) 17.\(\text{axb}3\) \(\text{e}5\) 18.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{xc}6\) 19.\(\text{xd}5\) \(\text{b}7\) 20.\(\text{d}6\) Short-Kasparov, PCA World Championship 1993) 16.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{xe}6\)! 17.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{e}7\)! 18.\(\text{xd}7+\) \(\text{xd}7\) 19.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{a}7\)! 20.\(\text{he}1\) (20.\(\text{d}5?!\) \(\text{c}6\) 21.\(\text{fd}6+\) \(\text{xf}6\) 22.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{f}3\) 23.\(\text{he}1+\) \(\text{h}7\) 24.\(\text{fxe}7\) \(\text{xd}1\) 25.\(\text{exf}8\) \(\text{w}+\) \(\text{xf}8\) 26.\(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{h}3=\) ) 20...\(\text{e}6!\) 21.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{b}7\). White has compensation for the sacrificed piece, but it is only sufficient for equality, a sample variation being 22.\(\text{d}6\) \(\text{c}4\) 23.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{e}7\) 24.\(\text{f}6+\) \(\text{d}8\) 25.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 26.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{c}7\) 27.\(\text{a}8+\) \(\text{c}8\) 28.\(\text{a}7\) \(\text{c}7=\) 12...\(\text{b}7\)

13.0-0-0 13.0-0-0 \(\text{e}7\) 14.\(\text{ad}1\) 0-0 Black has solved his opening problems, and can now himself play to seize the initiative. 13...\(\text{b}6\) and now:

F31) 14.\(\text{hf}1!\) 14...\(\text{e}7\) 15.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{g}6!\) 15...0-0-0?! 16.\(\text{g}3?!\) (16.\(\text{xf}7\) \(\text{d}8\) 17.\(\text{h}6\)) 16...\(\text{h}6!\) \(\text{xe}5\) 17.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 18.\(\text{g}7\) 0-0-0 19.\(\text{xf}6\) 19.\(\text{xe}8\) \(\text{xe}8\) with excellent compensation for the exchange! 19...\(\text{e}3+\) 20.\(\text{d}3\) 20.\(\text{xd}3\) \(\text{xf}8\) 21.\(\text{xe}6+\) \(\text{xe}6\) 22.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{xf}6\) 23.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 24.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{e}3\) 25.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{h}5\) 26.\(\text{w}3\) \(\text{h}3\) 27.\(\text{g}xh3\) \(\text{e}8=\) 20...\(\text{xf}6\) 21.\(\text{xe}6+\) \(\text{xe}6\) 22.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{d}3\) 23.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{e}3\) 24.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{e}8\) 25.\(\text{xd}3\) \(\text{xe}6=\);

F32) 14.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{e}7\) 15.\(\text{h}4\) 0-0?! 15...0-0-0?! 16.\(\text{a}3!\) \(\text{b}8\) 17.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 18.\(\text{a}2\) \(\text{xd}4\) 19.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 20.\(\text{hf}1\) \(\text{h}8\) 21.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{b}8\) 22.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}5\) 23.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{gf}6\) 24.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{e}5\) 25.\(\text{bxc}5\) \(\text{xd}4\) 26.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{ex}d4\) 27.\(\text{exe}7\) \(\text{e}8\) 28.\(\text{w}7\) 1-0 Topalov-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 1996.
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

16...g5 hae8 17.wg4 th8? Black has solved the problem of castling, successfully developed his pieces, and is himself ready to strike a blow;

F33) 14.he1?! te7 15.wg4 g5 16.wg3 16.wc3 0-0-0= 16...h5 17.wc2 h4 Black has an excellent position!

F4) 9.f5 te7 10.wf3 In the event of 10.0-0?! e5 11.cf3 0-0 Black is at the very least not worse. 10...0-0 11.wc3 11.0-0 w d7 12.wc3 b5 13.a3 cb3 Black has the advantage. 11...e5 12.de2 xb3 13.axb3 b5 14.g4 b4 15.wa4 wb7? Black has eliminated the dangerous light-squared bishop, developed his piece, and is attacking the e4-pawn. Soon the central break ...d6-d5 will follow and Black’s advantage will be indisputable.

G) 8.wc2?! h6 9.wd2 9.g5 te7 10.f4 h6 11.wxf6 11.h4? wbxe4= 11...xh6 12.0-0 w c7 13.wf5 0-0= White has given up his strong bishop and weakened his dark squares, whilst Black at the same time has developed his pieces to active squares and will soon advance ...b5-b4, with a clear advantage.

8...wc5 9.f4

A) The slow play which arises after castling cannot be favourable for White, because his previous moves were ambitious and aggressive. It is clear why castling is less popular than other moves. 9.0-0 te7 10.wd1 wd7 11.b4 and now:

A1) 11...wb7?! 12.f4! 0-0 Here White is at a crossroads. He can play 13.wf3 and sacrifice the queen, but as we will see, this is not dangerous for Black, whilst the other move 13.e5 is very interesting and leads in a few moves to an ending which is very hard to assess. But I prefer the transition into the ending.

A11) 13.wf3 b5 14.wd5 wb7

15.wxf6 xh3 16.wxe7 xh8 17.xf3

Three pieces for the queen; this is one of the most interesting and difficult positions to assess. It seems to me that it is dynamically equal. Black should somewhere play ...d6-d5, closing in the bishop on b3. The weakness of the white e4-pawn, king and f4-pawn will then have its say. Black will sacrifice the exchange on e7, and try to exploit the weakness of the diagonal g1-a7. For example: 17...b4 18.xc4 wb3 19.xb3 wc2 20.wb6 wc8 21.wc4 d5 22.ac1 wb3 23.ad6 wb2 24.wc8 xec8 25.f5 a5 Despite the fact that the computer assesses the position in Black’s favour, such positions are absolutely unclear and tend to be won by whoever does not make the final mistake, Rublevsky-Sutovsky, Kragujevac tt 2009;

A12) 13.e5!? dxe5 14.wxe5 w e4 15.wxe7 wxc3 16.xd6 w xd6 17.wxd6 w x d1 18.wxd1 wd7 leads us to an interesting endgame, where White probably has a small advantage. But Black too has his ideas: he wants to play ...f7-f6 and ...e6-e5, and put his king on e6, whilst White wants meanwhile to start an attack on the kingside.
Chapter 4 — White Retreats the Bishop to b3

A2) 11...0-0 12.f4

A21) A real computer move, which probably only a computer could find. Usually in the Sicilian, the queen goes to the d8-a5 diagonal, whilst the d7-square is reserved for the knight or the light-squared bishop. 12...\textbf{\textit{d7}} 13.\textbf{\textit{e5}} 13.f5 b5 14.fxe6 fxe6 15.\textbf{\textit{xf5}} \textbf{\textit{cxb3}} 16.\textbf{\textit{xe7+}} \textbf{\textit{xe7}} 17.axb3 \textbf{\textit{b7}}= 13...\textbf{\textit{dxe5}} 14.\textbf{\textit{fxe5}} \textbf{\textit{d5}} 15.\textbf{\textit{xe7}} \textbf{\textit{xc3}} 16.\textbf{\textit{bxc3}} \textbf{\textit{xe7}} 17.\textbf{\textit{e3}} b5 18.\textbf{\textit{xc6}} In the event of 18.\textbf{\textit{gg3}} \textbf{\textit{xe4}} 19.\textbf{\textit{g4}} \textbf{\textit{b7}} 20.\textbf{\textit{e1}} \textbf{\textit{c5}} 21.\textbf{\textit{g3}} f5 22.exf6 \textbf{\textit{xf6}} 23.h3 \textbf{\textit{f7}}, at the very least Black is not worse, mainly because he will soon exchange off the bishop at b3, which would otherwise cause Black many problems. 18...\textbf{\textit{d7}} 19.\textbf{\textit{d6}} \textbf{\textit{b7}} 20.\textbf{\textit{e7+}} \textbf{\textit{h7}} 21.\textbf{\textit{b4}} \textbf{\textit{e8}} 22.\textbf{\textit{xc8}} \textbf{\textit{xc8}} Black has a clear advantage on account of his superior pawn structure and better pieces;

A22) It is also possible to play 12...\textbf{\textit{e8}}!??, reaching a new position, for example 13.f5 \textbf{\textit{xb3}} 14.axb3 \textbf{\textit{d7}} with equal play.

B) 9.\textbf{\textit{e2}} \textbf{\textit{e7}} 10.f4 h6 11.h5f6 \textbf{\textit{xf6}} 12.0-0-0 \textbf{\textit{c7}} transposes to 8.\textbf{\textit{e2}}.

9...\textbf{\textit{e7}} 10.\textbf{\textit{xf3}}

A) 10.0-0 \textbf{\textit{cxe4}} 11.\textbf{\textit{xe4}} \textbf{\textit{xe4}} 12.\textbf{\textit{xe7}} \textbf{\textit{xe7}} 13.\textbf{\textit{d3}} d5=.

10...\textbf{\textit{c7}}

White has a choice of which side to castle. If he castles kingside, then he avoids the counterattack on the queenside, but also loses the chance himself to attack on the other flank.

11.0-0-0 b5!\textbf{\textit{f}} Black begins an indirect attack on the pawn on e4, by attacking its defender and freeing the square b7 for his bishop, which will then attack the e4-pawn.

A) 12.\textbf{\textit{xf6}} \textbf{\textit{xf6}} 13.\textbf{\textit{g4}} In such positions, it is hard to recommend anything, since in bad positions, there are no good moves. Neither the g2-g4 push nor the knight sacrifice are sufficient for equality: 13.\textbf{\textit{xb5}} axb5 14.\textbf{\textit{xb5}} \textbf{\textit{xb3+}} 15.\textbf{\textit{xb3}} \textbf{\textit{c5}} 16.\textbf{\textit{xd6+}} \textbf{\textit{f8}} 17.e5 \textbf{\textit{e7}}; not 13.\textbf{\textit{f5?}} exf5 14.\textbf{\textit{xd5}} \textbf{\textit{d7}}+ or first 13...\textbf{\textit{xb3+}}!? 14.axb3 exf5 15.\textbf{\textit{d5}} \textbf{\textit{b7}} 16.exf5 0-0+ as in Istratecsu-Akopian, Mamaia Wch-jr 1991. 13...\textbf{\textit{b8}} 14.\textbf{\textit{b1}} b4 15.\textbf{\textit{e2}} \textbf{\textit{b7}} 16.\textbf{\textit{g3}} \textbf{\textit{h4}}=

B) 12.\textbf{\textit{he1}} \textbf{\textit{b7}} 13.f5!? \textbf{\textit{xb3+}} 14.axb3 \textbf{\textit{b4}}!\textbf{\textit{N}} After this strong move, White is obliged to sacrifice a piece, since he has no other moves. The complications are only good for Black 14...e5 15.\textbf{\textit{xf6}} \textbf{\textit{xf6}} 16.\textbf{\textit{d5}} \textbf{\textit{a5}} 17.\textbf{\textit{xf6+}} \textbf{\textit{gxf6}} 18.\textbf{\textit{e2}} \textbf{\textit{al+}} 19.\textbf{\textit{d2}} \textbf{\textit{a5+}} 20.\textbf{\textit{c1}} \textbf{\textit{a1+}} 21.\textbf{\textit{d2}} \textbf{\textit{a5+}} 22.\textbf{\textit{c1}} with a draw in Berndt-
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

Areschenko, Germany Bundesliga 2010/11. 15.fxe6 bxc3 16.exf7+ ♙xf7 17.bxc3 ♗he8=\n
\[11...0-0\]

Here White has a choice: either to develop his last piece, or to begin the attack at once. In my opinion, White lacks the time to involve his last piece, and he should go for the complications.

\[12.f5\]

A) After 12.\textit{\textbf{Aae1}} \textit{\textbf{Qxb3}} 13.\textit{\textbf{Qxb3}} b5 14.e5 \textit{\textbf{Qh7}} 15.\textit{\textbf{Wg3}} dxe5 16.fxe5 \textit{\textbf{Qh5}} 17.\textit{\textbf{Wh4}} \textit{\textbf{Qxg5}} 18.\textit{\textbf{Wxg5}} g6 19.a3 a5 20.\textit{\textbf{Qxb5}} \textit{\textbf{Wb6+}} 21.\textit{\textbf{Qd3}} \textit{\textbf{Qa6}} 22.c3 \textit{\textbf{Qxb5}} 23.\textit{\textbf{Qf3}} \textit{\textbf{Qc4}} 24.g4 \textit{\textbf{Qd5}} 25.\textit{\textbf{Qf2}} \textit{\textbf{Qg7}} 26.\textit{\textbf{Qe3}} \textit{\textbf{Qe8}} Black is winning, Palac-Kurnosov, Istanbul Ech 2003.

B) 12.\textit{\textbf{Aad1}}

\[12...h6!?N\] (the immediate 12...b5 was the old move) 13.\textit{\textbf{Qh4}} b5 14.e5 \textit{\textbf{Qb7}} 15.\textit{\textbf{We2}} dxe5 16.fxe5 \textit{\textbf{Qfe4}} 17.\textit{\textbf{Qxe4}} \textit{\textbf{Qxe4}} 18.\textit{\textbf{Qxe7}} \textit{\textbf{Wxe7}} 19.\textit{\textbf{Qf4}} \textit{\textbf{Qg6}} and Black is slightly better, as White has no attack, whilst Black will soon begin to press on the queenside.

\[12...b5 13.fxe6 fxe6 14.\textit{\textbf{Qf5}}\]

A very attractive move, but not so effective, although it is hard to recommend anything stronger. 14.\textit{\textbf{Wh3}} \textit{\textbf{Qxb3}} 15.axb3

\[15...\textit{\textbf{Qd7}}!N\] A strong move, indirectly defending the hanging pawn on e6, which cannot be taken because of 16.\textit{\textbf{Wc8}}, after which White loses a knight. After 15...\textit{\textbf{Qb4}? 16.\textit{\textbf{Qxe6}} \textit{\textbf{Wc5}}} 17.\textit{\textbf{Qe3}} \textit{\textbf{Wb7}} 18.\textit{\textbf{Qd5}} \textit{\textbf{Qxd5}} 19.\textit{\textbf{Qxf8+}} \textit{\textbf{Qxf8}} 20.\textit{\textbf{exd5}} \textit{\textbf{Qxd5}} 21.\textit{\textbf{Qc7}} \textit{\textbf{Qb7}} 22.\textit{\textbf{Wf3}} \textit{\textbf{Qb8}} 23.\textit{\textbf{Qd5+}} \textit{\textbf{Qxd5}} 24.\textit{\textbf{Qxd5}} Black has a minimal advantage, Ramnath-Sandipan, New Delhi 2012. 16.\textit{\textbf{h1}} \textit{\textbf{Qc5}} 17.\textit{\textbf{Qe3}} \textit{\textbf{Wc8}}=\n
\[14...\textit{\textbf{Qd8}}! 15.\textit{\textbf{Qd5}} \textit{\textbf{exd5}} 16.\textit{\textbf{Qxd5+}} \textit{\textbf{Qe6}} 17.\textit{\textbf{Qxf6}}\]

17.\textit{\textbf{Qxa8}} \textit{\textbf{Qxg5}} is disastrous for White, Günther-Repkova, Ceske Budejovice 1994.

\[17...\textit{\textbf{Qxf6}} 18.\textit{\textbf{Qe5}} \textit{\textbf{Qa7+}}!N\]

After the mistaken 18...\textit{\textbf{Qxe5}}? White does not play 19.\textit{\textbf{Qxa8?? as in Lefebvre- Berbatov, Aix-les-Bains Ech 2011, on account of the riposte 19...\textit{\textbf{Qd4}}, which is good for Black, but 19.\textit{\textbf{Qxe6+}} \textit{\textbf{Qxe6}} 20.\textit{\textbf{Qxa8}}=\n
\[19.\textit{\textbf{h1}} \textit{\textbf{dxe5}} 20.\textit{\textbf{Qxa8}} \textit{\textbf{g6}} 21.\textit{\textbf{Qe4}} \textit{\textbf{Qxf5}} 22.\textit{\textbf{Qxf5}} \textit{\textbf{Qe7}} 23.\textit{\textbf{Qae1}} \textit{\textbf{b7}} 24.\textit{\textbf{Qd3}} \textit{\textbf{Qf8}}\]

An unclear game, in which White has a rook and pawn for two pieces, but Black’s king is exposed and the white pieces are very actively placed.
Conclusion

In this chapter, we have been looking at one of the sharpest lines of the Najdorf, which begins with 6...c4. Our study shows that if Black chooses the accurate moves, he can first complete the development of his pieces and prevent White from developing the initiative, associated with his rapid development and a quiet attack. White has two ways to develop his attack: firstly, by advancing his f-pawn to f5 and creating threats on the f-file and the a2-g8 diagonal, but we have seen that in this case, Black puts his knight on c5 and solves all his problems. The second method for White is to attack with pieces, and without his f-pawn, by playing his queen to f3. But then after the exchange of a pair of minor pieces, White’s attack is weakened and Black is ready to seize the initiative.

We can conclude that with accurate play, Black has no problems and he can play boldly, after a careful study of this chapter.
In this chapter, we will analyse the most dangerous plan: kingside castling. The idea of 7.0-0 is to complete the rapid development of the kingside and begin an attack as soon as possible. There is a significant difference between this move and 7...b3: after the latter, Black immediately brings his knight to d7 and c5, and eliminates Fischer’s favourite bishop, whereas after castling, Black has to play ...b7-b5 to drive the bishop to b3, and can only then start trying to eliminate it. But the move ...b7-b5 also has its minuses: firstly, the weakening of the a8-h1 diagonal can cause Black a lot of trouble, and also another point that is often overlooked – after castling, White prepares a sacrifice on e6, if Black tries to play ...bd7 at once.

For other alternatives for White, see the next chapter.

8...b3

As mentioned in the introduction, Black has difficulties after 7...bd7 8.e1 (even 8.xe6 fxe6 9.xe6 is an option), for example 8...b5 9.d5!, 8...c7 9.xe6! or 8...e7 9.xe6!
Black has a choice; he can either develop one of his bishops or take the highly poisoned pawn. Let us first examine the continuations which develop the pieces. In such positions, one often gets transpositions, if both ...ėe7 and ...eb7 are played, but this is not the case here. White has an interesting bishop sacrifice, after which he has the initiative, and has very good compensation.

\[
8...ėe7
\]

A) If 8...eb7 White can strike at once:

A1) 9.ėxe6 fxe6 10.ėxe6:

A11) 10...ėc8!? 11.ėd5 ėxd5 12.exd5 ęf7

Given that White has a piece less, in order to pose real problems to the opponent, he needs to exploit all his resources. Looking at the position, it is obvious that apart from the rook on a1, all of his pieces are ready for action, and the move a2-a4 will open the third rank for his rook, as well as starting a second front on the queenside: 13.a4!N ębd7 14.ėa3 After 14.ęe1 there followed 14...b4!, taking control of the important square a3, and on 15.ėd2 ęb7 16.ęe2 h6 17.h4 ęe8 White forced the draw with 18.ėd8+ ęxd8 19.ęe6+ ęg6 20.h5+ ęh7 21.ęf5+ in Klima-Czakon, Ostrava 2005. 14...h6 15.ėe1 ęb7 16.axb5 axb5 17.ęe2 ęc8 18.ęc3 ęe8 and here again White should resort to the drawing com-

bination 19.ėd8+ ęxd8 20.ęe6+ ęg6 21.ęg3+ ęh7 22.ęf5+ ęg8 23.ęe6+=;

A12) 10...ęb6? 11.ėd5 ęxd5 11...ęc6 12.ęh6± 12.exd5 ębd7 13.a4 ęc8 14.axb5 ęxb5

15.ęe1! ęf7 16.ęg5+ ęg6 17.ęa5 ęc4 18.ęf4 h5 19.ęf5+ ęh6 and now 20.ęc3! maintains White's clear advantage. Black runs out of good moves and White is threatening to play his queen to e6 and f7. The immediate 20.ęe6 would fail to 20...ęd4+, 21...ęe5 and 22...ęe8;

A13) 10...ęd7 11.ėd5 ęf7D (the only move; after anything else, White has a clear advantage) 12.ęg5+ ęg8D 13.ęb6 ęe7 14.ęxa8 ęxa8 15.ęe1 h6 16.ęh3 ęxe4 17.ęf3 ęxc2 18.ęxe7 ęxd1 19.ęc7 ęh7 20.ęf4 d5 21.ęe6 ęe2 22.ęd2.

White is slightly better, on account of his active pieces.

A2) 9.ęe1 ębd7

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This is the only dangerous move for White. For 10.\texttt{g5} see line A3 with 9.\texttt{g5}. 10...\texttt{xe6} 11.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{xc8!} 12.a4 \texttt{b4} 13.\texttt{d5} \texttt{f7} 14.\texttt{dc7} \texttt{h6} 15.\texttt{e3} \texttt{xe4} and Black defends, without great problems; he just needs to complete his development and exploit his material advantage;

A3) 9.\texttt{g5} \texttt{bd7} 10.\texttt{e1} \texttt{h6} (not to be recommended is 10...\texttt{c5} 11.\texttt{d5}!) 12.\texttt{g3} \texttt{e5} is unclear, for instance: 13.\texttt{f3} \texttt{c7} 14.\texttt{d2} \texttt{h5} 15.\texttt{h4} gxh4 16.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{fg4} 17.a4 \texttt{b4} 18.\texttt{a2} \texttt{c5} 19.\texttt{e2} \texttt{g6} 20.\texttt{g3} \texttt{h4} 21.\texttt{wxg4} hxg3 22.\texttt{wxg3} \texttt{h6} 23.\texttt{f3} \texttt{f4} 24.\texttt{g4} 24...\texttt{e7!} 25.\texttt{c1} \texttt{xc1} 26.\texttt{xc1} \texttt{ag8} 27.g3 \texttt{e5} 28.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{g4} 29.\texttt{xe4} f5 0-1 Ehlvest-Dvoi rys, Podolsk 1993;

A32) 11.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} Taking with the queen is stronger, since it defends once again Black’s one weakness, the square e6. 12.a4 \texttt{b4} 13.\texttt{a2} and now:

A321) 13...\texttt{c5} 14.\texttt{xb4} \texttt{a5} 15.\texttt{bc6!} \texttt{e5} 16.\texttt{d5} exd4

Apart from the \texttt{a1}, all the white pieces are taking part in the attack, and once the rook gets involved, Black is hardly likely to be able to defend. 17.\texttt{a3!N} One can say that this move wins the game at once, whilst the move 17.e5 only leads to complications: 17...\texttt{e5} 18.\texttt{xe5+} \texttt{d7} (this move loses the game at once; instead, 18...\texttt{e6} continues the battle, with mutual chances) 19.\texttt{g4+} \texttt{c7} 20.\texttt{f5} \texttt{g6} 21.\texttt{f4+} \texttt{d6} 22.\texttt{xf7+} \texttt{b6} 23.\texttt{xb7+} \texttt{xb7} 24.\texttt{xd4+} \texttt{c5} 25.\texttt{d3} \texttt{d6} 26.\texttt{b3+} 1-0 Golubev-Zagorski s, Karvina 1992. 17...\texttt{d3} 18.\texttt{xd3!} \texttt{xd3} 19.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{e7} 20.\texttt{b3!} \texttt{a6}
21.¢b8  bàb8  22.¢c6+  àf8  
23.¢xb8+  àd8  24.¢d1 and White is winning.

A322) A better defence is the immediate 13...àa5!, not allowing White’s second knight to enter the attack: 14.¢b5 (14.c3= Nunn) 14...àc8  15.¢xd6+  àxd6  16.¢xh2  àc6  17.¢e3  ¢xb2  
18.¢e3  àd4  19.¢e3  ¢f6  20.¢xh3  àf8  21.¢b3 àc6=;

B) As we have already remarked several times, the pawn on e4 is poisoned, and with his pieces undeveloped, Black cannot afford to grab material, and should certainly not take the pawn: 8...àb4? 9.¢a4  òxe4  10.¢e1  d5  
10...àxf6?! opens the e-file for White: 11.¢g5  d5  12.¢f3  àe7  13.¢xf6  ¢xf6  
14.¢xd5 òa7  15.¢c6  òxc6  16.¢xc6+  àf8  17.¢ad1±.  11.¢f4! and now:

B1) 11...àf6  12.¢c1! White will advance the c-pawn, so it is better first to put the rook on c1 and then do it, since Black has no useful moves and cannot develop his pieces normally. 12...àd6  
13.¢xd6 òbd6  14.¢f5±;

B2) if  11...àd6  12.¢xe4!  òxe4  
13.¢xe6  òxe6  14.¢xd6 White has a strong attack and Black cannot castle, plus his pieces are not developed and it is not obvious how to bring out both rooks.

Back to the main line after 8...àe7.

Here White has two main continuations.

9.¢f3

Since the 1990’s this queen move has ousted 9.f4 as the most common line. We will also examine the advance of the f-pawn, which contains mutual dangers – Black must be careful because White immediately attacks the e6-pawn, but later he can himself hope to exploit the weakness on e4:

9.f4

A) 9...0-0 and now:

A1) 10.f5

10...àb4!  11.¢a4  e5  12.¢e2  àb7  
13.¢g3

A11) Not 13...àxe4? Black has other moves which give him the advantage, whereas after he text the game ends in a draw: 14.¢xe4  àxe4  15.¢e4  d5  
16.¢h6 òf6  17.¢xg7  ¢xg7  18.f6  àg6  
19.fxg7 àxg7  20.¢ad1  d4  21.¢xf7

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21...\texttt{xf7}! 21...\texttt{d7}? gives White the edge after 22.\texttt{xg6 xf1}+ 23.\texttt{xf1 hxg6 24.\texttt{xf3}+ 22.\texttt{xf7}+ \texttt{xf7} 23.\texttt{f1}+ \texttt{g8} 24.\texttt{e6}+ \texttt{h8} 25.\texttt{xe5}+ \texttt{g8} 26.\texttt{c5} \texttt{c6} 27.\texttt{e6}+ \texttt{h8} 28.\texttt{e7} \texttt{c7} 29.\texttt{f6}+ \texttt{g8} 30.\texttt{e6}+=;

A21) 13...\texttt{bd7} Now after 14.\texttt{e1} a5 15.c4 \texttt{c7} 16.\texttt{e2} \texttt{c8} 17.\texttt{g5} \texttt{c5} 18.\texttt{ac1} h6 19.\texttt{e3} \texttt{cd7}! 20.\texttt{f2} \texttt{d6} 21.\texttt{c2} \texttt{b8} 22.\texttt{e1} \texttt{a8} 23.\texttt{d3} \texttt{g4} 24.\texttt{f1} \texttt{df6} 25.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xf2} 26.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{c6} 27.\texttt{cc1} \texttt{a7}+ 28.\texttt{e2} \texttt{d8} 29.\texttt{d1}... White retains a clear advantage with 12.\texttt{e3} \texttt{xd4} 13.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{c6} 14.\texttt{c5} \texttt{xe5} 15.\texttt{xf8} \texttt{b6}+ 16.\texttt{h1} \texttt{xf8} 17.\texttt{e1}+.

A21) 12.\texttt{h5} \texttt{c6} 12...\texttt{c7} is an alternative. After the text White has a choice:

A211) 13.\texttt{xc6}? \texttt{b6}+ 14.\texttt{e3} and now:

A2111) 14...\texttt{xe3}?? is a mistake because it fails to a concrete idea. Black has a hanging bishop on e7 and the queen is very uncomfortable on e3, under the attacks of the white pieces, so for this reason, it is better to take the dangerous knight on c6, rather than the bishop on e3. 15.\texttt{h1} \texttt{g5} 16.\texttt{f3} \texttt{c5}

17.\texttt{xb5}!N A very strong move, after which White retains an extra pawn and every chance of conducting the game to victory. Less strong is 17.\texttt{e4} because Black's position is strategically superior, and exchanges always favour the side with the better pawn structure: 17...\texttt{xe4} 18.\texttt{xe7}+ \texttt{xe7} 19.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{b7} 20.\texttt{g4} \texttt{c5} 21.\texttt{ae1} \texttt{ad8} 22.\texttt{e2} \texttt{d4} 23.\texttt{h5} \texttt{f4} 24.\texttt{g1} \texttt{d4}+ 25.\texttt{h1} \texttt{xb2} and Black has a large advantage, Stehno-Jedlicka, Czechia tt-2 1999/00. 17...\texttt{b7} 18.\texttt{bd4} \texttt{ac8} 19.\texttt{xe7}+ \texttt{xe7} 20.\texttt{e3}+;
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A2112) 14...\textit{w}xc6 15.\textit{f}3 15.\textit{f}4 \textit{w}c7 and if 16.\textit{d}4 \textit{c}5; or 16.\textit{e}1 \textit{w}xe5 17.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}5. 15...\textit{c}5 16.\textit{e}1 \textit{b}7 17.a3 \textit{ad}8 18.\textit{g}3 \textit{g}6 19.\textit{h}6 \textit{xe}3+ 20.\textit{exe}3 \textit{w}xe3 \textit{w}c5!. After the exchange of queens, Black has a large advantage; White's pawn structure is bad, the pawn on e5 is cut off from its main army and in need of permanent defence, and the bishop on b3 is dead. White has a lot of work to do to make a draw.

A211) 14.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}5! 15.\textit{ad}1 \textit{xd}4 14.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}5! 15.\textit{ad}1

15...\textit{b}6! First, Black wants White to have to defend the bishop with \textit{f}e2. Then the knight will not be coming to e4, which is very important. 16.\textit{f}4 In the event of 16.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}7! White cannot defend the e5-pawn. 16...\textit{w}c7 17.\textit{g}4 \textit{xd}4+ 18.\textit{exe}4 \textit{exe}5 Black has won a pawn anyway, and White's problem is that his two minor pieces can neither take part in the attack on the black king, nor defend the e5-pawn.

A22) 12.\textit{e}3?! \textit{xe}5 12...\textit{w}c7? 13.\textit{xf}7!. 13.\textit{w}h5

20...\textit{c}5 The only move, but sufficient; Black does not allow the enemy knight into e4 and always threatens mate on g2, plus he threatens 21...\textit{d}2, after which White will not be able to defend the g2-pawn. Black has an excellent position. 21.\textit{g}4 The rook makes way for the other rook, so as to attack h7. White has no other ideas in this position. 21...\textit{d}7 The only move. The idea is simple – to meet \textit{h}3 with ...f7-f5 and defend h7 with the rook. (21...\textit{d}2?? 22.\textit{h}3 \textit{gg}2+ 23.\textit{gf}1+-) 22.\textit{a}2 \textit{f}5 23.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 24.\textit{h}3 \textit{dd}7 Black wards off the white attack and now begins a counterattack against the white king. White will have to move his heavy pieces back to prevent mate.

A212) 13.\textit{e}3 \textit{xd}4 14.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}5! 15.\textit{ad}1

White has sacrificed a pawn for a very strong initiative, and in such positions, Black needs to exchange a pair of minor pieces, to ease the pressure and damp down the enemy's attacking chances.

A221) 13...\textit{w}c7 14.\textit{ae}1 At first sight, White has sacrificed a knight for two pawns and his next move regains the knight, so it appears he should be
better with his extra pawn. But the black pieces imperceptibly come to life and the story changes, as Black now assumes the initiative, and White must play very accurately to emerge from a difficult position. 14.\( \text{dxb5 a}x\text{b5} \)
15.\( \text{xb5 c}6 \) 16.\( \text{xe5 b}7 \) 17.\( \text{f2 d}7 \) 18.\( \text{h5 f6 e}2 \). As we have said, Black has managed to seize the initiative, and now this becomes clear to the naked eye, as the powerful march of the h-pawn starts. 19...h5! 20.h3 e4 21.d4 \( \text{d}7 \) 22.f3 \( \text{f}6 \). 14...\( \text{bd7} \)

One can say that this is hardly a sacrifice, but the harsh reality of White's problems. However, even after the sacrifice, he will not manage to equalise. Other continuations are also insufficient. 17.\( \text{xe6 f}6 \) 18.g5 \( \text{f}6 \)
19.\( \text{xe6 h}5 \) 20.\( \text{xc7} + \text{c}4 \)
21.\( \text{xa8 xa}8 \).

\[ \text{A2221)} \]
15...b4? 16.h3 h6

Since in the opening White is trying to obtain the advantage, and he has not previously managed to create any great problems for Black, one always suspects that there should be some improvement earlier on. This led to the idea of the following bishop sacrifice, after which White has two pieces hanging, but Black cannot take either of them. 17.\( \text{xh6!N} \) 17.d1 \( \text{a}5 \) 18.d5 exd5 19.g3 d4 20.d5 (20.xg7+ \( \text{g}7 \)
21.xh6+ \( \text{h}7 \) also leads to a draw by perpetual check after 22.g5+)
20...g5 21.xg5 \( \text{xd}5 \).

\[ \text{A222} \]
13...\( \text{bc6} \) 14.\( \text{xc6 xc6} \)

Here White has two continuations, but Black can hold the balance with accurate play in both cases. 15.\( \text{f3} \) The main choice, but White also has the interesting option of a knight sacrifice: 15.\( \text{ad1 a}5 \) 16.d5 exd5 17.xd5 b4?? (instead of this move, which loses immediately, he should have played 17...\( \text{e6} \), to return the piece and obtain slightly the better position) 18.\( \text{xf7} \)

And now White forced the draw with 22.f6 \( \text{axh5} \) 23.xg7+ in Short-Kasparov, Novgorod 1997.
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17...\( g6 \) 18.\( \text{w}f3 \) \( \text{bxc3} \) 19.\( \text{w}x\text{c6} \) \( \text{cxb2} \) 20.\( \text{h}f1 \) \( \text{a7} \) 21.\( \text{w}c3! \) \( \text{f}6 \) 22.\( \text{x}f6 \) \( \text{b1} \text{w}+ \)

A picturesque position. Black has two queens and an extra exchange, but he has to return all the material to avoid mate: 23.\( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{xf1} \) + 24.\( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 25.\( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 26.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 27.\( \text{h}4 \)

With ideas of \( \text{d}4 \) and \( \text{h}3 \). White has the advantage on account of the weak black king and pawns;

A2222) 15...\( g6 \) 16.\( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{f}6 \)! 17.\( \text{d}1 \)

An important moment. Black has a choice, which way to move the queen, but luckily for him, both are of virtually equal strength. After each move, Black obtains a different structure, but in both cases, he has sufficient counterplay for equality.

A22221) 17...\( \text{e}8 \) 18.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{e}5 \)! 18...\( \text{a}5 \)? loses: 19.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{xb3} \) 20.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 21.\( \text{xf6}+ \) \( \text{xf6} \) 22.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{c}5 \)

23.\( \text{w}3 \) (White could have started a winning king chase with the brilliant 23.\( \text{f}7 \)!! \( \text{xf7} \) 24.\( \text{wh}7+ \) \( \text{f}6 \) 25.\( \text{fl}+ \) \( \text{e}5 \) (25...\( \text{g}5 \) 26.\( \text{g}3 \))

26.\( \text{c}7+ \) \( \text{d}5 \) 27.\( \text{d}1+ \) \( \text{c}4 \) 28.\( \text{b}3+ \) \( \text{b}4 \) 29.\( \text{a}3+ \) \( \text{a}3 \) 30.\( \text{xc}5+ \) \( \text{b}2 \)

31.\( \text{d}4 \) + 23...\( \text{e}7 \) 24.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 25.\( \text{f}7 \) and White also won in Todorovic-Lazic, Belgrade 1988.

19.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 20.\( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 21.\( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{xc}5+ \) 22.\( \text{xc}5 \) White has compensation, as his pieces are very active, but Black has no special weaknesses, and just has problems completing his development. If he manages it, he will have an extra pawn, or he may return the pawn and equalise.

A22222) 17...\( \text{c}7 \)!

18.\( \text{h}1 \)? Prophylaxis! The king always prevents White establishing a dangerous attack, because if necessary, Black can exchange dark-squared bishops and queens on the same diagonal.

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If 18...\textit{h}3 \textit{f7} 19.a4 (19...\textit{d}5? \textit{exd}5 20.\textit{xd}5 \textit{hxh}3 21.\textit{xf}7+ \textit{xf}7 22.\textit{wh}7+ \textit{fe}6 23.\textit{wh}3+ f5 24.\textit{wh}6 \textit{\text{c}}e5 – Black is winning and only needs to take due care, Karhunen-Eklund, Finland tt 1990) 19...\textit{f}8 20.\textit{wh}4 Black has an extra pawn and is beginning to activate his pieces. 18...\textit{d}e5 19.\textit{xf}4 \textit{b}6 20.\textit{xe}5 \textit{fxe}5

21.\textit{gg}3 After 21.\textit{xf}8+ \textit{xf}8 22.\textit{wh}3 \textit{a}7 23.\textit{e}4 \textit{f}7 24.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}7 25.\textit{f}1 White has good compensation for the pawn, but Black also has his pluses, and he is ready to give back one pawn, in return for activating his bishops. 21...\textit{f}7 22.\textit{d}5! \textit{a}7 23.\textit{xe}7+ 23.\textit{xg}6+ draws: 23...\textit{hxg}6 24.\textit{w}xg6+ \textit{f}8 25.\textit{wh}6+ \textit{e}8 26.\textit{wh}8+ \textit{f}8 27.\textit{f}6+ \textit{e}7 28.\textit{g}8+=. 23...\textit{xe}7 24.\textit{gd}3 \textit{d}7! 25.\textit{w}3 \textit{af}8 26.\textit{h}3 \textit{c}8 27.\textit{xe}5 White is slightly better, but has no clear advantage, since Black only has a single weakness on e6.

A2223) 15...\textit{d}6! 16.\textit{h}3 \textit{h}6

17.\textit{axh}6 In case of 17.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}5! 18.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 19.\textit{hxh}6 \textit{g}6 Black is slightly better after the exchange of queens, because White’s play was based on the attack. Black can neutralise this and remain with the better pawn structure. 17...\textit{c}5+ 18.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5+ 19.\textit{e}3 \textit{xe}3+ 20.\textit{xe}3 \textit{d}8 The position is equal. In fact, I would even prefer Black.

A23) 12.\textit{g}4 Or 12.\textit{f}3. 12...\textit{xe}5! 13.\textit{e}4 \textit{c}5! 14.\textit{e}3

14...\textit{bc}6! 15.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xe}3+ 16.\textit{xe}3 \textit{xc}6 With simply an extra pawn, Black should exchange queens and, most of all, activate his bishop. 17.\textit{ad}1 \textit{e}7 18.\textit{e}4 \textit{b}7 19.\textit{g}5 \textit{ae}8 20.\textit{de}1 \textit{d}8 21.\textit{g}3 \textit{h}6 22.\textit{e}4 \textit{xe}4 23.\textit{xe}4 \textit{d}5 24.\textit{g}4 \textit{g}6 25.\textit{c}3 \textit{h}7 26.\textit{c}2 and Black won in Goncharov-Aveskulov, Alushta tt 2004.

B) 9...b4 10.\textit{a}4
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B1) Not 10...\textit{e}4? 11.f5! e5 12.\textit{xf}7+! Or also 12.\textit{d}5!? \textit{f}6 13.\textit{xa}8 \textit{d}7 14.b3 when White simply has an extra exchange and an absolutely winning position. 12...\textit{xf}7 13.\textit{e}6 \textit{w}e8 14.d5 \textit{b}5 15.\textit{xe}4 and White is winning;

B2) 10...0-0 11.e5 dxe5 Also good may be 11...\textit{e}4!? 12.\textit{e}3 \textit{b}7 13.\textit{g}4 dxe5 14.fxe5 \textit{g}5 15.\textit{e}2 \textit{d}7 16.\textit{ad}1 \textit{xe}3+ 17.\textit{xe}3 \textit{e}7 18.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}c5 19.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 20.\textit{c}4 \textit{ad}8 and Black consolidated in Markovic-Babula, Moravia tt 2002/03.

12.\textit{fx}e5 \textit{d}5 Here, Black has a natural alternative in 12...\textit{fd}7, hitting the e5-pawn. Now 13.\textit{xf}7 \textit{xf}7 14.\textit{xe}6 \textit{wa}5 seems insufficient for White. Another plausible move is 12...\textit{e}4, as was already played in Emma-Najdorf, Zarate Open 1972.

B3) Black has several continuations, but the strongest becomes obvious, once one understands White’s threat, which is to advance the e-pawn, opening lines and exposing the weakness of the black king. But the following move makes this threat difficult to execute.

10...\textit{c}7! 11.e5 dxe5 12.\textit{xf}e5 \textit{w}e5 13.\textit{f}4 \textit{w}e4 14.\textit{d}2 \textit{b}7 15.\textit{ae}1 \textit{d}7

13.\textit{wg}4!N For some strange reason, instead of this active move, White has previously played 13.\textit{wh}1 in this position, after which Black has no problems, whereas after the aggressive queen move, Black starts to have trouble because of the weakness of his king. 13...\textit{h}8 14.\textit{f}3! \textit{w}c7 15.\textit{wh}5 \textit{g}6 16.\textit{wh}6 \textit{w}xe5 17.\textit{xd}5 exd5 17...\textit{xd}5 18.\textit{e}3 \textit{h}5 19.\textit{wh}5 g\textit{x}h5 20.\textit{h}6± 18.\textit{e}3 \textit{g}8 19.\textit{ae}1 \textit{a}7 20.\textit{b}6±;

16.\textit{f}5 \textit{ex}f5 17.\textit{c}5 Not 17.\textit{xe}7+ \textit{xe}7 18.\textit{c}5 \textit{b}6++. 17...\textit{b}6 18.\textit{h}1! \textit{xc}5 19.\textit{d}6 0-0 20.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 21.\textit{e}5 \textit{b}6 22.\textit{d}6 \textit{d}8 23.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 24.\textit{xf}5 \textit{bd}7 and now, purely on material, it may appear Black is winning, but when one looks at the position more closely, we understand that the white queen is quite good in the fight against the three black minor pieces, whilst the advance of the h- and g-pawns gives him real drawing chances. 25.g4! \textit{h}6 26.h4! \textit{e}4\textperp.

C) 9...\textit{b}7 10.e5 10.\textit{e}3?! 10...dxe5 11.\textit{xe}5 \textit{c}5 11...\textit{fd}7? 12.\textit{xf}7! 12.\textit{e}3 was another main line for a very long time, but is currently hardly ever played anymore.

9...\textit{w}c7

Here Black has two good continuations, although I slightly prefer 9...\textit{w}c7, because it suits my chess tastes more, and
because it was the choice of Boris Gelfand, in the game which proved to be the best of the Kazan Candidates’ cycle. The alternative is 9...\(\text{b6}\) and now:

A) 10.\(\text{g5}\)! The bishop on g5 does not do anything special, and so this move is not the best for White.

A1) 10...\(\text{xd4}\)? 11.e5

11...\(\text{dxe5}\)! 12.\(\text{xa8}\) \(\text{b6}\)! 13.a4! \(\text{c7}\) 14.\(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{gxf6}\) 15.\(\text{f3}\) The queen must move away, since Black threatens ...\(\text{e7}\) and then ...\(\text{c5}\), trapping it. But White manages to evacuate it in time. 15...\(\text{b4}\) 16.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{h5}\)! A very strong move, the idea of which is simple: the white knight is aiming for the square h5, from where it will attack the f6-pawn and not allow Black to castle. But once the pawn reaches h4, White will not be able to put the knight on h5. 17.\(\text{ac1}\) White wants to open the c-file, because he has no other ideas, and if Black manages to play ...\(\text{b7}\) and activate the knight with ...\(\text{d7-c5}\), then he will stand better. Hence White must hurry. 17...\(\text{b7}\) 18.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{h4}\)!

A2) 10...\(\text{0-0}\) 11.\(\text{ad1}\)

In the event of 11.e5? \(\text{dxe5}\) 12.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{xf5}\) 13.\(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{b7}\) 14.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 15.\(\text{xb6}\) \(\text{xf3}\) 16.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{a7}\) Black simply has an extra pawn and a winning position. 11...\(\text{bd7}\) and now:

A21) 12.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{h5}\)! 13.\(\text{h4}\) \(\text{g5}\) 14.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{h6}\) 15.\(\text{fe1}\) \(\text{b7}\) 16.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{g5}\)

18.\(\text{h4}\)! Not 18.\(\text{f5}\)? \(\text{b4}\) 19.\(\text{xd6}\) \(\text{c7}\) 20.e5 \(\text{xf5}\) 21.h4 \(\text{bxc3}\) 22.\(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 23.\(\text{xf5}\) \(\text{e1+}\) 24.\(\text{h2}\) \(\text{xb2}\) 0-1 Shabalov-Nakamura, Miami 2007.

A22) 12.\(\text{fe1}\) \(\text{b7}\) 13.\(\text{g3}\) After 13.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{c5}\) 14.\(\text{e3}\) (14.e5? \(\text{dxe5}\) 15.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{ad8}\)?) 14...\(\text{b4}\) 15.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{xa4}\) 16.\(\text{xaxa4}\) \(\text{a5}\) 17.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{g5!}\)

17...\(\text{xc6}\) 18.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{g5}\) 19.\(\text{xe7}\)+
\( \text{h8 is known to be unclear) 18.} \text{axb7 } \text{a7 19.} \text{c6 } \text{c7 Black is simply a little better. The opposite bishops suit him. It is strange that so far, no black players have headed for this position.} \text{13...h5} \text{14.} \text{h4 } \text{gxg5} \text{15.} \text{hxg5 } \text{h6 16.} \text{e3 } \text{b8 Black is better, because the white attack is not dangerous, and Black has easy play: all his pieces are developed and stand well.} \text{B1) 10.} \text{e3! White develops his bishop with tempo, as Black must spend another move with his queen, whilst White has already developed all his pieces and is ready for active operations. Plus the black queen will occupy b7, where the black bishop would like to go.} \text{10...} \text{b7:} \text{B11) 11.} \text{g3 0-0 12.} \text{h6 I do not like 12.f3, and was very surprised to see it in a game by Ivanchuk himself. Admittedly it was a rapid game, but it shows that Vasily Mikhailovich was not in his best form: 12...d7 13.} \text{fd1 } \text{c6 14.} \text{xc6 } \text{xc6} \text{15.} \text{e2 } \text{c8 16.} \text{d2} \text{b4 17.c4 a5 18.c2 a4 19.d3 d7 20.d4 e5 21.f1 } \text{e8 22.c1 b3} \text{23.axb3 axb3 24.} \text{e1 } \text{d8 25.} \text{d1 and Black won in Ivanchuk-Le Quang Liem, Beijing rapid 2011.} \text{12...e8} \text{Here White has two main continuations, both of which give the game a sharp character. White is slightly ahead in development, but if Black manages to exchange a pair of minor pieces, then he will solve his problems.} \text{B111) After 16.} \text{xe6? fxe6 17.} \text{xe6} \text{Black was already slightly better with 17...f7!? 18.d5 e5 19.ec7 xd5 20.xa8 f6 whereas 17...g8!± would have been even stronger, Wyss-Gopal, Zurich 2009; B112) Another possibility is 16.} \text{d5!? exd5 17.f5 and now:} \text{93}
B1121) 17...\texttt{\textit{xe5}} 18.\texttt{\textit{h6}}! g6 19.\texttt{\textit{xd6}}!! 19.\texttt{\textit{g7}}+? \texttt{\textit{g8}} led to a draw in Werner-Nagy, Budapest 2003. The text move is much stronger.

19...\texttt{\textit{xd6}} 20.\texttt{\textit{xf8}} \texttt{\textit{xf8}} 21.\texttt{\textit{xe5}} We have reached an unclear position, where again I prefer Black, even though his dark-squares are weak and White’s dark-squared bishop has no opponent.

B1122) A new move here is 17...\texttt{\textit{h5}}N, for example: 18.\texttt{\textit{h4}} \texttt{\textit{xe5}} 19.\texttt{\textit{xf4}} h6 20.\texttt{\textit{xd5}} b8 21.h4 g6 22.\texttt{\textit{f3}} \texttt{\textit{e5}} 23.\texttt{\textit{g3}} \texttt{\textit{xf6}} 24.\texttt{\textit{f4}} h5 25.\texttt{\textit{xa8}} \texttt{\textit{xa8}} 26.\texttt{\textit{xd6}} \texttt{\textit{e6}} and I prefer Black’s position, as he has two pieces for the rook. Admittedly, White has two extra pawns, but the main thing is that the black pieces are more active;

B113) 16.\texttt{\textit{xe3}} Now Black has a choice:

B1131) 16.\texttt{\textit{b6}} 17.\texttt{\textit{f4}} \texttt{\textit{h5}}?!

18.\texttt{\textit{h4}}

B1132) In my opinion, 16...\texttt{\textit{b4}} is strongest. It is always nice to drive the

B11311) 18...\texttt{\textit{xe5}}?? 19.\texttt{\textit{fxe5}} g6 20.\texttt{\textit{h1}}? Even after this White has the advantage, but it is the start of a series of mistakes, as a result of which White gradually loses a winning position. 20.g4! \texttt{\textit{xf4}} 21.\texttt{\textit{f3}}! \texttt{\textit{b7}} 22.\texttt{\textit{xf4}} e5 23.\texttt{\textit{f2}} exd4 24.\texttt{\textit{xd3}} +. 20...\texttt{\textit{b7}} 21.\texttt{\textit{h3}} \texttt{\textit{c5}} 22.\texttt{\textit{g4}} b4 23.\texttt{\textit{d5}} exd5 24.\texttt{\textit{gxh5}} \texttt{\textit{c7}} and Black won in Iruzubieta Villaluenga-Topalov, Elgoibar 1992;

B11312) Best is 18...\texttt{\textit{xf4}}! 19.\texttt{\textit{xf4}} e5 20.\texttt{\textit{g3}} \texttt{\textit{xe5}} 21.\texttt{\textit{xf4}} exd4 22.\texttt{\textit{d5}} \texttt{\textit{c5}}! After 22...\texttt{\textit{d8}} 23.\texttt{\textit{xd8}} \texttt{\textit{xd8}} 24.\texttt{\textit{xd4}} White has the advantage in the endgame. His pieces are active plus his rooks are very well placed. He can play \texttt{\textit{c3}}-\texttt{\textit{c7}} when the chance arises. Black will have to play ...\texttt{\textit{g8}} because the f7-pawn is very weak, and Black also has a weak pawn on d6. White has the idea of a2-a4, giving Black extra problems with the a- or b-pawn. 23.\texttt{\textit{g3}} d3+ 24.\texttt{\textit{f1}} \texttt{\textit{d4}}! 25.\texttt{\textit{xd3}} \texttt{\textit{e5}} 26.\texttt{\textit{xe5}} \texttt{\textit{xe5}} 27.\texttt{\textit{d4}}
opponent's pieces out of the centre, where they control many important squares, and also defend the pawn on e4. After Black's pawn move, White has to find another way to defend his e-pawn.

B11321) 17.\textit{a}4 The idea of this is simple: White keeps the e-file open for his rook, which will stand well on e1, and if the black bishop moves to e7, White will play \textit{d}f5. 17...h6 17...\textit{xe}4 18.\textit{xe}4 \textit{x}g5 19.\textit{ee}1 \textit{d}8 20.\textit{h}3 We have reached a position with roughly equal chances;

B11322) 17.\textit{ce}2 \textit{xe}4 18.\textit{xe}4 \textit{yg}5 Here the white rook has nothing to do on the e-file. He needs to think up something concrete, for which the black pieces are fully ready. 19.\textit{xe}6 After 19.\textit{g}4 \textit{f}6 20.\textit{xd}6...

... 20...a5 is a strong move, with the idea of bringing the rook into play via a6, while, most importantly of all, driving away the only active white piece. 19...\textit{c}5? Better is 19...\textit{f}6 20.\textit{xd}6 \textit{e}4 21.\textit{f}3 \textit{xd}6 22.\textit{d}5 \textit{g}4 23.\textit{xb}7 \textit{xf}3 24.\textit{xf}3 \textit{ee}8\textit{f} and Black just has an extra exchange. 20.\textit{d}5\textit{f} and White was better, though the game was finally drawn in Nunn-Ftacnik, England tt 1999/00.

B12) I think White miscalculated when he sacrificed the knight. 13.\textit{f}5?

exf5-- 14.\textit{d}5 \textit{c}6 15.exf5 \textit{xf}5 16.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}7 17.\textit{ae}1 (17.\textit{fe}1 \textit{f}6 18.\textit{e}4 \textit{e}5 is similar, Tischbierek-Hünerkopf, Munich 1991/92) 17...\textit{f}6 18.\textit{e}4 \textit{e}5 19.\textit{g}5 \textit{f}6 20.\textit{yg}7 \textit{yg}7 21.\textit{xe}5 \textit{exe}5 22.\textit{gg}3 \textit{h}8 23.\textit{hh}4 \textit{f}5 24.\textit{f}4 \textit{xd}5 and 0-1 in Delchev-Nikolov, Varna 2012;

B13) After 13.\textit{ad}1 Black has a mass of possibilities:

B131) 13...\textit{c}6

14.\textit{f}3\textit{f} A strategically strong move, since if you have a space advantage, then you should not exchange pieces. Black has no squares to which to develop his cramped pieces and exchanges would help him. The computer says the position is equal, but White's play is easier. After 14.\textit{d}5 (14.\textit{xc}6 transposes) 14...\textit{d}8 15.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 16.\textit{fe}1 \textit{hh}8 17.\textit{ff}4 a5 18.a3 Black still has to fight to equalize. He only has one problem, namely that his pieces are all on the back rank, and if he could reorganise them, he would stand well: 14...\textit{xc}6 15.\textit{d}5 \textit{d}8. 14...\textit{hh}8 15.\textit{g}5 \textit{f}6.

B132) 13...\textit{f}6? is not best in my opinion, because Black still has pieces that are not developed, whereas the \textit{e}7 is developed and stands ideally:

B1321) 14.\textit{e}3 and now:

B13211) 14...\textit{d}7??
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

15.\(\boxtimes e6\) \(\boxtimes e6+\) \(\boxtimes h8\) 17.\(\boxtimes d5\) \(\boxtimes b8\) 18.\(\boxtimes a8\) \(\boxtimes c3\)! The correct move. White will exchange the bishop on f6 anyway, so Black spoils the white structure and reaches a very interesting position of dynamic equality. After 18...\(\boxtimes a8\) 19.\(\boxtimes d4\)! Black’s strongest piece must be removed, and then the pawn on d6 remains weak, as do the dark squares in Black’s camp. 19.\(\boxtimes c3\) \(\boxtimes a8\) 20.\(\boxtimes d4\) I prefer White’s position, as I don’t think he is risking anything;

B13212) 14...\(\boxtimes d7\)?! 15.f4! \(\boxtimes c6\) 16.\(\boxtimes x6\) \(\boxtimes x6\) 17.e5 dxe5 18.\(\boxtimes e5\) \(\boxtimes e7\) 19.\(\boxtimes g4\) Alternatively, the knight can be brought into the attack on the king, via 19.\(\boxtimes e2\)! and then f4 and h5.

19...\(\boxtimes h8\) 20.\(\boxtimes f2\) (20.\(\boxtimes e2!\)→) 20...f5 21.\(\boxtimes xf6\) \(\boxtimes xf6\) 22.\(\boxtimes x6\) \(\boxtimes e8\) 23.\(\boxtimes h3\) \(\boxtimes d8\) 24.\(\boxtimes d4\) \(\boxtimes b6\) 25.\(\boxtimes e2\) \(\boxtimes d7\) 26.\(\boxtimes f3\) \(\boxtimes b8\) 27.\(\boxtimes g3\) \(\boxtimes c7\) 28.\(\boxtimes f4\) \(\boxtimes e4\) 29.\(\boxtimes c5\) \(\boxtimes d8\) and Black has compensation for the pawn. The draw was agreed in Golubev-Kempinski, Germany Bundesliga 2001/02;

B13213) With 14.\(\boxtimes g5\) White exchanges off Black’s only active piece and after that, the weakness of the d-pawn becomes clear. White has pressure: 14...\(\boxtimes b4\) 15.\(\boxtimes a4\) \(\boxtimes x5\) 16.\(\boxtimes x5\) \(\boxtimes f6\) 17.\(\boxtimes f3\) Following 17.e5! h6 18.\(\boxtimes f4\) dxe5 19.\(\boxtimes x5\) White’s position is slightly better, as he has active pieces, and is better developed, whilst the black queen is very badly placed, blocking the development of the bishop on c8. 17...\(\boxtimes d7\) 18.\(\boxtimes a5\) \(\boxtimes x4\) 19.\(\boxtimes x4\) \(\boxtimes c8\) 20.\(\boxtimes f2\) \(\boxtimes bd7\) 21.\(\boxtimes x7\) \(\boxtimes xd7\) 22.a3 bxa3 23.\(\boxtimes x3\) \(\boxtimes e5\) 24.\(\boxtimes b3\) with an absolutely equal position, Danin-Donchenko, Nuremberg 2012.

B133) After 13...\(\boxtimes h8\)?! 14.\(\boxtimes g5\) White is simply better. The main thing is to exchange the bishop on e7, and the weaknesses of the black position will immediately become visible. White has all of his pieces well placed and is ready for decisive action. 14...\(\boxtimes x5\) 15.\(\boxtimes x5\) h6 16.\(\boxtimes h4\) \(\boxtimes c6\) 17.\(\boxtimes x6\) \(\boxtimes x6\) 18.\(\boxtimes d4\) a5 19.a3 \(\boxtimes b8\) 20.\(\boxtimes f1\) \(\boxtimes a6\) 21.f3 \(\boxtimes g8\) 22.\(\boxtimes f2\) \(\boxtimes c7\) 23.h3 \(\boxtimes b6\) with an unclear position, in which the chances are about equal, Konguvel-Jaracz, Dresden 2012;

B134) 13...\(\boxtimes d7\) 14.\(\boxtimes x6\) 14.\(\boxtimes d5\) \(\boxtimes d8\) 15.\(\boxtimes e1\). 14...\(\boxtimes f6\) 15.\(\boxtimes e6+\) \(\boxtimes h8\) 16.\(\boxtimes d5\) \(\boxtimes b8\) 17.\(\boxtimes x8\) \(\boxtimes a8\);

B135) 13...\(\boxtimes d7\) After this strongest move, White has two ways to proceed:

B1351) After 14.\(\boxtimes e1\)! play assumes a more positional character in which chances are about equal, because neither side has any obvious weaknesses or problems: 14...\(\boxtimes f6\) 14...\(\boxtimes c6\)??

15.\(\boxtimes d5!\)± \(\boxtimes d8\) 16.\(\boxtimes f5\) \(\boxtimes e5\) 17.\(\boxtimes f5\) \(\boxtimes e5\) 18.\(\boxtimes x5\) dxe5 19.f6 g6 20.\(\boxtimes e7\)+ 1-0 Kudrin-Moulin, New York 1992.
Chapter 5 – 6...c4 e6 7.0-0: White Castles Kingside

15...g5! After this exchange White’s position is slightly more pleasant, as his pieces are better and he can potentially exploit the third rank to bring his rooks via e3 and d3, to the kingside for the attack. 15...xg5 16.xg5 c6 17.e3 a7 18.ce2 a5 19.h4 xb3 20.h3 h6 21.axb3 c5 22.g3 h7 23.c3 g5 24.xg5 hxg5 25.b4 f6 26.f3 The resulting endgame is roughly equal, although White has slight pressure because of the pawn on d6. However, with accurate play, Black can easily equalise, Kruppa-Gavrikov, Irkutsk 1986;

B1352) More active and ambitious is 14.f4, with the idea of ramming the pawn down to f6, and exposing the black king, in order to make it easier for his pieces to attack: 14...c6!

He needs to complete his development quickly and exchange some of the attacking pieces, since otherwise it will be very hard for Black to defend.


B13522) 15.f5 xd4 16.xd4 f6 17.d3 Black is very tied up, with practically all his pieces on the back ranks. Here he has two continuations: either continue with passive tactics, by means of ...h8, or to start harassing the enemy with counteractions, beginning with 17...b4. As the variations below demonstrate, the move 17...b4 is stronger.

B135221) 17...h8 18.g5! 18.fx6! fxe6

19.e5! dxe5 20.e3! 18.b4 19.fx6 fxe6 20.e5 dxe5 21.e4 b5 22.c5 e7 23.xe6 g8 24.e3 xd3 25.cxd3 c7 26.g5 and White is an exchange down, but his initiative is sufficient for a draw, Golubev-Zubov, Odessa 2007;

B135222) 17.b4! 18.fx6 fxe6
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

gxh6 22.\(f4\) \(\text{\(\text{x}d3\)}\) 23.\(\text{\(\text{xf}d3\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{xf}6\)}\) 24.\(\text{\(\text{xe}6\)}\)\(\text{\(\text{xf}6\)}\); or 20...\(\text{\(\text{xd}3\)}\) 21.\(\text{\(\text{xf}6\)}\)\(\text{\(\text{h8}\)}\)!! 22.\(\text{\(\text{xd}3\)}\) gxh6\(\text{\(\text{f}\)}\)

B2) 11.a3 0-0 11...\(\text{\(\text{bd}7\)}\)!! is also possible, and in some lines reaches the same position as after castling, but the text move has one small plus by comparison: after castling, Black can still develop his pieces in various ways, whereas the immediate 11...\(\text{\(\text{bd}7\)}\) deprives Black of these additional options.

B2) 11...\(\text{\(\text{bd}7\)}\)

12.\(\text{\(\text{ae}1\)}\) has its pluses. The idea is simple: White is clearly prepared to attack, by advancing his g- and f-pawns, and in that case, the rook on f1 is obviously well-placed to support the match of the f-pawn and help create threats on that file.

This is a very important moment for Black, who must decide how to continue developing his pieces. He has two ways of doing so: first with 12...\(\text{\(\text{bd}7\)}\), which leads to a very complicated struggle, where Black has to play extremely accurately in order not to fall under a mating attack; and secondly, with the move I prefer, 12...\(\text{\(\text{d}7\)}\).

B2 1) 12...\(\text{\(\text{bd}7\)}\) 13.\(\text{\(\text{g}3\)}\)

Here Hou Yifan played 13...\(\text{\(\text{h}8\)}\) and after 14.\(\text{\(\text{f}4\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{c}5\)}\) 15.\(\text{\(\text{e}5\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{e}4\)}\) 16.\(\text{\(\text{xe}4\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{h}3\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{xe}5\)}\) 17.\(\text{\(\text{xe}4\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{xe}4\)}\) 18.\(\text{\(\text{xe}4\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{h}8\)}\) 19.\(\text{\(\text{c}5\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{xf}7\)}\) 20.\(\text{\(\text{xf}7\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{f}8\)}\) 23.\(\text{\(\text{h}5\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{e}4\)}\) 24.\(\text{\(\text{c}4\)}\)

\(\text{\(\text{d}7\)}\) 25.\(\text{\(\text{xe}6\)}\) Black was winning in Dauletova-Hou Yifan, Macau 2007.

I think Hou Yifan understood that 13...\(\text{\(\text{h}5\)}\) was the way to play, but against a weaker opponent, she wanted to play for a win and almost paid the price. After the correct 13...\(\text{\(\text{h}5\)}\), White should repeat the position, or himself find some other way to continue: 14.\(\text{\(\text{h}3\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{e}4\)}\) 15.\(\text{\(\text{f}4\)}\) 15.\(\text{\(\text{g}3\)}\)\(\text{\(\text{e}4\)}\) 16.\(\text{\(\text{f}4\)}\) After 16.\(\text{\(\text{xe}4\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{xe}4\)}\) 17.\(\text{\(\text{xe}6\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{f}6\)}\) 18.\(\text{\(\text{g}5\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{h}3\)}\) 19.\(\text{\(\text{xe}4\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{xe}4\)}\) 20.\(\text{\(\text{h}h3\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{h}4\)}\) 21.\(\text{\(\text{e}2\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{c}5\)}\) 22.\(\text{\(\text{d}5\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{e}8\)}\) 23.\(\text{\(\text{b}3\)}\) White's position is slightly more pleasant, on account of the strong bishop on d5, but his kingside is weak. 16...\(\text{\(\text{xc}3\)}\) 17.\(\text{\(\text{f}6\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{e}4\)}\) and now:

The resulting position is very sharp: White is a piece down but has a strong attack, and now he has a choice of attacking continuations. The first regains the piece, but as we will see from the variations, this does not offer White more than perpetual check, whereas the other option delays regaining the piece and gives White a strong initiative, which with best play on both sides should bring him a minimal advantage.

B2 1) 18.\(\text{\(\text{exd}7\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{xd}7\)}\) 19.\(\text{\(\text{h}5\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{e}6\)}\) 20.\(\text{\(\text{h}4\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{e}8\)}\) 21.\(\text{\(\text{g}5\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{c}8\)}\) 22.\(\text{\(\text{c}3\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{d}5\)}\) 23.\(\text{\(\text{g}3\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{h}8\)}\) 24.\(\text{\(\text{h}4\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{g}8\)}\) 25.\(\text{\(\text{xf}6\)}\) \(\text{\(\text{xf}6\)}\)
With a very simple idea: the move ... \( \text{d}6 \) and the attempt to exchange the strong white knight on d4. 13.\( \text{e}4 \)? 13.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 14.\( \text{xf}3 \) dx\( \text{e}5 \) 15.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 16.\( \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{xd}7= \). 13...\( \text{c}6 \)! 14.g5 and now:

B212) 14...\( \text{e}8 \) It is better immediately to move the knight away, because if we start with \( \text{e}5 \), then the white f-pawn starts its advance with tempo, as we shall see. 15.\( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 16.\( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{xb}3 \) 17.\( \text{xb}3 \) a5 18.\( \text{b}4 \) axb4 19.axb4 g6 20.f5 e5 21.\( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{d}8 \)\)

22.\( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 23.\( \text{fxe}6 \) \( \text{fxe}6 \) 24.\( \text{xf}6+ \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 25.\( \text{e}7+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 26.\( \text{e}7+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 27.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 28.\( \text{wh}6+ \) \( \text{g}7 \) 29.\( \text{wh}3= \);

B212) 14...\( \text{e}5 \) 15.\( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 16.\( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 17.\( \text{xc}4 \) bxc4 18.\( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{e}2 \)g6 19.\( \text{xc}4 \) bxc4 20.\( \text{b}3 \).

18...g6 19.\( \text{e}c2? \) e5 20.\( \text{f}6 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 21.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{g}5+ \) 22.\( \text{e}c3 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 23.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{f}4 \) 24.\( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{xf}4 \) 25.\( \text{e}f4 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 26.\( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{g}5+ \) 27.\( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 27...\( \text{g}8= \). 28.\( \text{h}7 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 29.\( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 28.\( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{xb}2 \) 28...\( \text{g}1 \) 29.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 30.\( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 31.\( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{g}6= \). 29.\( \text{h}7+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 30.\( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 31.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{g}1 \) 32.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{d}4+ \) 33.\( \text{f}1 \) 1-0

Polgar-Dominguez Perez, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011.

B22) 12.\( \text{fe}1 \) \( \text{bd}7 \)
B22 11) 13...\(\text{\emph{e5?!}}\) 14.\(\text{\emph{g3}}\) \(\text{\emph{h5}}\)
14...\(\text{\emph{g6}}\) 15.\(\text{\emph{ad1}}\) \(\text{\emph{h5}}\) 16.\(\text{\emph{g4}}\) \(\text{\emph{xe5}}\).
The bishops should have been exchanged earlier. Now Black has given
his opponent many tempi. White has created an attack on the \(d6\)-pawn, and
has pressure against the black position, on account of his active pieces.
17.\(\text{\emph{wxg5}}\) \(\text{\emph{f6}}\) 18.\(\text{\emph{f3}}\) \(\text{\emph{c7}}\) 19.\(\text{\emph{g3}}\)
\(\text{\emph{e5}}\) 20.\(\text{\emph{xex5}}\) \(\text{\emph{dxe5}}\) 21.\(\text{\emph{d3}}\) \(\text{\emph{b7}}\)
22.\(\text{\emph{d6}}\) \(\text{\emph{xd6}}\) 23.\(\text{\emph{xd6}}\) \(\text{\emph{f8}}\) 24.\(\text{\emph{xf8}}\) 25.\(\text{\emph{f3}}\) \(\text{\emph{f6}}\)
26.\(\text{\emph{d1}}\) \(\text{\emph{c8}}\) 27.\(\text{\emph{e2}}\) with an absolutely equal
endgame, which should end in a draw,
but since such positions are always easier to play as Black, I prefer his position.
Nisipeanu-Agrest, Mainz rapid 2005.
15.\(\text{\emph{h4}}\) \(\text{\emph{xe5}}\) 16.\(\text{\emph{h5}}\) \(\text{\emph{g6}}\)
I prefer Black in such positions, as his play is rather easier. For example, 17.\(\text{\emph{g3}}\)
\(\text{\emph{b6}}\) 18.\(\text{\emph{ad1}}\) \(\text{\emph{b7}}\) 19.\(\text{\emph{fxf3}}\) \(\text{\emph{fxf3}}+\)
20.\(\text{\emph{xf3}}\) \(\text{\emph{f8}}\) 21.\(\text{\emph{e3}}\) \(\text{\emph{xe3}}\) 22.\(\text{\emph{xe3}}\)
\(\text{\emph{f8}}\) 23.\(\text{\emph{ed3}}\) \(\text{\emph{e7}}\) 24.\(\text{\emph{f3}}\) \(\text{\emph{ac8}}\) 25.\(\text{\emph{d4}}\)
\(\text{\emph{c6}}\) 26.\(\text{\emph{d4}}\) \(\text{\emph{xa4}}\) 27.\(\text{\emph{xa4}}\) \(\text{\emph{xb8}}\) 28.\(\text{\emph{d3}}\)
d5 29.\(\text{\emph{xd5}}\) with a dead drawn position.
Iturrizaga Bonelli-Dominguez Perez, Santo Domingo 2007;
B22 12) 13...\(\text{\emph{c5}}\) 14.\(\text{\emph{a2}}\) \(\text{\emph{c7}}\)
15.\(\text{\emph{ad1}}\) \(\text{\emph{b7}}\) This also looks good.
Black places all his pieces flexibly and is ready to bring his heavy artillery into
play. 16.\(\text{\emph{b4}}\) \(\text{\emph{ed7}}\) 17.\(\text{\emph{h3}}\) \(\text{\emph{e5}}\) 18.\(\text{\emph{f4}}\)
\(\text{\emph{c4}}\) 19.\(\text{\emph{h1}}\) \(\text{\emph{b2}}\) 20.\(\text{\emph{a1}}\) \(\text{\emph{a4}}\)
21.\(\text{\emph{xa4}}\) \(\text{\emph{bxa4}}\) 22.\(\text{\emph{d3}}\) \(\text{\emph{ac8}}\) 23.\(\text{\emph{c4}}\) \(\text{\emph{h6}}\)
24.\(\text{\emph{xf6}}\) \(\text{\emph{xf6}}\) A double-edged position
in which both sides have their trumps. White has seized the centre and
has the better pawn structure, whilst Black has two very strong bishops
which give him sufficient compensation
for his pawn weaknesses, Movsziszian-Gelfand, Minsk 1986;
B22 13) 13...\(\text{\emph{h6}}\)? A logical move.
Black wants to know at once what the
bishop's intentions are, as well as ensuring he does not constantly have to
worry about the blow on \(h6\). 14.\(\text{\emph{d2}}\)
After 14.\(\text{\emph{h4}}\) \(\text{\emph{b6}}\) 15.\(\text{\emph{ad1}}\) \(\text{\emph{b7}}\) Black has an excellent position. 14...\(\text{\emph{e5}}\)
14...\(\text{\emph{e5}}\)? 15.\(\text{\emph{g3}}\) \(\text{\emph{h8}}\) 16.\(\text{\emph{ad1}}\) \(\text{\emph{c7}}\)
is unclear. 15.\(\text{\emph{a2}}\) \(\text{\emph{b4}}\)? 15...\(\text{\emph{h8}}\) leads
to a position where the chances are about equal. 16.\(\text{\emph{xb4}}\) \(\text{\emph{xb4}}\?
17.\(\text{\emph{c6}}\)-- Coleman-Tisdall, Gausdal 1995.
B222) 13.\(\text{\emph{g3}}\)

B22 11) 13...\(\text{\emph{c5}}\) 14.\(\text{\emph{h6}}\) \(\text{\emph{c8}}\)
White feels it is the right moment to jump in with the knight. Here he could have played either \(\text{\emph{d5}}\) or \(\text{\emph{f5}}\). The more correct move was \(\text{\emph{d5}}\), but in the game,
White went wrong and obtained a lost position, although he was lucky
and went on to win a beautiful game:
B22 11) 15.\(\text{\emph{f5}}\) \(\text{\emph{f6}}\)! Or 15...\(\text{\emph{exf5}}\)
16.\(\text{\emph{d5}}\) \(\text{\emph{xa7}}\) 17.\(\text{\emph{xa8}}\) \(\text{\emph{xa8}}\) 18.\(\text{\emph{f5}}\)
\(\text{\emph{f6}}\) and Black is better. 16.\(\text{\emph{ad1}}\)
\(\text{\emph{xb3}}\)? (16...\(\text{\emph{e5}}!\))

B22 11) Black has gone wrong and
given his opponent the chance to seize
the initiative, but White in his turn is
seduced by the attractive move 17.\(\text{\emph{e5}}\),
which looks logical, as it frees the
\(e4\)-square for his knight. Unfortunately,
it fails to a strong queen sacrifice, after
which the advantage swings over to
Black: 17...\(\text{\emph{dxe5}}\) 18.\(\text{\emph{e4}}\) \(\text{\emph{xe4}}\)
19.\( \text{d5}\)!! \( \text{Wxd5} \) 20.\( \text{exd5} \) 20.exd5 \( \text{Qf5}\)\( +\). 20...\( \text{exd5} \) 21.c3.

B22212) 15.\( \text{Qd5}\)!N \( \text{Qxb3} \)

16.\( \text{Qxe7+} \) \( \text{Wxe7} \) 17.\( \text{cxb3} \) \( e5 \) 18.\( \text{Qf5} \) \( \text{Qxf5} \) 19.\( \text{exf5} \) and White has pressure.

B2222) 13...\( \text{Qe5}\)!N If there is a choice of equal merit, I always try to play the move which has not been played, since there are simply more chances that the opponent will not know the move, whilst you have some analysis and know the position better.

14.f4 \( \text{Qc4} \) 15.\( \text{Qxc4} \) \( \text{bxc4} \) 16.e5 \( \text{Qe4} \) 17.\( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Wxe4} \) 18.\( \text{Qxd6} \) \( \text{Qxd6} \)

19.\( \text{Qad1} \) \( \text{Qd8} \) with a playable position, where Black is certainly not worse. He has two strong bishops, which need to move out of the centre, and then Black can play for the initiative.

B23) 12.\( \text{g4}\)?! An active move. White wants to seize space immediately and exploit the fact that the black queen is a long way from the kingside, and half of Black’s army are not in their places.

B222 112) Better is 17.\( \text{Qxd6}! \) \( \text{Qxd6} \)

18.\( \text{Qxd6} \) \( \text{Qd4} \)

19.\( \text{Qd5} \)!! \( \text{Wxd5} \) 20.\( \text{exd5} \) 20.exd5 \( \text{Qf5}\)\( +\). 20...\( \text{exd5} \) 21.c3.

B22212) 15.\( \text{Qd5}\)!N \( \text{Qxb3} \)

16.\( \text{Qxe7+} \) \( \text{Wxe7} \) 17.\( \text{cxb3} \) \( e5 \) 18.\( \text{Qf5} \) \( \text{Qxf5} \) 19.\( \text{exf5} \) and White has pressure.

B2222) 13...\( \text{Qe5}\)!N If there is a choice of equal merit, I always try to play the move which has not been played, since there are simply more chances that the opponent will not know the move, whilst you have some analysis and know the position better.

14.f4 \( \text{Qc4} \) 15.\( \text{Qxc4} \) \( \text{bxc4} \) 16.e5 \( \text{Qe4} \) 17.\( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Wxe4} \) 18.\( \text{Qxd6} \) \( \text{Qxd6} \)

19.\( \text{Qad1} \) \( \text{Qd8} \) with a playable position, where Black is certainly not worse. He has two strong bishops, which need to move out of the centre, and then Black can play for the initiative.

B23) 12.\( \text{g4}\)?! An active move. White wants to seize space immediately and exploit the fact that the black queen is a long way from the kingside, and half of Black’s army are not in their places.

12...\( \text{Qc6}\)!! 13.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 14.\( \text{Wf5} \) \( \text{Qc5}\)!! A simple and strong move. Exchanges usually help the defending side and ease the defence. With the knight move, Black creates another threat, by indirectly attacking the pawn on e4, and at the same time gets ready to eliminate the light-squared bishop, which has caused him so much trouble. 14...\( \text{g6} \) 15.\( \text{Wh6} \) \( \text{Qde5} \) 16.\( \text{Qxc6} \) \( \text{Wxc6} \) 17.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{He8} \)

18.\( \text{Qad1} \) \( \text{b7} \) 19.\( \text{Qd4} \) \( \text{Qf8} \) 20.\( \text{Wf4} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 21.\( \text{Wg3} \) \( \text{Qac8} \) 22.\( \text{Qf2} \) \( \text{Qc4} \) 23.\( \text{Qe2} \)

\( \text{e5} \) 24.\( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 25.\( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{Qc5} \) and Black is close to winning. Mamikonian-Rohit, Yerevan Wch-jr 2007. 15.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \)

16.\( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qxb3} \) 17.\( \text{cx} \) 17...\( \text{f5} \) and Black is a little better, as the white attack has run out of steam.

Back to the main line after 9...\( \text{Wc7} \).
White needs to play very accurately to achieve anything. At first glance, it looks as though 10.\textit{e}1 is a good move, but if one looks at the position more deeply, then it becomes clear that 10.\textit{g}3 forces Black to play very precisely, in order to equalise.

\textbf{10.\textit{g}3!}

By contrast, 10.\textit{e}1 is very slow and is not dangerous for Black: 10...\textit{0-0}

A) 11.\textit{g}3

A1) Black has two continuations. The first is 11...\textit{d}7, but this move has its drawbacks: it allows White to correct his inaccuracy with 10.\textit{e}1, whereas the move \textit{h}8 underlines the minuses of this move, and Black's problems are behind him. 11...\textit{d}7 12.\textit{h}6 \textit{e}8

Here White played 17.\textit{g}3?! , missing a concrete win involving the sacrifice of the e-pawn, which stops his \textit{c}2 attacking \textit{h}7. But the text move is also not bad, and promises White a large advantage in Matikozian-Gallegos, Irvine 2010. With 17.e5! he could already have gained a decisive advantage.

14.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6

A11) 13.\textit{a}4 \textit{b}4 14.\textit{ce}2 \textit{h}8 15.\textit{g}5 \textit{x}5 16.\textit{x}5 \textit{f}6 17.\textit{g}3 \textit{c}6 18.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xe}6 19.\textit{ad}1 \textit{ad}8 20.\textit{d}3 \textit{h}6 21.\textit{wf}4 \textit{wh}4 22.\textit{wh}4 \textit{c}d7 23.\textit{h}5 \textit{xf}5 24.\textit{x}5 \textit{d}8 25.\textit{h}3 \textit{b}6 26.\textit{a}5 \textit{b}7 27.\textit{h}4 Kasparov-Gelfand, Paris rapid 1991. After interesting positional play, we reach a roughly equal position. Black's subsequent defeat was not the result of the opening;

A12) 13.\textit{ce}2! \textit{c}6 13...\textit{a}5?! 14.\textit{c}3 (14.\textit{a}4?! 14...\textit{bxa}4 15.\textit{xa}4 \textit{f}6 16.\textit{d}2\pm ) 14...\textit{h}8 15.\textit{g}5 \textit{f}6 16.\textit{h}4 (16.\textit{f}4?! ) 16...\textit{a}6?

A2) 11...\textit{h}8 12.\textit{g}5 \textit{b}4 12...h6?! 13.\textit{d}2 (13.\textit{h}3?! \textit{b}4 14.\textit{ce}2 \textit{g}8

15.\textit{f}4! 15.\textit{d}4!N The knight is clearly more active on d4 and all the white pieces are very well placed. With his next move, he brings the a-rook to d1 and will pressurise his opponent on the central squares and lines, with the weakness of the d6-pawn having its say. 15...\textit{h}8 16.\textit{g}5 \textit{x}5 17.\textit{x}5 \textit{f}6 18.e5 dxe5 19.\textit{xe}5 \textit{ac}8 with an approximately equal position, Minasian-Rodriguez Cespedes, Lucerne Wch-rt 1993.
Chapter 5

15...e3  dxe4 16.c3  dxc6 17...c4

White has a non-standard position, where White has an outside passed pawn, and the more active pieces. In return, Black has a strong pawn centre, which balances the chances. 13...d7 With the idea of exchanging the knight on d4, after which Black will be OK.

After 12...b4 White has:

A21) 13...b1?!  b7 14...d2  c6 15...c6  dxc6 16.a3 a5 17.axb4 axb4 18...d1 h5 19...h4  xg5 20...xg5 f6 21...h4. In principle, such positions are regarded as equal, but I prefer Black, because he has exchanged two pairs of minor pieces and has easily equalised, and now he can fight for the advantage, thanks to his superior pawn structure, Dgebuadze-V. Gurevich, Le Touquet 2002;

A22) 13...a4!  d7? As we have said several times, the bishop stands excellently on d7, attacking the white knight at a4, defending the important e6-square, and helping the development of the knight at b8. 14.c3 h6 15...d2  b7! 16.e5 dxe5 17...xe5 c6! with an absolutely equal position, where I would prefer Black.

B) 11.a3?! is a slow and not very strong move, which gives Black time to develop his pieces, after which he will stand well. 11...c6 12...c6  wxc6 13.g3  h5 14...h3  f6 15...g5 16.g3=. 15...b7?! 15...h6!

16...e3!  fe8 17...ae1  h8 18...h4  g8 19...g3  c5 20...ee3  h6 21...e7  xxe7 22...f4  f8 23...h3  c6 24...xh6+  gxh6 25...xh6+  g8 26...xe6  e5 27...xg6+  g7 28...h5  fxe6 29...g3 and White won in Short-Ehlvest, Moscow rapid 1994;

C) 11.a4 b4! After this strong move, Black has no problem, as he exchanges his b-pawn for the white e-pawn, and Black is at least not worse. 11...bxa4?! 12...xa4  d7? (after 12...b7! 13...g3  c7 14...c4 White is slightly better)

13...c4 (after 13.e5! dxe5 14...c4  a5 15...e6  xxe6 16...xa8  xc4 17...xc4  b4 18...b7± White is simply better, with equal material, two bishops and a threat of check on f7)
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

13...\texttt{b7} 14.\texttt{g5} (14.e5! \texttt{xf3} 15.\texttt{xf3} dxe5 16.\texttt{xe5±}) 14...\texttt{d8} 15.e5 \texttt{xf3} dxe5 16.\texttt{xe5} h6 18.\texttt{e3} \texttt{b5} 19.\texttt{d4} \texttt{e8} 20.a4 \texttt{xd4} 21.\texttt{xe8} \texttt{xe8} 22.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{f6} 23.\texttt{e4} \texttt{xe5} 24.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{c6} 25.\texttt{c3} and White has a minimal advantage thanks to the strong bishop on c3, and chances to create an outside passed pawn, Nisipeanu-Banikas, Novi Sad Ech-tit 2009.

12.\texttt{a2}

12...\texttt{b7} 13.\texttt{xb4} \texttt{bd7} 14.c3 \texttt{e5} 15.\texttt{h3} \texttt{xe4} 16.a5! The pawn on a6 needs to be fixed. 16...\texttt{h8} 17.\texttt{g5} d5 18.\texttt{g3} \texttt{h5} 19.\texttt{h4} \texttt{f6} 20.\texttt{g3} ½-½ Nisipeanu-Karjakin, Warsaw Ech 2005.

10...0-0

The alternative is 10...\texttt{c6} and now:

A) 11.\texttt{f5} An excellent knight sacrifice, which is hard to find, because after Black takes the knight, it is not obvious how White should develop the initiative. But as an analysis of the games will show, as a result of the sacrifice, Black has great problems, because his king is unsafe in the centre of the board under the blows of the white pieces.

11...\texttt{xf5} 12.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xf5} A1) 13.\texttt{g5} One's eyes glaze over at the sight of so many interesting continuations, but I think the most logical and probably strongest is to develop another piece with tempo in this way, after which the rook on a1 can also come into play.

Here Black has three continuations. After each, we will see that by returning the piece, he either obtains a double-edged position or equalises. I will not give preference to any one move, but I can say with confidence that Black has adequate play in all lines.

A11) 13...\texttt{d8} 14.\texttt{d5} \texttt{xd5} 14...\texttt{h5}? 15.\texttt{c3}!± \texttt{b7} 16.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xe7} 17.\texttt{h3} \texttt{g7} 18.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{f6} 19.\texttt{h6} \texttt{f7} 20.\texttt{e6} \texttt{g8} 21.\texttt{ae1} \texttt{c7} 22.\texttt{xf7}+ \texttt{xf8} 23.\texttt{g7} \texttt{g7} 24.\texttt{e6} with an ongoing initiative in Solak-Karjakin, Dresden Olympiad 2008. 15.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{b7} 16.\texttt{h6}

A111) 16...\texttt{d7} 17.\texttt{xh7} \texttt{f4}!N Previously 17...0–0–0 was played. After 18.\texttt{xf8} \texttt{xf8}, now 19.c3?! didn't worry Black too much after 19...f4

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20.f3 ♕e5 21.♗f1 ♗d8 22.♗f5 ♖b6+ 23.♕h1 ♧xf5 24.♗xf5 ♕xd5, Coleman-Eames, England tt 2005/06. But with 19.a4!N b4 20.exf5 White gains the upper hand. 18.♗xf8 ♧xf8 19.a4 b4 20.c3 ♕xc3 21.bxc3 White has the advantage. He has two pawns and a rook against two pieces, but his bishop on d5 is magnificent, whilst the black king is in the centre and is very vulnerable. Also, the b-file is open, and the white rooks can use this to start an attack, and the f4-pawn is weak.

A112) 16...♕d7!N is an excellent novelty. Black's only problem is his king, so he removes it from the danger zone, opening the back rank for his pieces to come to the aid of the rook f8, and begin an attack on the white king, to exploit his material advantage. A sample variation is 17.♗xf7 ♔h8 18.♗xf5+ ♖c7 19.♖g7 ♔h4 20.c4 ♖d7 21.♗xf7 ♔d8 22.♗g8 ♕c6 23.♖f7 with a dynamic, balanced position. Of course both sides have other choices, but there is no point in looking at all possibilities, rather one just needs to know the assessment of the position and play whichever side you prefer.

A12) 13...b4 14.♗xf6 bxc3 15.♖xc3

15...♗d7?!N A new move (15...f4 16.♗xf7 ♕e5 was seen in Gallegos-Adelberg, Las Vegas 2008), after which White has a large choice. But at a very deep level, the computer says the position is level. In principle this should be so, since White has sacrificed a piece, but has two pawns for it and can win a third, and in addition, the black king is in the centre. I offer this sample variation of what might happen: 16.♗xf5 ♕xf5 17.♖ad1 0-0-0 18.♖e1 h5=;

A13) 13...♖xe4 14.♕d5 and now:

A131) 14...♖a7! 15.♕xe7

A1311) If 15...f6 16.♕d5 ♕xe7 17.♕e3 ♖b8 18.♕h6 ♕xd5 19.♗xf8+ ♕d7 20.♕f7+ ♕c6 21.♖fd1 ♕c7

22.c4 b4 23.♕h5 ♕e6 24.♕f4 White has an excellent attack; the black king is stuck in the centre, and the d6-pawn is weak. White wants to play f2-f3 if the chance arises, and then to break through with c4-c5. The black pieces are not ready for this, and the opposite bishops strengthen White’s attack;
A1312) In case of the recapture 15...\(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{c}e7}}\) 16.\(\texttt{\textsc{e3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{c}c5}}\) 17.\(\texttt{\textsc{f}f1}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{b}b7}}\) 18.\(\texttt{\textsc{h}h6}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{e}e6}}\) 19.\(\texttt{\textsc{xe6}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{e}e6}}\) 20.\(\texttt{\textsc{xe6}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{fxe6}}}\) 21.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f8+}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}d7}}\) 22.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f7}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{g}g8}}\) 23.\(\texttt{\textsc{g}3}\) White is simply better, as his king is defended, his pieces are active, whilst play occurs on both flanks, which means White's bishop is strong, and the black king is in the centre under attack.

A132) 14...\(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}d8}}\)? 15.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f6}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{e}e7}}\) 15.\(\texttt{\textsc{c}c5}\)? \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{x}xe7}}\) 16.\(\texttt{\textsc{h}h6}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{g}g8}}\) 17.\(\texttt{\textsc{xf7}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}d7}}\) 18.\(\texttt{\textsc{g}g5}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{x}g5}}\) 19.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f5}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}d8}}\) 20.\(\texttt{\textsc{d}d4}\) leads to an interesting position with much play. The opposite bishops help White and the black pawns are weak, but he has two knights against a rook. The position is unclear, because the knights lack central outposts, which is the most important thing in such positions, and rook and pawn is not weaker than two knights, even in an ending. 15...\(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{xe7}}\textsc{e7}}\) 16.\(\texttt{\textsc{f}f1}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{c}c6}}\) 17.\(\texttt{\textsc{xe7}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{xc6}}\textsc{c6}}\) 18.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f7}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}d7}}\) Black has an extra piece, whilst really dangerous ideas for White are not obvious, although of course he has compensation. However, I do not think Black will experience any serious problems.

A3) 13.\(\texttt{\textsc{e}e5}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{x}xe5}}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textsc{g}g5}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{b}b4}}\) 15.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f6}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{bxc3}}\textsc{c3}}\) 16.\(\texttt{\textsc{a}a6}\) 0-0-0!- White has compensation for the piece, but I think that by accurate play, Black can neutralise the white initiative, and keep his extra piece. For example: 17.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f3}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{e}e7}}\) 18.\(\texttt{\textsc{e}e3}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{bxb2}}\textsc{b2}}\) 19.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f6}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{e}e6}}\) 20.\(\texttt{\textsc{c}c3}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}d6}}\) 21.\(\texttt{\textsc{h}h4}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}d7}}\) 22.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f3}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{e}e5}}\) 23.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f5}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{b}b7}}\) 25.\(\texttt{\textsc{a}a1}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}d4}}\) 26.\(\texttt{\textsc{b}b3+}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{a}a8}}\) 27.\(\texttt{\textsc{a}a3}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{b}b8}}\) 28.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f8}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{x}xe8}}\) and Black won in Mukhutdinov-Shneider, St Petersburg 1993.

B) 11.\(\texttt{\textsc{a}a6}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{bxc6}}\textsc{c6}}\) 12.\(\texttt{\textsc{a}a1}\) and now:
B1) 12...0-0 13.\(\texttt{\textsc{h}h6}\) Now Black has to choose between two knight moves:
B11) 13...\(\texttt{\textsc{d}d8}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f4}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{f}f6}}\)

20...\(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{e}e6}}\)!\textsc{N} After this strong novelty, Black has no problems and can play calmly. 20...\(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{w}xc2}}\)? 21.\(\texttt{\textsc{e}e1+}++-\) was seen in a game Coleman-Bushill, London 2004, where after 21...\(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{e}e6}}\) 22.\(\texttt{\textsc{d}d5}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textsc{fxe6}}\textsc{xe6}}\) 24.\(\texttt{\textsc{w}f7+}\) with perpetual check, White could have won with 23.\(\texttt{\textsc{x}e6}++-\).
square, which instead stands on e8. The queen on c6 is also liable to be attacked by the enemy pieces. 16.c3 7.e5 17.7.g5 f6 18.7 xe6 7.xg3 19.7.d8+ 7.c4 20.7 xc4+ bxc4 21.7.e3 7.h4 22.g3 7.g5 23.f4 7.h6 — Black simply has an extra piece and a winning position, Nalbandian-Minasian, Decin 1996. 16...a5 17.a4 b4 18.e5±.

B12) 13...7.h5 14.7.g4 7.h8!? A very interesting idea; despite the fact that White keeps an extra pawn, Black has two bishops and practical compensation 14...7.c5? 15.e5! 7.h8?? (15...7.b7±) 16.7.d2 g6 17.7.e4 7.c7 18.exd6 7.xd6 19.7.xd6 7.xd6 20.7.b4 7.d8 21.7.d1+— Bosch-Andreasen, Arnhem Ech-jr 1989. 15.7.xh5 gxh6 16.7.xh6 7.g8 17.7.ad1 7.c5 18.7.e3 7.f6 19.a3 7.e5 20.g3± Black of course has compensation, but it is insufficient, and in addition, White can exchange queens at some moment and advance f4, after which the strong bishop on e5 will be driven away and White can start attacking Black’s only weakness, the pawn on d6; White should move the knight from c3 and put the pawn on that square, so as to restrict the strong bishop completely.);

B2) An excellent move, which I like, involves the unusual plan of sacrificing a pawn and castling queenside (!), so as to begin an attack on the white king, using the g-file, which has been opened by the loss of the g7-pawn: 12...7.b7 13.7.xg7 13.a3 0-0 14.7.h6 7.e8 15.7.ad1 7.h8 16.7.g5 7.xg5 17.7.xg5 7.f6 18.7.d3 7.ad8 19.7.g3 7.g8 20.7.h4 7.c5!N 21.7.g5 7.b6 22.7.e3 At first glance, it seems as though White has a very strong attack, but in reality, he has nothing, since when the opponent has no obvious weaknesses one lacks anything to fasten onto. Firstly, his pawns cannot help in this, and secondly, his minor pieces are very far away from the scene of the action. 22...h6 23.7.f3 7.h7 24.7.h5 7.d7 and it is time for White to retreat. He cannot do anything and Black’s position is very solid. 13...7.g8 14.7.h6 0-0-0! If 14...7.g6 15.7.h3. 15.7.h3! 7.b8! 16.f3

It is very difficult to give a concrete assessment of this position. This is the only place where White can fight for an advantage, but I think Vasily Mikhailovich gave the most accurate assessment: he has played the position with both colours and won both times. I have come to the same conclusion, namely that the better player will win. The computer gives White a small advantage, but if one follows its first line for a few moves, this advantage dwindles to zero. So play this position, if you are confident of your strength.

B2 1) 16...7.g6 and now:

B2 11) 17.7.e3 7.dg8 18.7.e2 7.d7 19.7.d5 exd5 20.7.xd5 7.c7 21.7.xf7 7.f6 22.7.d1 7.xb2 23.7.e4 7.a3 24.cx b5 axb5 25.7.xg8 7.xg8 26.7.xh7 — White has a winning position, and his material advantage is more than sufficient to wrap up the game, Ivanchuk-Polugaevsky, Monaco blind 1993;
B212) 17.\textit{f4} \textit{dg8} 18.\textit{e2} \textit{c8!}
18...b4 19.\textit{a4} e5 20.\textit{e3} d5 21.exd5
\textit{xd5} 22.\textit{xd5} \textit{xf5} 23.\textit{f2} and now
Black won with 23...\textit{h4!} 24.\textit{xh4}
\textit{hxg2+} 25.\textit{g2} \textit{xf6} 26.\textit{f1}
\textit{xf3}+ 0-1 Degraeve-Guidarelli, Aix-
les-Bains ch-FRA 2003. 19.\textit{e5} \textit{dx e5}
20.\textit{exe5+} \textit{d6} 21.\textit{xd6+} \textit{xd6}
Black has excellent compensation and a
strong attack. The bishop on b3 and
knight on c3 are just spectators;
B213) 17.a3 \textit{dg8} 18.\textit{e2} h5
19.\textit{h1} \textit{c7} 20.\textit{d1} h4 21.\textit{e3} \textit{h5}
22.\textit{g4} \textit{d8} 23.\textit{d2} \textit{g5} 24.\textit{g3} f5
25.\textit{e3} fx4 and Black broke through
in Kir. Georgiev-Ivanchuk, Tilburg
rapid 1993.

B22) 16...b4 17.\textit{a4} \textit{g6!} Notwith-
standing the fact that the computer
played differently, this move is stronger
and more logical! Black's play is simple:
he should double rooks and begin an
attack on the king, since if he does not
do that, White will soon complete his
development and have an extra pawn.
17...\textit{c8?!} 18.\textit{e3} \textit{b5} 19.\textit{c4} bxc3
20.\textit{xc3} \textit{e5} 21.\textit{ad1} h5 22.\textit{f4} \textit{a5}
23.\textit{d4} \textit{g4} 24.\textit{we3} \textit{d7} 25.\textit{d2} e5
and Black took over in HIARCS 6-REBEL
8, Debrecen 1998. 18.\textit{e3} \textit{dg8}
19.\textit{e2} d5 20.\textit{f4+}

20...\textit{a7!} An unlikely move, but the
right one. In general, in such positions,
both sides try to shield their king and
put it on a safe square, but here,
strangely enough, the king feels safest
on an exposed square, where it is
subject to numerous checks. 21.\textit{e5!}
21.exd5 \textit{xd5} 22.\textit{xd5} \textit{xf5} 23.\textit{d2!} (23.\textit{e3+} \textit{b8} 24.\textit{d2} \textit{xf3}
25.\textit{xf3} \textit{xf3} 26.\textit{g3=}) 23...\textit{b5}
24.\textit{e3+} \textit{b8} 25.\textit{b3} \textit{g5} 26.\textit{e1}
\textit{xe3+} 27.\textit{xe3} \textit{g5} 28.\textit{g3}+ \textit{xf3}
29.\textit{hxg3} \textit{g3=}. 21...\textit{d7} 22.\textit{e3+}
\textit{b8} 23.\textit{h1} \textit{g5} and Black has excel-
lent compensation for the pawn.

11.\textit{h6} \textit{e8} 12.\textit{ad1} \textit{d7}

13.\textit{f4}

The more aggressive and dangerous
move. 13.\textit{f3} is the positional move.
White tries to build pressure on the
d6-pawn, for which he does not need
the knight on d4. He wants to play
\textit{f4}, bring a rook to the d-file and play
e4-e5 if the chance comes. 13...\textit{b4}?! The
normal move, after which Black
has everything protected. I do not see
any real dangerous white continu-
ations. After 13...\textit{c6} 14.\textit{f4!} White is
slightly better. He has some pressure
against Black's position, the better de-
development, and his pieces are more ac-
tive. However, Black has no weaknesses
and if he can activate his pieces, he will
have a decent position. For example,
Chapter 5 – 6.\textit{c}4 e6 7.0-0: White Castles Kingside

14...\textit{w}b7 15.\textit{f}fe1 b4 16.\textit{e}2 e5 17.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}6 18.\textit{h}4 \textit{a}5 19.\textit{d}5 \textit{xd}5 20.\textit{x}d5 \textit{x}g5 21.\textit{x}g5 \textit{c}4 22.\textit{g}3 and White’s position looks very threatening, but he is unable to pose his opponent any direct threats. The position is roughly equal, Kasparov-Gelfand, Moscow Olympiad 1994. 14.\textit{e}2 a5 15.\textit{f}4 \textit{h}8 \textit{g}5 \textit{c}6!? 16...\textit{w}f6 17.\textit{w}h4 \textit{b}5 18.\textit{d}4 \textit{e}8 19.\textit{d}xe6 (it is hard even to call this a sacrifice, because after this exchanging combination, White ends up with extra material. He has an absolutely winning position) 19...\textit{fxe}6 20.\textit{x}e6 \textit{a}7 21.e5 \textit{d}e5 22.\textit{x}f8 \textit{xf}8 23.\textit{xf}6 \textit{g}xf6 24.\textit{d}8 \textit{d}7 25.\textit{g}4 1-0 Kasparov-Gelfand, Linares 1993.

Now White has a choice:

A) 17.\textit{d}5!? \textit{exd}5 18.\textit{exd}5 \textit{x}g5 19.\textit{d}xc6 \textit{xc}6 20.\textit{x}g5 \textit{h}6 21.\textit{fx}3 \textit{c}8 22.\textit{w}f4 \textit{f}6 23.\textit{x}d6 \textit{e}4 24.\textit{x}h6+ \textit{gx}h6 25.\textit{w}xh6+ \textit{g}8 26.\textit{g}6+ =;

B) 17.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 18.\textit{w}h4 \textit{f}6 19.\textit{fe}1 a4 20.\textit{c}4 e5 21.\textit{d}5 \textit{exd}5 22.\textit{xd}5 \textit{a}5 23.\textit{g}5 \textit{g}8 24.\textit{d}2 \textit{h}6 and White had to give material with 25.\textit{xf}7+, for which he did not get enough compensation, Stupavski-Palac, Zadar 2007;

C) 17.\textit{fe}1! a4 18.\textit{c}4 \textit{x}g5 19.\textit{x}g5 \textit{a}5 with chances for both sides.

This is one of the basic positions of this variation and this is where the main debate on the line is taking place. White has several continuations, and many interesting games have been played at the top level in each of them.

The analysis is given below, and it seems to me that the different continuations are equally good, but in all cases, Black at first needs to make some accurate moves, so as not to obtain a bad position.

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

14.\textit{xc}6

A) 14.\textit{f}5 \textit{xd}4 15.\textit{xd}4 and now:
A1) 15...\textit{h}8 16.f6?!N A recent top-level game saw 16.\textit{e}e3 \textit{d}f6 17.\textit{h}3 d5 18.e5 \textit{w}xe5 19.\textit{h}4 \textit{f}c8 20.\textit{h}1 \textit{x}c3. An excellent exchange sacrifice, after which it becomes clear that it is Black who is fighting for the advantage. As noted earlier, the whole game was played excellently by Gelfand, and words are superfluous – the moves speak for themselves. 21.bxc3 \textit{w}xc3 22.\textit{d}d4 a5 23.\textit{d}d3 \textit{x}c6 24.c3 a4 25.\textit{x}c2 e5 26.\textit{g}5 b4 with very good play for the exchange, Mamedyarov-Gelfand, Kazan 2011.

16...\textit{x}f6 17.\textit{x}f6 \textit{w}c6 18.\textit{x}g7+ \textit{h}8 19.\textit{x}f6 \textit{c}5 20.\textit{x}g7+ \textit{b}8 21.\textit{x}f6 \textit{d}xe5 22.c3 \textit{g}7 23.\textit{h}4 \textit{h}5 24.\textit{h}3 \textit{f}6 25.\textit{h}2 \textit{e}5 26.b3 and Black won in Morozevich-Kasparov, Astana 2001.

A2) A new idea is 17.\textit{w}f2!?N b4 17...\textit{x}f6? 18.\textit{f}xe6 \textit{w}f6 19.\textit{e}e5+ 18.\textit{f}xe6 \textit{b}xc2 21.\textit{x}xf6 \textit{w}xf6 22.c3 \textit{w}f2 23.\textit{w}c5 24.\textit{f}b2=.

B) 14.\textit{g}5 is an interesting move, but it does not give any advantage if Black reacts correctly, as Gelfand did in the following game: 14...\textit{x}g5 15.\textit{x}g5 \textit{d}x4 16.\textit{x}d4 \textit{w}c5 17.\textit{w}e3 b4 18.\textit{d}1 \textit{b}5 19.\textit{e}e1 a5 20.c3 \textit{c}7 21.h4 21.e5?! \textit{d}xe5 22.\textit{w}xe5 \textit{a}6. 21...\textit{x}b8 22.\textit{w}f2 \textit{e}8 23.\textit{e}3 \textit{b}xc3 24.\textit{c}4 \textit{a}7 25.\textit{b}xc3 a4 26.\textit{c}2 \textit{e}5 and later the game ended in a draw in Morozevich-Gelfand, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

A21) 17.\textit{w}g4?! b4 18.f6 In case of 18.\textit{e}e2 exf5 19.\textit{xf}5 \textit{b}5 20.f6 \textit{xf}6 21.\textit{x}f6 \textit{d}x3 22.\textit{c}x3 \textit{h}8 23.\textit{g}3 \textit{w}e7 24.\textit{f}2 gxf6 Black is slightly better; although his king is weak, he has an extra exchange.

18...\textit{g}6! Black has the advantage. He has a strong bishop, and will have a pawn for the exchange, whilst all of White's dark squares are weak, and the bishop b3 can always come under attack from the move ...a6-a5. For example, 19.\textit{e}e2 a5 20.\textit{x}f8 \textit{xf}8 21.\textit{h}4 a4 22.\textit{w}h7 \textit{a}7+ 23.\textit{h}1 \textit{xf}6 24.\textit{h}6+ \textit{e}7 25.\textit{c}4 \textit{c}5 26.b3 and Black won in Morozevich-Kasparov, Astana 2001.

20.\textit{d}5! \textit{ac}8 21.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 22.a3! White has the advantage. He prevents Black playing ...b5-b4, has seized the half-open f-file and will exert pressure along this file. White only has one problem: the pin on the a7-g1 diagonal. If he can escape from this, he will have a nice advantage.

A2) 15...\textit{f}6!? 16.\textit{d}3 \textit{e}5

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Back to the main line. The bishop recaptures on c6:

14...\(\text{xc6} 15.f5 \text{h8}\)

16.f6

16.\(\text{e3} b4 17.a4 f6! (17...\text{b8}??) 18.fxe6 \text{fxe6} 19.\text{xf8+ xf8} 20.\text{f1 we7} 21.e5 \text{xa4} 22.\text{g5 wa7+} 23.\text{e3 we7} 24.\text{xa4} and White won in A. Sokolov-Gelfand, Odessa ch-URS 1989. 18.\text{fxe6 Axe4} 19.\text{h3} (Damaso-Arnason, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990) 19...\text{xe6} 20.\text{b6} \text{ea8}.

16...gxh6 17.fxe7 \text{xe7} 18.\text{f2 g7} 19.\text{d4}

19.\text{b6?! fc8} 20.a3 (20.\text{d4 transposes to 19.\text{d4}) 20...a5 21.h1 h5 22.\text{d3 wa7}! Michiels-Bu Xiangzhi, Antwerp 2008.

19.\text{ac8}

In case of 19...\text{wa7} 20.\text{xa7 Axa7} 21.\text{xd6}, even with equal pawns, White is slightly better: Black has doubled h-pawns, and his knight on g7 is bad, although White has a weak pawn on e4 and his bishop on b3 is not especially strong: 21.\text{c8} 22.a3! a5? 22...\text{b7!} 23.\text{d1} 23.a4!\text{b4} 23.\text{e8} 24.\text{d8 Aa8} 25.\text{d4 Aab6} 26.h3 b4 27.axb4 Axb4 In the resulting endgame, White has an advantage, which he realised in accurate fashion, Ivanchuk-Gelfand, Moscow blitz 2008.

20.a3

20.\text{d3! N h5} 21.a3 \text{cd8} 22.\text{f6 e5} 23.\text{f2 e6}.

20...\text{g5}! 21.\text{f2}

21.\text{xd6? f5!} 22.\text{e5+ f6} 23.\text{xe6 e3} 24.\text{h3 f5} 25.\text{e6 e8} Rublevsky-Bu Xiangzhi, Ningbo rapid 2010.

21.a5 22.\text{d3 cd8} 23.\text{b6 wc5} 24.\text{xc5}

24.\text{xc5} 25.\text{xf7 a4} 26.\text{a2 b4} 27.\text{d6 bxc3} 28.\text{xf8+ xf8}

29.\text{xc6 cxb2} 30.\text{b6}=

Conclusion

In this line, White has a mass of interesting sacrifices and attacking possibilities, but in return, Black gets the better piece play and pawn structure. Black has to be very careful in the early moves, so as not to fall under a mating attack. He should not be afraid of the white sacrifices, but needs to know and remember some complicated variations.
In this section, we will examine three alternative moves: 7.\textit{f}e3, 7.\textit{g}5, and 7.\textit{a}3. The idea of 7.\textit{g}5 is to develop the queenside as soon as possible, and to castle queenside and begin an attack on the kingside, where the black king is likely to castle.

7.\textit{a}3 is the only move which allows White to retain the light-squared bishop, which will be safe on a2. But for this, White pays a high price – he loses three tempi, just to develop one piece, and although the bishop is extremely important, three tempi is three tempi.

\textbf{7.\textit{e}3}

Not a dangerous move for Black, and he has many ways to obtain a good position. We will examine several of these, which I think will be enough for what is not a very important line. Other seventh-move options for White are:

A) 7.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}7

A1) 8.\textit{b}3 \textit{a}5 (8...\textit{c}6!? and now:

A11) 9.\textit{d}2 \textit{h}6 10.\textit{xf}6 In case of 10.\textit{h}4 \textit{d}xe4 11.\textit{xe}4 \textit{d}xd2+ 12.\textit{xd}2 \textit{xh}4 13.\textit{xd}6+ \textit{e}7 Black is slightly better; or 10.\textit{e}3 \textit{g}4 11.0-0-0 \textit{e}xe3 12.\textit{xe}3 \textit{d}7 and after Black eliminates the white dark-squared bishop, he cannot have any problems, and can even play to seize the initiative. 10...\textit{xf}6 11.0-0-0 0-0 Because White has no dark-squared bishop, Black cannot have any problems.

A12) 9.\textit{d}2 Not a great move, but the only way to avoid exchanging the bishop for the black knight. The bishop takes the d2-square from the white queen, but does force the black queen to move away to c7.
A121) 9...\textit{b}b4?!N is a very strange-looking move, but at the same time strong. Black just attacks the knight on d4 and it is not obvious how White should defend it. The computer suggests going back with \textit{g}5, but then, if nothing else, Black can play \textit{a}5 again:
\begin{enumerate}
  \item 10.\textit{g}5 10.\textit{e}3 \textit{x}xe4 11.\textit{w}g4 d5!
  \item 12.a3 \textit{a}5 13.0-0 h5 14.\textit{w}f3 \textit{xc}3
  \item 15.\textit{d}2 – here, White has compensation for the pawn.
\end{enumerate}
A122) 9...\textit{c}7 10.0-0 0-0 11.\textit{w}f3 b5 12.a3 \textit{b}7 yields a reasonable position where Black has no problems.

A2) 8.f4?! \textit{c}7 9.\textit{b}3 h6 10.\textit{h}4 10.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 just gives Black the advantage, so White must retreat the bishop to h4! 10...\textit{xe}4 11.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xc}3
\begin{enumerate}
  \item 12.\textit{w}g4 \textit{xe}7
  \item 13.\textit{xc}3 \textit{f}8 14.\textit{b}7+ \textit{f}8 15.\textit{xc}3
\end{enumerate}
14.\textit{xf}8+ \textit{xf}8 15.\textit{bxc}3 \textit{d}7 In this ending too, Black is slightly better, as White has a broken structure and, most of all, Black has exchanged the queens and a pair of minor pieces;

A3) 8.0-0 \textit{c}7 9.\textit{b}3 0-0 10.\textit{w}f3 Or 10.f4 h6 11.\textit{h}4 \textit{xe}4 12.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xc}3 13.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xd}6 14.\textit{xc}3 \textit{c}6\text{=}.
\begin{enumerate}
  \item 10...\textit{b}5 11.a3 \textit{bd}7 12.\textit{g}3 \textit{h}7 Here too, Black has an excellent position, thanks to his excellently developed pieces;
\end{enumerate}

A4) In case of 8.\textit{d}2 \textit{h}6! 9.\textit{e}3 \textit{g}4 10.0-0 \textit{c}7 11.\textit{b}3 0-0 12.\textit{ad}1 \textit{xe}3 13.\textit{xc}3 \textit{c}6 Black is slightly better, on account of his two bishops and the weak dark squares in the enemy camp.

B) 7.a3 \textit{e}7 8.\textit{a}2 0-0 9.0-0 \textit{b}5 and now:
\begin{enumerate}
  \item 10.\textit{f}3 \textit{b}7 11.\textit{g}3 \textit{c}6 12.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 13.\textit{h}6 \textit{e}8 14.\textit{ad}1 \textit{b}4 In my opinion, 14...\textit{h}4! 15.\textit{g}4 \textit{f}6 gives Black an edge, as it is not obvious where White’s play is coming from. His pieces do not cooperate. 15.\textit{xb}4 \textit{h}8 16.\textit{c}4 \textit{xb}4 17.\textit{b}3 \textit{h}4 18.\textit{g}4 \textit{f}6 19.\textit{d}2 a5 20.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}7 21.\textit{g}3 a4
  \item 22.\textit{h}5 a3 23.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}2 24.\textit{c}1 with a great advantage, Hamdouchi-Vachier-Lagrave, Pau ch-FRA 2012;
  \item 10.\textit{e}3 is too slow, so it is not even necessary to look at the numerous concrete variations; White cannot do anything to pose Black problems. I will give one example: 10...\textit{b}7 11.f3 \textit{bd}7 12.\textit{e}1 \textit{e}8 13.\textit{d}1 \textit{c}7 14.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}8 15.\textit{g}5 \textit{ac}8 16.\textit{h}1 \textit{b}8 17.\textit{d}2 \textit{h}8 18.\textit{fd}1 h6 19.\textit{h}3 \textit{h}7 20.\textit{f}4 \textit{e}5 21.\textit{de}2 \textit{a}8 22.b4 \textit{ed}8 23.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}7 24.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}6 25.\textit{h}3 \textit{c}4 \text{½-½} A. Fedorov-Jaracz, Czechia tt 2011/12;
  \item B2) 10.\textit{f}4 \textit{b}7 11.\textit{f}5 e5 12.\textit{de}2 and now:
    \begin{enumerate}
      \item B3 1) 12...\textit{xe}4 13.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 14.\textit{g}3 d5! 14...\textit{b}7 15.\textit{h}5±.
15. f6!?N In the spirit of the position. White is already a pawn down and cannot afford to retreat; to justify the pawn sacrifice, he has to continue in the same style. 15. \(\text{\textit{N}}e4\) dxe4 16. \(\text{\textit{N}}d5\) \(\text{\textit{N}}d7\) 17. \(\text{\textit{N}}xe4\) \(\text{\textit{N}}f6\)!N (this position had only been reached once before, and then Black committed a serious mistake. If White manages to develop his dark-squared bishop and rook, he will have the advantage, thanks to the bishop pair and the weak light squares in the black camp. With 17... \(\text{\textit{N}}e6\), Black offers a pawn sacrifice and attacks the white queen, and thanks to his more active pieces, he obtains the better chances. 17... \(\text{\textit{N}}c7?\) 18. \(\text{\textit{N}}xf7+\) 18. \(\text{\textit{N}}e2\) (18. \(\text{\textit{N}}xe5?! \text{\textit{N}}e8!\) 19. \(\text{\textit{N}}h1\) \(\text{\textit{N}}c8!\)) 18... \(\text{\textit{N}}d4+\) 19. \(\text{\textit{N}}h1\) \(\text{\textit{N}}f8\) and at the very least, Black is not worse, as he has the only open file and White has an exposed king and a weak diagonal g1-a7. 15. \(\text{\textit{N}}xf6\) 16. \(\text{\textit{N}}xe4\) dx\(\text{\textit{e}}4\) 17. \(\text{\textit{N}}e3\) \(\text{\textit{N}}d7\) 18. \(\text{\textit{N}}d5\) \(\text{\textit{N}}c7\) 19. c3 White will soon take on e4, and will remain a pawn down, but he has compensation sufficient for equality;

B32) 12... \(\text{\textit{N}}bd7!\) 13. \(\text{\textit{N}}g3\) \(\text{\textit{N}}c8!\) 14. \(\text{\textit{N}}e2\) To defend the e4-pawn. Or 14. \(\text{\textit{N}}g5?!\)

14... \(\text{\textit{N}}xc3!\) \(\text{\textit{N}}\). A typical Sicilian exchange sacrifice, after which White ends up with a broken pawn structure and his previous play loses much of its point. Meanwhile, Black has a strong pawn centre and active pieces. 15. bxc3 \(\text{\textit{N}}xe4\) 16. \(\text{\textit{N}}xe4\) \(\text{\textit{N}}xe4\) 17. \(\text{\textit{N}}xe7\) \(\text{\textit{N}}xe7\) 18. c4 \(\text{\textit{N}}c8\) 19. \(\text{\textit{N}}e2\) \(\text{\textit{N}}f6\) 20. \(\text{\textit{N}}ac1\) h5 21. \(\text{\textit{N}}xb5\) axb5 22. \(\text{\textit{N}}xb5\) \(\text{\textit{N}}a7+\) 23. \(\text{\textit{N}}h1\) h4 24. \(\text{\textit{N}}b3\) \(\text{\textit{N}}g4\) and Black won in Ermenkov-Portisch, Skara Ech-tt 1980.

14... \(\text{\textit{N}}b6\) Black has solved his only problem in the position, namely by obtaining control over the square d5, whilst White is still not completely developed and it is not clear how he can do so, as Black already threatens to advance ...d6-d5 or put his knight on c4;

7... b5 8. \(\text{\textit{N}}b3\) \(\text{\textit{N}}b7\)

Now after a move like 9. f3?! Black cannot have any problems, because the main idea of putting the bishop on b3 is to advance the pawn to f5 and create a problem on e6; 9... \(\text{\textit{N}}bd7\)!

9.f4 Now Black can win a pawn in two ways, or try to complete his development. Before analysing the position, my intuition was that even if the computer shows how Black can hold the position, it is extremely dangerous for him.

9... \(\text{\textit{N}}bd7\)

A) 9... \(\text{\textit{N}}xe4\) 10. \(\text{\textit{N}}xe4\) 10. f5? \(\text{\textit{N}}h4+\) 11. \(\text{\textit{N}}f1\) \(\text{\textit{N}}xc3\) 12. bxc3 \(\text{\textit{N}}e4\) 13. \(\text{\textit{N}}d2\) e5 14. \(\text{\textit{N}}e1\) \(\text{\textit{N}}e7+\) Eberth-Herczeg, Hungary t3-3 1991. 10... \(\text{\textit{N}}xe4\) and now:
Chapter 6 - 6\textsuperscript{e}c4 e6: White Alternatives on Move 7

A1) 11.f5 exf5! In case of 11...e5? 12.exf5+ xf5 13.d5+ a5+ 14.d2 b6 15.g5+ g8 16.xe4 d5 White has a large advantage, because the black king is unable to castle and is blocking the rook on h8, whilst the white pieces all stand excellently. White just needs to castle and he will have a winning position, Kobese-Vasquez Schroeder, Istanbul Olympiad 2012.

12.xf5 xf5 13.0-0 13.d5? fails to the strong reply 13...e7, after which Black is winning. 13...e7 14.f3 e4 14...a7? 15.b6+-. 15.xf7+ d8 16.g4! b7 17.ae1 d5 18.e6!±;

A2) 11.0-0 and now:

A21) 11...d7? 12.f5! e5 13.xf7+ After 13.h5? e7 14.g5 f6 15.xf6 gxf6 16.ae1 d5 17.e2 0-0 Black has an extra exchange and a winning position, Ikonomopoulou Paulet, Sibenik 2007. 13.xf7 14.e6 c8 15.g5+ e7 16.e4!±.

A22) A new idea is 11...h5?!, taking the square h5 from the white queen.

12.a4 b4 12...d5 13.f5 c5 14.fxe6 fxe6 15.h1!±. 13.f5 e5

Here again, White has the favourable liquidation trick 14.xf7+ xf7 15.e6 h4 16.g5+ e8 17.g3 g4 18.xg4 hxg4 19.ex4!±;

A23) 11...d7 12.f5 e5 13.g4! d5 Not 13...b7 14.e6 fxe6 15.fxe6 c6 16.f7 e4 17.h3+- 14.e2!±.

B) 9.b4 10.a4 xe4 11.f5 and now:

B1) 11...e5 12.f3

B11) 12.f6 13.g5 d5 14.xe4 dxe4 15.g6 h6 16.e2 c7 17.0-0-0± Kobese-Areschenko, Gibraltar 2005;


B13) 12...xf3?!N 13.xf3 b7 14.g4±.

B2) 11...exf5!N A good move. Black should eliminate the strong pawn, which is threatening to damage his position, and always sets up the motif d6. 12.0-0 g6 13.b6 xb6 14.xf5 d8 15.g3 c6 16.xf6 xf6 17.d4 f4 18.e2+ e7 19.xh8 b5±.

10.0-0 c8

A) 10...b4 11.a4

Once again, the question arises whether to take the poisoned pawn or not. But if one looks at the position purely intuitively, then it becomes clear that with his undeveloped pieces and uncastled king, Black should not be able to get away with taking the pawn, opening lines against his own king:

A1) 11.xe4? 12.f5 e5
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

13.\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e6! fxe6 14.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)xe6 \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)b8 15.\(\text{\texttt{b}}\)b6!

A1 1) 15.\(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c6?! 16.\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)f6! In the style of the old masters. White is now a whole rook down, but his attack is more than sufficient compensation. 16...\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xf6
17.\(\text{\texttt{d}}\)d5! \(\text{\texttt{a}}\)a7 18.\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)c6+ \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c6 19.\(\text{\texttt{d}}\)d5 \(\text{\texttt{h}}\)h4 20.\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)a7 \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)xa7 21.\(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c3! \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c6 21...\(\text{\texttt{b}}\)xc3 22.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)f3+-
22.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f1 \(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e7
23.\(\text{\texttt{h}}\)h1!!± The idea of this move is simple: White wants to take on b4, but at present, his king prevents this, because Black can check on d4 and the knight d5 hangs. White wants to force \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f8 and only then take on a6, when castling is no longer possible;

A2) 15.\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e7? 16.\(\text{\texttt{a}}\)a4+ \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c6 16...\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f8 17.\(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g4+-
17...\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)a8 \(\text{\texttt{a}}\)a4
18.\(\text{\texttt{b}}\)b6 \(\text{\texttt{w}}\)e8 19.\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)xf6 \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c2 20.\(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c1 \(\text{\texttt{x}}\)xf6 21.\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)c2 \(\text{\texttt{w}}\)b7 22.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xd6 \(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e7
23.\(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c7+ \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f8 24.\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e2+ 1-0 Velimirovic-Suba, Pinerolo 1987;

B) The simplest is usually the strongest, and by all rules of thumb, Black should develop his pieces, after which he needs only to castle kingside:
11...\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e7! 12.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f5 \(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e5 13.\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e6 \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)xe6
14.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)xe6 \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f8! 15.\(\text{\texttt{b}}\)b6 \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c6 16.\(\text{\texttt{a}}\)a8
16...\(\text{\texttt{d}}\)d5?! \(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g6? Seretakis-Kr. Georgiev, Athens 1993. 16...\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xa8
17.\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)xf6 17.\(\text{\texttt{a}}\)a3! \(\text{\texttt{b}}\)xa3 18.\(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c3 \(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g6? 17...\(\text{\texttt{g}}\)xf6 18.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)g4 18...\(\text{\texttt{d}}\)d5!\(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g6? 18...\(\text{\texttt{d}}\)d5
18...\(\text{\texttt{h}}\)h5— Arancibia Guzman-Vasquez Schroeder, Santiago 1993.

B1) 10...\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e7

B2) 10.\(\text{\texttt{a}}\)a4+ \(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e7 11.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f3+-

But now it is time to sacrifice the bishop. White will have three pawns for the piece, which is sufficient compensation. The black king will be unable to castle and will have to stay in the centre. But the sacrifice has one drawback: after sacrificing the strong king's bishop, White remains, in footballing terms, minus his 'centre forward'.

11.\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)xe6! fxe6 12.\(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c6 \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f8 13.\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)g7+ \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f7
14.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f5 \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f8 and now:

B1) 15.\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e5? \(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g8 16.\(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g3 \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c6 17.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)e2 \(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e8 and Black takes over: 18.\(\text{\texttt{a}}\)ad1 \(\text{\texttt{d}}\)xe5 19.\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)xe5 \(\text{\texttt{x}}\)xe5 20.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)f2 \(\text{\texttt{x}}\)xe3 21.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xd7+ \(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xd7 22.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xe3 \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c6
23.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)e4 \(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g6 24.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)h3 \(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g8 25.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)f5 \(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e7 0-1 Kobese-Gelfand, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005;

B2) 15.\(\text{\texttt{d}}\)d4! \(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g8 16.\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e3 \(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g6 17.e5 \(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e8 18.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)xf6 18.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f5 \(\text{\texttt{x}}\)g2+ 19.\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e2 \(\text{\texttt{d}}\)xe5 20.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f2 \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c6 21.a4 \(\text{\texttt{b}}\)4 22.\(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c2 \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f4. 18...\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xe3+ 19.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)e3 \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f2+ with a draw by perpetual check.

11.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)e2

11.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f5?! \(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e5 12.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f3 Once White has played f4-f5, the knight sacrifice is in principle the right idea, though it does not work in this particular position: 12.\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e6? \(\text{\texttt{x}}\)xe6— 13.\(\text{\texttt{x}}\)xe6 \(\text{\texttt{c}}\)c5 14.\(\text{\texttt{d}}\)d5 \(\text{\texttt{d}}\)xd5 15.\(\text{\texttt{d}}\)xd5 \(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e7 16.\(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g4 0-0 17.\(\text{\texttt{b}}\)b5 \(\text{\texttt{d}}\)xd5 18.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xd5 \(\text{\texttt{w}}\)c7 19.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f5 \(\text{\texttt{b}}\)b7
20.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f1 \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)xf5 21.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)xf5 \(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xd5 22.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xd5 \(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f8 23.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)f8+ \(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xf8 24.\(\text{\texttt{w}}\)xc5 dxc5
Chapter 6 - 6.\textit{c4} e6: White Alternatives on Move 7

25.\textit{h4} \textit{e8} 0-1 Velimirovic-Portisch, Szirak izt 1987. 12...\textit{e7} 13.\textit{d2} 0-0\textit{\textsubscript{\textsuperscript{=}}}

11...\textit{b4} 12.\textit{a4}

Even if correct play allows him to defend, it is better for Black to avoid the knight sacrifice on e6 altogether:

12...\textit{a5}

12...\textit{xe4} After 13.f5 e5

... we reach a very interesting position with chances for both sides, where this time the knight sacrifice is very strong. But by declining it, Black brings about a sharp position: 14.\textit{e6} \textit{e7} 15.\textit{b6} \textit{xb6} 16.\textit{xb6} \textit{d7} 17.\textit{xf8} \textit{xf8} 18.a3 \textit{c6} 19.\textit{e3} \textit{bxa3} 20.\textit{xa3} \textit{e7} 21.\textit{a5} \textit{c7} 22.\textit{fa1} \textit{h6} 23.\textit{g4} \textit{g8} 24.\textit{h4+} \textit{f6} 25.\textit{b4} \textit{c6} and Black won in Feletar-Palac, Pula 1999.

After 12...\textit{a5}, White needs to open lines against the enemy king in the centre.

13.c3?

13.\textit{a3} \textit{bxa3} 14.\textit{xa3} \textit{h5} 15.\textit{xe5} \textit{e6} 16.\textit{b5} \textit{h6} 17.\textit{exf6} \textit{xf6} 18.\textit{d6} \textit{b7} 19.\textit{d5} \textit{c7} 20.\textit{d5} \textit{d5} 21.exd5 \textit{d5} 22.c4 \textit{e7} 23.\textit{a4+} \textit{f8} 24.\textit{b3} \textit{g8} 25.\textit{a7} White has excellent compensation for the sacrificed piece. Velimirovic-Gutman, Metz 1988.

13...\textit{xe4} 14.\textit{ac1} \textit{bxc3} 15.\textit{xc3} \textit{b7} 16.\textit{a4} \textit{xc1} 17.\textit{xc1} \textit{d5} 18.f5 e5

... I like Black, who has a strong and advanced centre, whilst all the white pieces are scattered around the board!

19.\textit{e6} \textit{d6} 20.\textit{xg7+} \textit{e7}\textsuperscript{=}

Conclusion

The three fairly rare continuations seen in this section have some definite sense for White, and so it is important to know how to meet them.

After 7.a3, Black should complete his development as quickly as possible and begin his play against the e4-pawn, as White has problems defending it.

The bishop move to e3 is not so dangerous. Black can play in standard fashion, making useful developing moves, and must just play carefully. As we already know, the main idea of the move is to retain the possibility of castling queenside, but as we have seen, by accurate moves, Black can either prevent this, or else obtain very good counterplay, where his chances are at the least not worse.

In case of 7.\textit{g5} Black can simply react with 7...\textit{e7} followed by ...\textit{h7-h6}, when the exchange on f6 does not bring White anything special.

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The move of the bishop to e3 is one of the strongest and most principled continuations in this position. This move has often been played by world champion Vishy Anand and also the top GMs Leko and Karjakin. Yet Black has a number of good replies to this quite strong move.

Firstly, let us consider what replies Black has. In my opinion, there are three equally good moves. First let us look at 6...e6. After this, White has two continuations – to play 7.a4, and go into positions from the Scheveningen Variation, or the stronger line 7.f3, after which we reach a very sharp position with opposite-side castling. This line is known as the English Attack.

The second option for Black is 6...\textit{\textbf{c}}g4. After this, White can play 7.\textit{\textbf{g}}g5 or 7.\textit{\textbf{c}}c1. After 7.\textit{\textbf{g}}g5, Black plays 7...h6 and a double-edged position arises. If White does not want to go in for this, he must play 7.\textit{\textbf{c}}c1, but then Black returns the knight to f6, and if White wants to reach the English Attack, he has to play 8.f3. However, this has the drawback that, if White played 6.\textit{\textbf{e}}e3 with the intention of answering 6...e5 with \textit{\textbf{f}}f3, starting a positional battle, now he finds that after 8.f3 e5 he has to enter the sharp positions arrived at after the knight retreats to b3.

In the following two chapters, we will look at 6.\textit{\textbf{e}}e3 e5, after which White has two main continuations: 7.\textit{\textbf{f}}f3 and 7.\textit{\textbf{b}}b3.
Chapter 7

6.\e3 e5: Knight goes to f3

1.e4 c5 2.f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.xd4 f6 5.c3 a6 6.e3 e5 7.f3

The move 7.f3, which we shall look at in this chapter, is the more solid and positional line, but White is only playing for a small plus, which in the majority of cases does not suffice for victory. The move 7.b3, treated in the next chapter, leads to sharper positions.

After this move, play assumes a positional character and both sides fight for the square d5. Black has two plans: firstly, to play ...c7 and not allow the opponent to develop his bishop to c4, or to play simply ...e7 and castle quickly – in both cases with equal chances, in my opinion.

7.e7

We will start by looking at the consequences of the move 7...c7:

A) 8.g5?! is not the most frightening move for Black, and moving a developed piece a second time is a breach of opening principles. 8.bd7 9.a4 h6 10.h4 g5 11.g3 c5 12.d2 e6∞ 13.e2 0-0-0 14.0-0 d5 15.exd5 xd5 16.xd5 xd5 17.b4 e6 18.c4
Black does not want to be cramped and tries to get rid of the strong pawn at a5 as soon as possible, by advancing his own b-pawn. But this advance has one minus: after the exchange on b6, Black has a serious weakness on a6.

**B)**

8...xe7 is the strongest move here, since as we all know, if it is possible to develop a kingside piece and castle quickly, that is usually preferable to developing the queenside:

B1) 9.a5

Black takes space and does not allow Black to play ...b7-b5 and develop his bishop to b7.

B11) 9...bd7?!
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

continues to develop his advantage on the queenside. There is only one open line, but White’s dark-squared bishop prevents the black rooks occupying it and Black needs to exchange off this bishop at all costs: 17...\(d8\)! 18.c5 \(e7\) 19.c4 \(g6\) 20.xe7 \(xe7\) 21.cxf5 \(xf5\) 22.e2 \(c6\) 23.d3! (23.d5 \(d4\) 24.e4 \(xe4\) 25.e4 \(ab8\)=) 23 ... \(f6\) 24.c3±.

16.c3 16.c4 \(b5\)! 17.b3 e4∞ is unclear. 16...\(d8\) It is a shame that the interesting exchange sacrifice 16...\(ad8\)?! does not work, because of a concrete response: 17.xd8 \(xd8\) 18.c4! (stronger than 18.cf3?! \(e4\) 19.e1 \(g6\) 20.d2 e4 when Black has compensation) 18...\(e4\) 19.f3±. 17.c4 17.c4?! \(d7\) 18.xe6 \(xe6\) 19.b3 \(xb6\) 20.axb6 is unclear; White has a strong pawn on b6 and with plenty of pieces on the board, this will cause Black a lot of trouble. If White manages to exchange queens, he will have the advantage, but Black will avoid this and will always have concrete play on the kingside. 17...\(b5\)! 17...\(xb6\) 18.cxb6 \(xd1\) 19.fxd1 \(ad8\) 20.b4 \(xd1+\) 21.xd1±.

18.b3!? 18.d6?! \(xb2\) 19.d3 It looks as though White has trapped the black queen, but the latter has a beautiful sacrifice after which play will be unclear: 19...\(xb6\)! 20.f1 \(xa1\) 21.xa1 d5∞ 18.e4 19.c2

19...\(b8\)! 20.xe4 20.e1 f5 21.h3 \(h8\) 22.f1 \(xb6\) 23.xb6 \(c5\) 24.c4 \(xc4\) 25.xc4 \(be8\) 26.e2 \(e5\) 27.xe5 \(xe5\) 28.c4 f4 29.d4 \(f5\) 30.a4 e3 and Black has the advantage, on account of the strong passed pawn on e3, which has advanced a long way, Petrik-Csiba, Banska Stiavnica 2012. 20...\(xb6\) 21.xa6 \(xe6\) 22.xa6 \(xa5\) 22...\(xc3\)=. 23.d3 \(g6\) 24.e3 \(bd8\) with equality. White should not play 25.xa5? here in view of 25...\(xc3\)!

B1122) 10...\(e6\) 11.0-0 \(bd7\) 12.g5 \(c6\) 12...\(c4\) 13.a4 \(xe2\) 14.xe2±.

13.f1! A splendid prophylactic move, the idea of which will become clear in a few moves. 13.d5 14.exd5 \(xd5\) 15.xd5 \(xd5\) 16.c4 \(xg5\) 17.cxd5
The point of White's idea, after which he has the advantage. He offers the exchange of queens, after which his d-pawn will be stronger and the weak black pawns on b7 and a6 will tell, Yakovenko-Bu Xiangzhi, Ergun tt 2006.

B12) 9.\(\text{e}2\) 0-0 10.0-0 10.a5 transposes into 9.a5. 10...b6?! If White does not play a4-a5, Black is ready himself to play ...b7-b6 and develop his bishop to b7, not allowing White to seize space.

B121) 11.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{c}6\) Or 11...\(\text{bd}7\) 12.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{d}8\)?!∞. White has not obtained anything real, as Black has managed to complete his development and can soon expect to equalize, D. Petrosian-Idani, Jermuk 2011. 12.\(\text{d}5\)

12.\(\text{c}4\)?! 12...\(\text{xd}5\) 13.\(\text{exd}5\) Now Black must play actively, as passive play will lead to catastrophe:

B1211) 13...\(\text{b}8\) 14.a5 b5

15.\(\text{d}2\) The idea of this move is simple: White needs to play c2-c4, but first it would be good to prepare this. After the immediate c2-c4, Black exchanges queens and eases his life, see 15.c4 bxc4 16.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{xc}4\) 17.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{d}7\) 18.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{b}8\) 19.b3 e4 20.\(\text{a}7\) \(\text{a}8\) 21.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{f}6\), whereas the move \(\text{d}2\) prevents the queen exchange and keeps a more tense position. 15...\(\text{d}7\) 16.c4± Safarli-Kadric, Rogaska Slatina tt 2011;

B1212) 13...\(\text{b}4\)?! is better than the passive retreat and gives Black good drawing chances: 14.\(\text{b}3\) a5 15.c3 \(\text{a}6\) 16.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{xa}6\) 17.\(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{fb}8\) 18.\(\text{xc}7\) \(\text{xb}3\)± Safarli-Sjugirov, Moscow 2011.

B122) 11.\(\text{d}2\)

There is no need to routinely develop the bishop to b7, even though this was the plan behind ...b7-b6, as now Black can play 11...\(\text{e}6\)!, which in this concrete position is very strong and does not give the white knight a post on c4:

12.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{xf}4\) 13.\(\text{xf}4\) \(\text{bd}7\) 14.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}5\)=

B13) 11.\(\text{g}5\) White changes his plans, and begins the battle for the square d5, for which he does not need his dark-squared bishop, but there is also another idea involved with this move: the transfer of the knight from f3 via h4 to f5. 11...\(\text{bd}7\) 12.\(\text{h}4\) g6 13.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{b}7\) 14.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{fe}8\) 15.\(\text{c}4\)
Exchanges are very necessary for Black, because White has more space and it is easier for him to manoeuvre. 16.\textit{\textbf{xf7+}} 16.\textit{\textbf{dxe4}} \textit{\textbf{xc4}} 17.\textit{\textbf{xe7}} \textit{\textbf{xe4}} 18.\textit{\textbf{xd6}} \textit{\textbf{g2=}}; 16.\textit{\textbf{cxe4}} d5 17.\textit{\textbf{xe7}} \textit{\textbf{xe7}} 18.\textit{\textbf{d3}} dxe4 19.\textit{\textbf{xe4}} \textit{\textbf{c5=}}. Black has seized the initiative, and has the more active pieces and better structure. White has to suffer to make a draw. 16...\textit{\textbf{xf7}} 17.\textit{\textbf{dxe4}} \textit{\textbf{g5}} 18.\textit{\textbf{d5}} \textit{\textbf{c6}} 19.\textit{\textbf{d5}} \textit{\textbf{g8}}! (after 19...\textit{\textbf{g7=}}? 20.\textit{\textbf{g4}}!± Black's king is weakened and the white pieces are attacking it. And as we know, queen and knight are two of the most effective attackers – here we have a trio of queen and two knights!)

20.c4! An excellent pawn sacrifice, to open the c-file and retain the initiative. 20...\textit{\textbf{xc4}} 21.\textit{\textbf{e3}} \textit{\textbf{h4}} 22.\textit{\textbf{xd6}} \textit{\textbf{ad8}} 23.\textit{\textbf{h3}} 23...\textit{\textbf{c8=}??} 18...\textit{\textbf{g7}} 19.\textit{\textbf{g4}} 19.\textit{\textbf{d5}} \textit{\textbf{c4=}}. 19...\textit{\textbf{f8=}??} Black has not allowed White to start an attack on his king and is thinking of counterplay himself;

B2) The move 8...\textit{\textbf{b6=}}? was once popular. Black stops a4-a5. But unfortunately, it fails to a specific sequence, after which Black's position is not so sweet:

B2.1) 9.\textit{\textbf{e2=}}?! \textit{\textbf{bd7}} 10.0-0 \textit{\textbf{e7}} 11.\textit{\textbf{h4}} g6 12.\textit{\textbf{h6}} \textit{\textbf{b7}} 13.\textit{\textbf{d3}} \textit{\textbf{f8}} 14.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{xh6}} 15.\textit{\textbf{wh6}} 0-0-0 16.\textit{\textbf{a3}} \textit{\textbf{b8}} 17.\textit{\textbf{b4}} d5 18.\textit{\textbf{xd5}}
A strong developing move, creating various threats. Black has many problems, and White many threats: \( \text{b6, f7+ g5} \).

B2211) 12...h6 13.\( \text{xb6 wb7} \) 14.0-0-0 \( \text{c6} \) 14...\( \text{e7} \) 15.\( \text{xf7}+ f8 \) 16.\( \text{e6}+ \). 15.\( \text{he1 g6} \) 16.\( \text{d5 e7} \) It is always nice to finish the game with a beautiful sacrifice, which also happens to be the quickest win: 17.\( \text{xe5}+\) –;

B2212) 12...\( \text{c6} \) 13.\( \text{xb6 wd7} \) 14.0-0-0 \( \text{b8} \) 15.\( \text{he1 xf3} \) 16.\( \text{xf3} \) g6 He has to try to develop the bishop to h6, given the lack of alternatives. But even after the bishop comes into the game, Black is struggling. 16...\( \text{a5} \) 17.\( \text{xf7}+ \) \( \text{xf7} \) 18.\( \text{xf7}+ \) \( \text{xf7} \) 19.\( \text{xa5}+ \). 17.\( \text{xa6 h6}+ \) 18.\( \text{b1 0-0} \) 19.\( \text{b5} \) d5 19...\( \text{xb6} \) 20.\( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{b8} \) 21.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{d4} \) 22.\( \text{xd4} \) exd4 23.\( \text{b5}+ \). 20.a5 d4 21.\( \text{a4}+ \) White has an extra pawn, two strong bishops and passed pawns, of which one can only dream;

B2213) 12...\( \text{e7} \) 13.\( \text{xf7}+ \) \( \text{f8} \) 14.\( \text{d5 xd5} \) 15.\( \text{xd5 wc6} \) 16.\( \text{we6} \) and despite the equal material, Black can quietly resign, as his king is unable to castle and all of his pawns are weak;

B2214) 12...\( \text{b7} \) 13.0-0-0! 13.\( \text{g5} \) d5 14.\( \text{xe4 dxc4} \) 15.\( \text{xc4}+ \). 13...\( \text{b5} \)

A simple exchanging tactic, after which we go into an ending where White is close to winning. 14.\( \text{xf7}+ \) \( \text{xf7} \) 15.\( \text{xf7}+ \) \( \text{xf7} \) 16.\( \text{g5}+ \) \( \text{g6} \) 17.\( \text{xe4}+ \).

B222) 10...\( \text{c6} \) As we have seen, 10...\( \text{b7} \) leads to a bad position. This move is also no panacea, but it avoids a catastrophe, and Black can still fight for a draw. 11.\( \text{g5} \) and now:

B2221) 11...\( \text{b7} \) 12.\( \text{xb6} \)! A simple tactic. 12...\( \text{b4} \) If 12...\( \text{d4}?? \) 13.\( \text{xd4}+\) –; 12...\( \text{xb6}?? \) 13.\( \text{xf7}+ \) \( \text{d8} \) 14.a5+–; 12...\( \text{e7} \) 13.\( \text{c4 d8} \) 14.\( \text{d2}+ \) (also strong is 14.\( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 15.\( \text{xe7 xc4} \) 16.\( \text{xf8 xf8} \); 12...\( \text{d7} \) 13.\( \text{c4 d8} \) (13...\( \text{b4} \) 14.\( \text{xf7}+ \) \( \text{xf7} \) 15.\( \text{xf7}+\) –) 14.\( \text{d3}+ \). If 13.\( \text{xc7 xd5 0-0} \)

14...\( \text{b3} \) with the idea of getting a position a pawn down with opposite-coloured bishops, and some drawing chances: 15.\( \text{xb3 c8} \) 16.\( \text{c4 xc7} \) 17.\( \text{b1}+ \).
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B2222) 11...\texttt{b4}?? It is a shame that this move does not work, because it would solve all Black's problems. 12.\texttt{wx}a8 \texttt{xc}2+ 13.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{xa}1 14.\texttt{xc}a6 \texttt{c}2+ 15.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{e}7 16.\texttt{b}5+ \texttt{f}8 17.\texttt{c}6 g6 18.\texttt{xc}8+ \texttt{g}7 19.\texttt{e}6+! \texttt{fxe}6 20.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{xc}6 21.\texttt{exe}7+ \texttt{g}8 22.\texttt{e}2!+–.

B2223) The only move which keeps chances for Black to fight is 11...\texttt{b}8. The idea is simple: to remove the rook from a square where it is always hanging, and to defend the b6-pawn.

B22231) 12.\texttt{xf}7? \texttt{b}4 13.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{xc}4 14.\texttt{xc}4 d5!= De Jongh-Nyzhnyk, Hilversum 2010;

B22232) 12.0-0-0?!N With this move, White is ready to sacrifice a piece, for which he gets two pawns. The black king remains in the centre of the board and will be an object of attack for the white pieces. 12...\texttt{d}8 13.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{h}6

B22233) 12.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{d}8 13.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{e}7 13...h6?! 14.\texttt{f}3±; 13...a5? 14.\texttt{c}3±. 14.\texttt{xa}6 14.\texttt{c}3 15.\texttt{xc}2 15...\texttt{xc}5 16.\texttt{b}5+ \texttt{f}8 17.\texttt{xc}5 \texttt{e}6 18.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{xc}2 19.0-0±.

I analysed the position after the capture on c2 a long time, and could not decide which continuation was best, as each leads to very similar positions, with small nuances. Let us examine the possibilities in turn.

B222331) 16.0-0!? 0-0 17.\texttt{fc}1 \texttt{xb}2 18.\texttt{d}3! An excellent move, with a very simple idea: White threatens to play \texttt{cb}1 and trap the black queen. 18...\texttt{c}8 19.\texttt{cb}1 \texttt{c}3 20.\texttt{xc}3 \texttt{xc}3 21.\texttt{f}3±; B222332) 16.\texttt{b}5+\texttt{c}6

17.\texttt{e}2!N The idea of this king move is very simple: Black cannot avoid the exchange of queens, after which White's king will be nearer the centre and will
actively help his pieces develop an initiative on the queenside. 17.0-0?!.
17...0-0 18.\textit{wc6 \textit{xc6 19.\textit{hc1 \textit{b4}}}
19...\textit{xc5} 20.\textit{xc6 \textit{xe3 21.\textit{xe3+--;}}}
19...\textit{fc8} 20.\textit{f3} 20.\textit{f3}

Back to the position after 8.a4.

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

\textbf{C) 8...\textit{wc6}?! 9.\textit{a3}?! \textit{bd7 10.\textit{b5}}
\textit{wc7} 11.\textit{xd7+ \textit{xd7 12.\textit{g5 \textit{c8}}}
13.\textit{xf6} \textit{gx6 14.0-0++; White has the better pawn structure, whereas Black has weak squares on f5 and d5, a bad bishop on f8, and his king is in the centre, Andriasyan-Dvoirys, Magnitogorsk 2011.}}

8.\textit{c4 0-0}

8...\textit{e6}?! In general, this exchange is favourable for Black, because it covers the d5-square, but in this instance, there is a concrete problem: 9.\textit{xe6}
\textit{fxe6} 10.\textit{g5 \textit{d7 11.\textit{f3}}.}

\begin{center}
\textbf{9.0-0 \textit{e6 10.\textit{b3}}}
\end{center}

\textbf{A) 10.\textit{we2}}

A subtle move. If Black does not appreciate the difference and continues in the same fashion, he will run into problems, because White will quickly bring a rook to the d-file and disrupt the coordination of the black pieces. Meanwhile, he can always play the bishop move later.

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

\textbf{A1) 10...\textit{b5}?! 11.\textit{b3}}

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

\textbf{A11) 11...\textit{c6}?! 12.\textit{fd1 \textit{c7}}
13.\textit{g5++;}}

\textbf{A12) 11...\textit{b4}?! 12.\textit{a4 \textit{xb3}}}

13.\textit{axb3 \textit{bd7}}
The e4 pawn hangs and needs to be defended, but there is no obvious and convenient way to do this. \textit{d2} does not work because it allows the freeing break d5. Here White's plans must change somewhat – he wants to play c4, so as to put paid to ...d6-d5 once and for all, and he has the interesting idea of transferring his knight from f3 via d2-f1, to e3.

\textbf{A121) 14.\textit{fd1}?! \textit{xe4}}

15.\textit{xe5}! dxe5 16.\textit{b6++;}}

\textbf{A122) 14.\textit{g5}! \textit{c7 15.c4++; or}}

15.\textit{d2}?!++.

\textbf{A13) 11...\textit{bd7}?! 12.\textit{xe6 \textit{fxe6}}}

13.\textit{g5++;}}

\textbf{A14) 11...\textit{xb3}?! 12.axb3 \textit{Exchanging bishops on b3 is clearly in}}

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White's favour, opening the a-file for his rook, leaving the a6-pawn weak, and depriving Black of counterplay, Polgar-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 1998; A15) 11...h6!
A151) 12...fd1 bb7 13.a3 and now:
A1511) 13...We8?! White has a good choice here. He can play zb4-f5, and with Black having played ...h7-h6, it is practically impossible to remove the knight from that square. But there is another idea, which is usually hard to implement, but is possible here: to transfer the knight via d3 to b4, where it will stand wonderfully, attacking the a6-pawn and controlling d5: 14...e1?! zb8 15.f3 zb5 16.a2 zbxa2 17.xa2 zb6 18.d3 a5 19.c1 zb4 20.xd4 exd4 21.xb5 d5 22.e5 d3 23.xd3 zb5+ 24.h1 zbxe5 25.b3 zb3 26.e1 zb8 27.a3d4

A15111) 27...xb5?! 28.g3! 28.f5? zb4 29.xe3 zbxf5+; 28.f5? zbxc2+--. White has an extra pawn and understandably wants to exchange queens, so as to eliminate Black's initiative. However, he cannot offer the queen exchange, for two reasons: the weakness of his back rank and the threat of mate down the h-file after the knight sacrifice on g3. The variations are:

A151111) 29.d6?

29...xb5+! 30.xg3 zbxd4! 31.xe8+ 32.e1 zb+c1+ 33.h2 zb+ 34.h3 zb+h1+ 35.g4

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Black is a rook down and now he puts a bishop en prise, but in the process, he threatens mate, against which White has no defence: 35...g6!+-;

A15112) 29.\_e2 \_e8+ 30.\_e2 and Black has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn, as all the white pieces are on the queenside and all the black on the kingside. White's problem is that his king is also on the kingside and the white knights cannot join in the defence;

A15113) 29.\_f5! \_xd4 30.\_xe8+ \_xe8 31.\_xg5 \_e1+ 32.\_g2 \_e2+ 33.\_f1 \_f2+ 34.\_e1 h\_xg5 35.\_xd4 \_xh2 36.b4!±. Finally White has managed to exchange queens, albeit at the cost of a pawn, but he has started to push his passed pawn, and it is quite hard for Black to stop it.

A15112) 27...\_xd4 Or also 27...\_g5±. 28.\_xe5 \_xe5 29.\_a1 \_xb2 30.\_b1?! \_e8 31.g3?! 31.h3±. 31...\_e3 32.\_d2 \_e2 33.\_d1 \_e3? 33...a4?!±. 34.\_g1? 34.c3+--; 34...\_e5 35.f4 \_b2 36.c3 \_e4 37.\_xd5 \_=\_h. Short-Kasparov, Horgen 1995.

This is probably a good time to pause and say a few words about the great rivalry between two great players, who in the 1990s delighted chess fans with beautiful games and great positional play. I am convinced that any player who wishes to play the Najdorf should analyse the games between Short and Kasparov, who between them played practically every variation of the opening. In their Najdorf games, Short was always White, because he always met 1.e4 with the move 1...e5, and Kasparov never got the Najdorf as White against him.

If you look at the statistics of their Najdorf games against each other, you will probably be surprised to see a plus score for Kasparov, even though he was always Black. Their games have not lost their relevance even to this day.

A1512) 13.\_c8! 14.\_h4 White is comfortable and getting ready to take the initiative. Therefore, the following exchange sacrifice is strong, but also essential:

14...\_xc3! 15.bxc3 \_xe4 16.\_xe6 fxe6 17.\_g4 \_dc5!N 17...\_xh4 18.\_xe4 d5 19.\_g6 \_f6 was fine for Black in Markgraf-Kroeze, Germany tt 2004/05. 18.\_g6 \_f5∞;

A152) Exploiting the fact that Black cannot prevent the knight transfer to h4

Nigel Short
by tactical means, White has no reason to refrain from this: 12.\texttt{h4!}
\begin{enumerate}
\item A1521) 12...\texttt{x4} 13.\texttt{x4} \texttt{xb3} 13...\texttt{xh4}? 14.\texttt{xe6} fxe6 15.\texttt{g4} \texttt{e7} 16.\texttt{xd6+} 14.\texttt{xb3} \texttt{h4} 15.\texttt{f1} d5 15...\texttt{e7}? 16.\texttt{x6} \texttt{d6} 17.\texttt{f3} e4 18.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xh2+} 19.\texttt{xh2} \texttt{c7+} 20.\texttt{g1}±; also good for White is 20.\texttt{f4}?! \texttt{c6} 21.\texttt{e7} \texttt{c8} 22.\texttt{xh6}! \texttt{xc2} 23.\texttt{ac1}±. 16.\texttt{c5} \texttt{xh7} 17.\texttt{xh7} \texttt{xe7} 18.\texttt{xd5}±;
\item A1522) 12...\texttt{bd7} 13.\texttt{ad1} 13.\texttt{f5}±. 13...\texttt{b4} 14.\texttt{a4} 15.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{ac8} 16.\texttt{d5} \texttt{xd5} 17.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{a5} 18.c3 My opponent has failed to cope with all the subtleties of the position and has allowed me to carry out all of my plans. Here White has the advantage. 18...\texttt{c4} 19.\texttt{c1} \texttt{d8} 20.\texttt{g4} \texttt{f8} 21.\texttt{fd1} \texttt{c6} 22.\texttt{e2} \texttt{f6} 23.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e7} 24.\texttt{g3} \texttt{f6} 25.\texttt{h4} \texttt{d7} 26.\texttt{a3} White is in no hurry, and strengthens his position to the maximum, while Black treads water. 26...\texttt{dd8} 27.\texttt{a2} \texttt{b6} 28.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{xb6} 29.\texttt{h5} \texttt{c7}
\item A1523) 12...\texttt{c6} Before the following game, I analysed similar positions, and drew some definite conclusions about how I wanted to play. I wished to delay the move \texttt{b3} and only play it if absolutely necessary, and instead quickly found the plan of \texttt{d1} and \texttt{h4-f5}. 13.\texttt{ad1} \texttt{c7} 14.\texttt{f5} \texttt{xf5}
\end{enumerate}
15.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{ac8} 16.\texttt{d5} \texttt{xd5} 17.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{a5} 18.c3 My opponent has failed to cope with all the subtleties of the position and has allowed me to carry out all of my plans. Here White has the advantage. 18...\texttt{c4} 19.\texttt{c1} \texttt{d8} 20.\texttt{g4} \texttt{f8} 21.\texttt{fd1} \texttt{c6} 22.\texttt{e2} \texttt{f6} 23.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e7} 24.\texttt{g3} \texttt{f6} 25.\texttt{h4} \texttt{d7} 26.\texttt{a3} White is in no hurry, and strengthens his position to the maximum, while Black treads water. 26...\texttt{dd8} 27.\texttt{a2} \texttt{b6} 28.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{xb6} 29.\texttt{h5} \texttt{c7}
\begin{enumerate}
\item A2) 10...\texttt{c6}?! A21) 11.\texttt{fd1}? In general, it is not so important which rook comes to d1, but each choice has its small nuances.
The idea of \( \text{fxd1} \) is to leave the other rook on a1 for now, because if Black exchanges bishops on b3, the rook will be very useful on the a-file after the recapture axb3. In the case of \( \text{ad1} \), the point is that many Najdorf players are likely to look for complications, and will play the positionally dubious move ...f7-f5, in which case the rook on f1 will be needed there, to defend the f2-pawn.

A211) 11...c8 12.b3?! 12.d5 \( \text{xd5} \) 13.xd5 \( \text{xd5} \) (13...\text{d7}) 14.c3\pm Andriasyan-Nepomniachtchi, Ohrid tt 2009; 13...b4? 14.b3!\pm) 14.xd5 c7 15.c3 \( \text{b8} \) 16.g5! f6 17.e3\pm Polgar-Nepomniachtchi, Netanya rapid 2009. 12...d6 13.h4 b5 13...d7 14.d5 d4 15.d5 x\( \text{xc3} \) (this is less than a standard exchange sacrifice and more of a good exchanging combination) 16.bxc3 \( \text{xd5} \) 17.xd5 \( \text{xd5} \) 18.exd5 g5 and Black has equalised, Timofeev-Naer, Sochi 2006.

A212) 11...c7 12.b3 d4 13.e5 13...g5?! x\( \text{ac8} \) 14.xd5 x\( \text{xb3} \) 15.cxb3 c8\infty. 13...x\( \text{xd5} \) 14.xd5 x\( \text{ac8} \) 15.c3 x\( \text{c4} \)

14.d5!N During the game, I did not like this move at all, and fortunately for me, my opponent chose another line, after which I equalised easily. But after 14.d5 White obtains the advantage, maybe not a large advantage, but such positions are extremely unpleasant for Black, because he has no counterplay. 14.g6 x\( \text{xb3} \) 15.xe7+ x\( \text{xe7} \)

16.axb3 d4 – Black is on the way to equalising, and has no special problems, Volokitin-Andriasyan, Moscow 2010. 14.xf5 15.exf5 x\( \text{a5} \) 16.d5 x\( \text{c4} \) 17.c3\pm;

A212) 11...c7 12.b3 d4 13.e5 13.g5?! x\( \text{ac8} \) 14.xd5 x\( \text{xb3} \) 15.cxb3 c8\infty. 13...x\( \text{xd5} \) 14.xd5 x\( \text{ac8} \) 15.c3 x\( \text{c4} \)

At first sight, it looks as though White has a clear advantage, as he has exchanged one pair of knights and seized the square d5, but it is not so simple. The knight on f3 is not very good – it cannot take part in the fight for d5 and Black always has good counterplay connected with the advance ...f7-f5.

Here, various moves have been played, but nobody has thought of the best continuation, which is shown by the computer, although even then, the advantage is very small, and it is hard to win such positions against a strong player:

A2121) 16.xe6?!N fxe6 17.g5?! After these two accurate moves, White has pressure. Earlier games saw:

A2122) 16.xc1 b5 17.b3 x\( \text{xe3} \) 18.xe3 c5 19.e2 x\( \text{a3} = \t. Kosintseva-Yifan, Ergun tt 2006;

A2123) 16.a4 h8 17.xc1 x\( \text{xd5} \) 18.xd5 f5 19.exf5 x\( \text{c6} \) 20.xd1 x\( \text{xf5} = \) Nepomniachtchi-Zherebukh, Moscow 2012;
A2124) 16.\textit{\textbf{g}5} \textit{\textbf{x}d5} 17.\textit{\textbf{x}d5}

\textbf{17...\textit{\textbf{f}6}!N} After 17...\textit{\textbf{x}g5} 18.\textit{\textbf{x}g5} \textit{\textbf{w}e7} 19.\textit{\textbf{f}3} \textit{\textbf{b}5} 20.\textit{\textbf{a}d1} White has a minimal advantage, but in general, such positions should end in a draw, Shaposhnikov-Aveskulov, Saratov 2006.

18.\textit{\textbf{e}3} \textit{\textbf{f}5} 19.\textit{\textbf{e}xf5} \textit{\textbf{x}f5}=

A22) 11.\textit{\textbf{a}d1} \textit{\textbf{c}8} 11...\textit{\textbf{b}5}?! 12.\textit{\textbf{b}3} \textit{\textbf{c}8} 13.\textit{\textbf{g}5}± Vachier-Lagrave-Cossin, Chalons rapid 2008.

12.\textit{\textbf{b}3} The idea of 12.\textit{\textbf{d}5}?! is that this move will have to be played anyway, so White tries to do it without wasting a tempo on \textit{\textbf{b}3}. However, Black has a good reply, which is hard to find over the board but if Black has analysed the position at home, he will have no problem: 12...\textit{\textbf{x}d5} 13.\textit{\textbf{x}d5} \textit{\textbf{w}a5} 14.\textit{\textbf{c}4} \textit{\textbf{c}xd5} 15.\textit{\textbf{c}xd5} \textit{\textbf{b}4}! 16.\textit{\textbf{a}3} \textit{\textbf{c}2}!=. 12...\textit{\textbf{c}7} 13.\textit{\textbf{d}3} \textit{\textbf{b}5} 14.\textit{\textbf{f}d1} \textit{\textbf{a}5}∞ Black has equalised easily, EQUI-NOX-SHREDDER, Pamplona 2009.

A3) 10...\textit{\textbf{c}7}! Black forces the white bishop to \textit{\textbf{b}3}, since as we know already, the exchange on \textit{\textbf{e}6} is unfavourable for White:

A31) 11.\textit{\textbf{x}e6} \textit{\textbf{f}xe6} 12.\textit{\textbf{g}5}

Here, after 12...\textit{\textbf{d}7}? 13.\textit{\textbf{c}4} \textit{\textbf{d}5} 14.\textit{\textbf{d}xd5} \textit{\textbf{f}xd5} 15.\textit{\textbf{c}c1} \textit{\textbf{b}6} 16.\textit{\textbf{f}3} \textit{\textbf{e}6} 17.\textit{\textbf{a}d1} \textit{\textbf{d}8} 18.\textit{\textbf{f}e1} White is clearly better, Bakre-Nikolov, Kavala 2010. But Black can equalise with 12...\textit{\textbf{c}8}! 13.\textit{\textbf{a}4} \textit{\textbf{d}8}!=.

A32) 11.\textit{\textbf{b}3} and now:

A321) 11...\textit{\textbf{c}8} 12.\textit{\textbf{f}d1} \textit{\textbf{b}d7} 13.\textit{\textbf{g}5} \textit{\textbf{b}5} 14.\textit{\textbf{e}1}! This may look like a standard knight transfer, but it is actually not used that often. However, if the move can beat so strong a player as Morozevich, then it probably deserves a closer look. 14.\textit{\textbf{a}c1} \textit{\textbf{c}4} 15.\textit{\textbf{x}c4} \textit{\textbf{w}xc4} 16.\textit{\textbf{w}xc4} \textit{\textbf{b}xc4} 17.\textit{\textbf{d}d2} \textit{\textbf{c}7} 18.\textit{\textbf{f}1} \textit{\textbf{h}6} 19.\textit{\textbf{f}6} \textit{\textbf{a}f6} 20.\textit{\textbf{e}3} \textit{\textbf{e}6} 21.\textit{\textbf{c}d5} \textit{\textbf{x}d5} 22.\textit{\textbf{x}d5} \textit{\textbf{g}5} gave Black an edge in the endgame in Zolotukhin-Giri, Olginka tt 2011. 14...\textit{\textbf{b}7} If 14...\textit{\textbf{b}6} 15.\textit{\textbf{x}f6} \textit{\textbf{xf6}} 16.\textit{\textbf{d}5} 15.\textit{\textbf{f}6} \textit{\textbf{x}f6} 16.\textit{\textbf{d}5} \textit{\textbf{xd5}} 17.\textit{\textbf{x}d5} \textit{\textbf{xd5}} 18.\textit{\textbf{x}d5} \textit{\textbf{b}4} 18...\textit{\textbf{f}5} 19.\textit{\textbf{a}d1} \textit{\textbf{f}xe4} 20.\textit{\textbf{w}xe4} \textit{\textbf{e}6} 21.\textit{\textbf{w}e2} \textit{\textbf{ac8}} 22.\textit{\textbf{a}3}!± Akopian-Morozevich, Bursa Wch-tt 2010. 19.\textit{\textbf{a}d1} 19.\textit{\textbf{a}3} \textit{\textbf{f}5}. 19...\textit{\textbf{a}c8} 20.\textit{\textbf{a}3}!± A very strong idea. White wants to play \textit{\textbf{c}2}–\textit{\textbf{c}3} and transfer the knight via \textit{\textbf{c}2} to \textit{\textbf{e}3}. \textit{\textbf{c}2}–\textit{\textbf{c}3} cannot be
played at once, because Black has ...

...b5-b4, but now to some extent Black
has to continue with ...
a6-a5, so as to
keep the possibility of ...
b5-b4. The
subtle nuance is that then, after ...
b5-b4, White captures axb4 and con-
trols the open a-file. 20...a5 21.g3 b4
22.b3 24xe5 23.axb4 axb4 24.xc5

A321) 11...b5 12.xf6

A322) 11...b5 12.xf6

A321) 12...c6?! This is not correct
here, because the fight is over the
d5-square, and on c6 the knight does
not contribute.

A3221) 13.a4!! xxb3 13...bxa4??
14.xe6 fxe6 15.g5 d8 16.xa4±;
Black’s position is creaking, with weak-
nesses on a6, e6 and d6. After 13...b4
14.d5 xd5 15.xd5 cxd5
16.xd5± White has managed to ex-
change the two defenders of d5, and
Black has further weakened his light
squares. White has the advantage.

14.cxb3 bxa4 15.bxa4±; or 15...xa4±;
A32212) 13.d5 cxd5 14.xd5

A322) 12...b7! The knight
should develop to here, but in order to
play this move, Black has to calculate a
long variation with a pawn sacrifice,
and players would probably be afraid of
this without prior home preparation.

A3221) 13.xe6 fxe6 14.g5

14...c8! 15.xe6 c4 16.xc4

A322) 10.xe6 fxe6 11.a4

B) 10.xe6 fxe6 11.a4

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Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

11...\(\text{d}4!\) 11...\(\text{f}d7?!\) 12.\(\text{w}d3\) (with 12.c4 \(\text{c}6\) 13.\(\text{w}b3\) \(\text{a}5\) 14.\(\text{w}d3\) \(\text{c}8\) 15.\(\text{f}ac1\) White retains minimal pressure, but Black has a very solid position) 12...b5 13.\(\text{f}c3\) (13.\(\text{w}b3?!\) bxa4 14.\(\text{w}b7\) \(\text{xf}3!\) 15.gxf3 \(\text{g}5=\)) 13...\(\text{f}6=\); 11...\(\text{b}d7?!\) 12.\(\text{g}5\)±.
12.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{xe}3\) 12...b5?! 13.\(\text{b}6\) \(\text{a}7\) 14.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{b}7\) 15.\(\text{xe}7+\) \(\text{xe}7\) 16.\(\text{g}5\)±; 12...c6 13.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{f}6\) 14.\(\text{b}6\) \(\text{e}8\) 15.h3 \(\text{h}6\) 16.\(\text{ad}1\)±.
13.\(\text{xe}3\) b5 14.\(\text{b}6\) \(\text{a}7\) 15.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{b}7\)

The knight on d5 is hanging, and White has three possible continuations. The first is to exchange the knight for the black one, after which the position equalises out. White also has two indirect ways to defend the knight, starting with 16.\(\text{w}d3\). But this has one drawback, namely the fact that on d3, the queen will always come under attack from the black knight. The second idea is to put the queen on d2, where it will have the possibility of coming to a5 if the chance arises.

B1) 16.\(\text{e}7+\) \(\text{xe}7\) 17.\(\text{f}d1\) \(\text{d}7\) 18.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{c}8\) 19.\(\text{ad}1\) \(\text{c}6=\) Aldokhin-Kurukin, Moscow 2012;

B2) 16.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{d}7?!\) 16...\(\text{d}7?!\) 17.\(\text{xe}7+\) \(\text{xe}7\) 18.\(\text{f}d1\) \(\text{b}6\). Now after 19.\(\text{ac}1\) \(\text{d}7\) 20.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 21.\(\text{c}4\) bxc4 22.\(\text{xc}4\) h6 23.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{h}7\) 24.h3 \(\text{a}8\) 25.\(\text{d}2\) a5 26.\(\text{b}5\) a4 petered out into a draw in Adams-Leitao, Istanbul Olympiad 2012, but in my opinion White can still fight for an advantage with 19.\(\text{b}4!\) \(\text{d}7\) 20.\(\text{c}4\)±. 17.\(\text{xe}7+\) \(\text{xe}7\) 18.\(\text{f}d1\) \(\text{b}6=\) Khairullin-Mozharov, Moscow 2008;

B3) 16.\(\text{d}2\) and now:

B31) 16...\(\text{h}4?!\) 17.\(\text{x}h4!\) \(\text{xe}4!\) 18.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{d}7\) 18...\(\text{d}8=\) 19.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{d}5\) 20.\(\text{ex}d5\) \(\text{ex}d5\) 21.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{d}4\) 22.\(\text{f}5\) \(\text{f}6\) 23.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 24.\(\text{e}f1\) \(\text{d}5\) 25.\(\text{ax}b5\) \(\text{xb}5\) 26.\(\text{a}3\) White is slightly better, as he has well-placed pieces and the knight on e4 is very strong, whilst Black has two weaknesses on e5 and a6;

B32) 16...\(\text{c}6?!\) 17.\(\text{ad}1\) \(\text{d}7\) 18.\(\text{c}3=\) Ivanchuk-Topalov, Morelia/Linares 2007;

B33) 16...\(\text{d}7\) 17.\(\text{ad}1\) \(\text{c}5\) 17...\(\text{h}4=\) 18.\(\text{xe}7+\) \(\text{xe}7\)

19.\(\text{e}5=\) This is better than the move in the game, because the exchange of the pawns on e4 and e5 favours White, since he opens lines for his rooks, and Black has trouble defending the pawns on d6 and e6. 19.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{b}7\) 20.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{b}6\) 21.b4 \(\text{c}6\) 22.a3 \(\text{f}4\) 23.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{c}7\) 24.c3 \(\text{c}4\) 25.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{f}7\) 26.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{c}7\) was seen in Melkumyan-Xiu Deshun, Golden Sands 2012. 19...\(\text{xe}4\) 20.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{a}8\) 21.\(\text{e}f1\) \(\text{d}5\) 22.\(\text{f}3\)±;

B34) 16...\(\text{d}7\) 17.\(\text{xe}7+\) 17.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 18.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{d}7=\) 17...\(\text{xe}7\) 18.\(\text{f}d1\)
10...c6

Not 10...h6? 11.\textsc{h}4!.

11.\textsc{g}5

11.\textsc{e}2 \textsc{a}5 12.\textsc{f}d1 \textsc{xb}3 and now:

13.axb3 looks right, since the pawn captures towards the centre, and opens the a-file for the rook on a1, as well as retaining the possibility of playing c2-c4. However, 13.cx\textsc{b}3 also has some ideas: it opens the c-file, prepares b4-b5, and sets up a space advantage and later a passed pawn.

A) After 13.\textsc{cx}b3 Black has many options and all his continuations lead to a good position. The recapture with the c-pawn on b3 does not pose Black any problems.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{\textsc{h}6} & 19.a4 & 19.\textsc{g}5 \textsc{x}g5 20.\textsc{x}g5 \\
\textbf{\textsc{c}8} & 21.\textsc{d}2 h6= & 19...\textsc{bxa}4 20.\textsc{a}4 \\
\textbf{\textsc{x}b}2 & 21.\textsc{b}4 \textsc{x}b4 22.\textsc{w}xb4 \textsc{c}6=.
\hline
\end{tabular}
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A1) 13...\textsc{d}7 14.\textsc{d}2 \textsc{c}7 15.\textsc{ac}1 \\
\textsc{xf}8 16.\textsc{d}5 \textsc{d}8 17.\textsc{xc}8 \textsc{xc}8 18.\textsc{xe}7+ \textsc{xe}7 19.\textsc{c}4 \textsc{xc}4 20.\textsc{xc}4 \textsc{c}5 21.b3 \textsc{c}6= Carlsen-Ivanchuk, Morelia/Linares 2008;

A2) 13...\textsc{b}8 14.\textsc{g}5 b5 15.\textsc{d}3 h6 16.\textsc{xf}6 \textsc{xf}6 17.\textsc{ad}1 \textsc{e}7 18.\textsc{d}5 \textsc{xd}5 19.\textsc{xd}5 \textsc{d}7 20.\textsc{e}1 \textsc{ac}8 21.g3 f5 with counterplay, Leko-Shirov, Morelia/Linares 2008;

A3) 13...\textsc{e}8! 14.\textsc{e}1 \textsc{g}4! 15.\textsc{c}2 f5∞ Carlsen-Karjakin, Cap d'Agde rapid 2006.

B) 13.\textsc{xb}3 \textsc{c}7 14.\textsc{g}5 \textsc{ac}8! 14...\textsc{h}5?! 15.\textsc{xe}5 \textsc{xe}5 16.\textsc{hx}5 \textsc{f}6 17.\textsc{f}3 \textsc{xc}3 18.\textsc{xc}3 \textsc{w}xe8 19.\textsc{d}4 \textsc{fe}8 20.\textsc{a}5 \textsc{ac}8 and White has some advantage, but winning such a position in practice is close to impossible, Kamsky-Gelfand, Kazan 2011.

15.\textsc{xf}6 \textsc{xf}6 16.\textsc{ac}1 \textsc{w}c6 17.\textsc{d}5 \textsc{d}8 18.c4 f5= 19.\textsc{xf}5?? \textsc{xf}5? 19...\textsc{xd}5=+. 20.h3 \textsc{e}8 21.\textsc{c}3 \textsc{g}6 22.\textsc{h}2 \textsc{h}4 23.\textsc{f}3 \textsc{d}8 24.\textsc{h}2 \textsc{h}8 and the game was soon drawn in Kamsky-Gelfand, Kazan rapid 2011.

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\hline
\textbf{11...\textsc{d}7!} \\
11...\textsc{a}5 12.\textsc{xf}6 \textsc{xf}6 13.\textsc{d}5± D. Petrosian-Ter Sahakyan, Yerevan ch-ARM 2011.
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

12.\textsc{xe}7 \textsc{xe}7 13.\textsc{d}5 \textsc{d}8
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

13...\texttt{axd5?!} 14.\texttt{\textbackslash wxd5!} \texttt{\textbackslash caf6} 15.\texttt{\textbackslash wd3 \textbackslash aad8} 16.\texttt{\textbackslash fe1 \textbackslash a5} 17.\texttt{\textbackslash d5 \textbackslash wc7} 18.\texttt{c3=} Almasi-Bu Xiangzhi, Beijing blitz 2008.

14.\texttt{\textbackslash we2!}?

If 14.c3 \texttt{\textbackslash a5}. Black wants to exchange the strong light-squared bishop on b3 and advance ...f7-f5, after which he will have no problems. This is clear from the variations below, and from the games of the top GMs:

A) 15.\texttt{\textbackslash ad1!!} \texttt{\textbackslash ac8} 16.h3 b5! 16...\texttt{\textbackslash b6?!} 17.\texttt{\textbackslash xb6 \textbackslash xb6} 18.\texttt{\textbackslash xe6 fxe6} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash de2=} Anand-Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2006. 17.\texttt{\textbackslash h2} \texttt{\textbackslash d4} 18.\texttt{\textbackslash xc4 \textbackslash bxc4} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash b4 cb3} 20.axb3 \texttt{\textbackslash xd5} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash wxd5 \textbackslash ecx3} ½-½ Svidler-Leko, Morelia/Linares 2006;

B) 15.\texttt{\textbackslash f2} \texttt{\textbackslash ac8} 15...\texttt{\textbackslash c4?!} 16.b3 \texttt{\textbackslash a3} 17.\texttt{\textbackslash e3 \textbackslash xc2} 18.\texttt{\textbackslash xc2 \textbackslash ac8} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash fd1 \textbackslash ac6} 20.\texttt{\textbackslash ac1} b5= ½-½ Carlsen-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2007.

16.h3 \texttt{\textbackslash b6=} 14...\texttt{\textbackslash a5!?} and now:

A) 15.\texttt{\textbackslash f6d1!!} \texttt{\textbackslash cc8} 16.\texttt{\textbackslash e3 \textbackslash xb3} 17.\texttt{\textbackslash axb3 \textbackslash we7} 18.\texttt{\textbackslash d2} 18.\texttt{\textbackslash wd3 \textbackslash f6} 19.b4 \texttt{\textbackslash fc8} 20.c3 g6 21.\texttt{\textbackslash a5 \textbackslash d8} 22.\texttt{\textbackslash e2 \textbackslash g7} 23.\texttt{\textbackslash d2 h6} 24.\texttt{\textbackslash a1} ½-½ TL Petrosonian-Areschenko, Rijeka Ech 2010. 18...\texttt{\textbackslash cc6} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash dc4} g6 20.\texttt{\textbackslash wd2} \texttt{\textbackslash sf6} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash xd6 \textbackslash wc7} 22.\texttt{\textbackslash w4 \textbackslash d8} 23.\texttt{\textbackslash dc4 \textbackslash d4} 24.\texttt{\textbackslash c3 \textbackslash xe4} 25.\texttt{\textbackslash a5 \textbackslash xc4} 26.\texttt{\textbackslash xc7 \textbackslash xc7} 27.bxc4 Akopian-Sjugirov, Rijeka Ech 2010. White has the advantage: the black rook is misplaced on e4 and it is extremely hard for Black to bring it back into play. White also controls the open file;

B) 15...\texttt{\textbackslash b6} 16.\texttt{\textbackslash e3} 16.\texttt{\textbackslash d2} b5 17.\texttt{\textbackslash fd1 \textbackslash c5} 15.h3 \texttt{\textbackslash axb3} 19.axb3 f6 20.\texttt{\textbackslash exf6} \texttt{\textbackslash xf6} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash e3 \textbackslash e4} 22.\texttt{\textbackslash d5 \textbackslash w6} 23.\texttt{\textbackslash xf6} \texttt{\textbackslash xf6} 24.\texttt{\textbackslash c3 \textbackslash f6} 25.\texttt{\textbackslash e3} h6 26.b4 and White has some advantage, as he has blockaded Black's weak pawns effectively and prepared to start taking them. Leko-Van Wely, Nice rapid 2008. 16...\texttt{\textbackslash a7} 17.axb3 \texttt{\textbackslash a7} 17...\texttt{\textbackslash a6} 18.\texttt{\textbackslash d2 \textbackslash w6} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash d1=} T.L. Petrosonian-Sjugirov, Moscow 2009. 18.\texttt{\textbackslash d5 \textbackslash d8} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash c3 \textbackslash c6=}.

15.\texttt{\textbackslash ad1}

The alternative is 15.\texttt{\textbackslash f6d1}, but the other rook is better. The king's rook belongs on the e- or f-file, whereas the rook on a1 is not doing anything. 15...\texttt{\textbackslash h8} 16.h3 f5!N Black has made all the essential preparatory moves for this advance. He does not want to go over to deep defence, but prefers to attack, even at some strategic risk. 16...b5 17.\texttt{\textbackslash d2 \textbackslash d7} 18.\texttt{\textbackslash a1 \textbackslash d7} 19.c3 \texttt{\textbackslash a5} 20.\texttt{\textbackslash w3} \texttt{\textbackslash axb3} 21.axb3 \texttt{\textbackslash xb3} 22.\texttt{\textbackslash d3 \textbackslash c5} 23.\texttt{\textbackslash d2 \textbackslash f6} was seen in Petrik-Zhou Jianchao, Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010. Now White should have played 24.\texttt{\textbackslash w3}, after which Black faces a

14...\texttt{\textbackslash c5!}

I prefer this move, although 14...\texttt{\textbackslash a5} also has its pluses. The knight remains on d7 and may if appropriate move to f6, exchanging off the strong knight on d5, or else continue on to h5 and f4. Moreover, there are always chances to start counterplay with the move ...f7-f5:
tough defence. 17.\texttt{c3} \texttt{fxe4} 18.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{\texttt{xe4}∞}

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15...\texttt{h8}!

A) 15...\texttt{b5}!? 16.\texttt{e3} and now:

A1) 16...\texttt{c8}!? 17.\texttt{d5} \texttt{\texttt{w}f6} 17...\texttt{xd5} 18.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{\texttt{e}e7=}. 18.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{\texttt{w}xe6} 19.\texttt{d5} \texttt{f5=};

A2) 16...\texttt{xb3}?! 17.\texttt{axb}3 \texttt{\texttt{w}c7} 18.\texttt{d3} \texttt{\texttt{b}b4} 19.\texttt{d2} \texttt{\texttt{w}e7} 20.\texttt{fd1} \texttt{\texttt{a}ad8} 21.\texttt{a1} 21.\texttt{f5} \texttt{\texttt{xf5}} 22.\texttt{exf5} \texttt{\texttt{e}e8} 23.\texttt{c3} \texttt{\texttt{c}c6} 24.\texttt{\texttt{w}e4} \texttt{\texttt{a}a5} 25.\texttt{d5} \texttt{\texttt{w}f6} 26.\texttt{e2} \texttt{\texttt{e}e8} 27.\texttt{d2} \texttt{\texttt{w}xf5} In this position, White has a large advantage, but Black managed later to outplay his opponent, Polgar-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2008. 21...\texttt{\texttt{b}7} 22.\texttt{c3} \texttt{\texttt{c}c6} 23.\texttt{d5±};

A3) 16...\texttt{xe4}!?\texttt{N} is strong because it quickly exchanges off his weak d6-pawn for the pawn on e4, and equalises the chances, whilst other black continuations are not bad, but always leave White with some slight and unpleasant pressure. 17.\texttt{d3} \texttt{\texttt{xb3}} 18.\texttt{axb3} \texttt{\texttt{g}g5=} ;

B) In case of the immediate 15...\texttt{c8}!? 16.\texttt{h3} \texttt{b5} 17.\texttt{d2} \texttt{\texttt{e}e7} 18.\texttt{xe7+} \texttt{\texttt{w}xe7} 19.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{fxe6} 20.\texttt{fd1} \texttt{\texttt{c}c6} 21.\texttt{e1} \texttt{\texttt{b}b8} 22.\texttt{d3} \texttt{\texttt{xd3}} 23.\texttt{\texttt{xd3}} \texttt{b4} 24.\texttt{\texttt{d}1d2} \texttt{a5} 25.\texttt{d1} \texttt{\texttt{bb6}} White has minimal pressure, but since the defender has only one weakness, it will be impossible to win without his assistance, T.L.

16.\texttt{h3} \texttt{f5} 17.\texttt{c3}

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17...\texttt{xb3}!

A) 17...\texttt{fxe4}? This was not why Black played 16...\texttt{f5}. After this weak move, White manages to exchange a pair of minor pieces, and all the drawbacks of the move 16...\texttt{f5}, which we know about, become obvious: 18.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{\texttt{xe4}} 18...\texttt{xb3} 19.\texttt{axb3} \texttt{d5} 20.\texttt{c3} \texttt{\texttt{w}d6} 21.\texttt{\texttt{e}e1} \texttt{\texttt{c}c5} 22.\texttt{\texttt{xe5}} \texttt{\texttt{xe5}} 23.\texttt{\texttt{w}e5} \texttt{\texttt{xf2}+} 24.\texttt{\texttt{h}h2} \texttt{\texttt{a}e8} 25.\texttt{\texttt{e}e2±} Almasi-Brkic, Sibenik tt 2008. 19.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{\texttt{c}c5} 20.\texttt{\texttt{d}d5±};

B) 17...\texttt{d7} 18.\texttt{\texttt{xe6} 18.\texttt{d2} \texttt{\texttt{xb3}} 19.\texttt{axb3} \texttt{\texttt{e}e6} 20.\texttt{\texttt{d}d5} \texttt{\texttt{ae8}}
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21.exf5 \( \text{xf}5 \) 22.c3 and now 22...e4 is an excellent tactical nuance, which Black exploits to achieve an advantage, Vachier-Lagrave-Bu Xiangzhi, Cap d’Agde rapid 2008. 18...\( \text{Q}xe6 \)
18...\( \text{W}xe6 \) 19.exf5 \( \text{xf}5 \) 20.d5±.
19.d5 \( \text{ae}8 \) 20.c3±;
C) 17...\( \text{We}7 \) 18.\( \text{Q}xe6 \) 18.\( \text{Q}f1 \) \( \text{ae}8 \)
19.\( \text{Q}xe6 \) \( \text{W}xe6 \) 20.exf5 \( \text{xf}5 \) 21.\( \text{Q}e4 \)
\( \text{Q}xe4 \) 22.\( \text{W}xe4 \) \( \text{Q}f8 \) 23.d5 \( \text{Q}c8 \)
24.\( \text{W}d6 \) \( \text{Q}f3 \) 25.gxf3 \( \text{Q}d4 \) 26.\( \text{Q}d4 \)
exd4 27.\( \text{W}d4 \) \( \text{xc}2 \), Predojevic-Brkic, Moscow 2008. White has an extra pawn, but his king is weak and his pawns very weak. Play is for two results, and he will either win or draw. The chances are about 50-50.
18...\( \text{W}xe6 \)
19.exf5 \( \text{xf}5 \) 20.d5±, for example 20...\( \text{Q}e7 \) 21.d2 d5 22.b4±;
D) 17...\( \text{Q}c8 \)?! I was shocked when my opponent played this, as I knew he had stronger moves, and frankly speaking, I had nothing prepared against these moves. So I was pleased when this appeared on the board, as I knew how to respond to it: 18.\( \text{Q}xe6 \) 19.exf5 \( \text{xf}5 \) Necessary was 19...
\( \text{Q}d4 \) 20.\( \text{W}e4 \) and White is slightly better 20.\( \text{Q}d3 \) \( \text{Q}f6 \) This leaves Black a pawn down and his position is close to lost. Also after 20...\( \text{Q}d4 \) 21.\( \text{Q}xd4 \)
\( \text{Q}d4 \) 22.\( \text{Q}e4 \) d5 23.\( \text{Q}g3 \) \( \text{Q}g5 \) 24.\( \text{Q}c3 \)
\( \text{Q}e6 \) 25.\( \text{W}d5 \) \( \text{xd}5 \) 26.\( \text{Q}d5 \) \( \text{Q}f4 \)
27.d7 White is winning, Balogh-Kempinski, Warsaw 2008. 21.\( \text{Q}d6 \)
\( \text{xd}6 \) 22.\( \text{Q}d6 \) \( \text{Q}d4 \) 23.\( \text{Q}e5 \) \( \text{Q}f3+ \)
24.gxf3 \( \text{Q}xe5 \) 25.\( \text{Q}f6 \) gxf6 26.\( \text{Q}d1 \)
\( \text{xf}3+ \) 27.\( \text{Q}f1 \) Andriasian-Sjugirov, Belgorod 2010. White has an extra pawn, the active king and the better-placed pieces. These factors should be sufficient to win.
18.axb3

18.h6!

After this strong move, this position has not been seen again. It is not obvious how White can fight for an advantage. He should seek an advantage in other lines.

19.exf5

White has several alternatives, but they all lead to equal positions:
A) 19.\( \text{Q}d2 \) \( \text{Qe}7 \) 20.\( \text{Q}f1 \) \( \text{Q}d8 \)
21.\( \text{Q}d5 \) \( \text{Q}f7 \); 20...d5±;
C) 19.\( \text{Q}f1 \) \( \text{Q}e7 \) 20.exf5 \( \text{xf}5 \) 21.\( \text{Q}e4 \) (21.\( \text{Q}d5 \) \( \text{Q}f7 \) 22.\( \text{Q}e3 \) \( \text{Q}e4 \)
21.\( \text{Q}e4 \) 20.\( \text{Q}e4 \) 21.\( \text{Q}c3 \)
21.\( \text{Q}g3 \) \( \text{Q}d6 \);
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This position is equal.

\textbf{Conclusion}

This chapter was devoted to the move 7.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{f}}}3, with which White hopes to obtain a small but stable positional advantage. By comparison with 7.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{b}}}3, this is a positional line and appeals to positionally-inclined players, who dislike long forcing variations and wish to deprive their opponents of any play.

The black players tend to be more aggressive and not to like such positions, which explains why White achieves such a high percentage of wins with such a quiet and unassuming system. But if Black has strong nerves, and does not succumb to the provocation, but just quietly awaits the right moment to become active, then he will be fine. This becomes clear when we look at the variations and the games of the top players. The lesson is clear: one must bide one's time as Black, and the game will be fine!
Chapter 8

6.♘e3 e5: Knight goes to b3

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♘e3 e5 7.♗b3

In this chapter, we will look at the knight retreat to the left flank, which will introduce play with opposite castling and promises a sharp struggle. This is a move for those who like sharp and uncompromising play. We have chosen to concentrate on the line with 10...a5, with which Black weakens his structure but obtains good attacking chances in return.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♘e3 e5 7.♗b3 ♘e7 8.f3

Here White has two main continuations, which often transpose. By starting with ♗d2, White retains the option of pushing the pawn to f4, departing from the heavily-analysed lines and heading for fresher territory: 8.♗d2 0-0 9.0-0-0 9.f3 ♘e6 10.0-0-0 a5 transposes to 8.f3.

Here Black has an excellent way of meeting White’s idea of ♗d2 and f2-f4:

9...a5!? Now we reach positions similar to the main variations we will examine with 10...a5. But now Black can pose his opponent fresh problems, which are
not so easy to solve. White must decide what to do about the advance of the a-pawn – should he let it come further, when Black will obtain a strong attack on the white king, or should he block it? In the latter case though, the difference is that White has not shielded his bishop on e3 with the move f2-f3.

A) 10.a4:
A1) 10...e6 11.f4 c8 12.b1 c6 13.f5

13...xe4! 14.xe4 xf5 15.d3 b4 16.hf1 g6 17.g5 xg5 18.xg5 d5 19.c3 xd3 20.cxd3 d4 and Black has a large advantage, Ashwin-Li Chao, Dubai 2008;

A2) 10...g4!?N Of course, Black should exploit the fact that White has not played f2-f3. It seems to me that after 10.a4, the dark squares have been weakened in White’s camp, and it makes all the more sense to eliminate his dark-squared bishop, which is the main defender of those squares.

11.d5 xe3 12.fx e3 c6=*

B) 10.b5 It may look as though White has stopped the a-pawn, but this is a myth, since Black can continue the pawn’s advance by tactical means, again based on the fact that White has not played f2-f3 and not defended his e4-pawn: 10.a4N Since taking on a4 with the bishop brings White nothing, we should analyse other moves, although the knight capture is no panacea either. Black needs to know exactly how to react to this move, however (11.xa4 xe4 12.xe4 xa4 13.xd6 xa2 14.b1 a8=†). 11...xe4 12.b2 d7=∞;

C) 10.b1 The king move is principled and leads to double-edged play. Here Black pushes the a-pawn all the way, while White starts pushing his g-pawn, to fight for the d5-square. 10...a4 11.c1 a3 12.b3 and now Black has two continuations. I like both very much, as both lead to interesting play with counterplay and sacrifices. Black has good compensation in all lines:

C1) 12.e6 13.h3 f3 transposes to 10...a5. 13.a5 14.g4 d5 15.g5

15...d4 It seems to me that 99% of players would play 15...d4 here without thinking, but great was my surprise when on my monitor I saw the move 15...xe4!?N, which I thought led to a slightly better ending for White. But taking the knight (16.xe4) is met by the quiet move 16.c7!, after which Black turns out to have a very strong initiative. 16.gxf6 xf6 17.c7=*

He should have played 17...c7, with complications. 18.d5 xd5 19.exd5 c5 20.xc7 c7 21.g5 c8 22.c4 dxc3 23.xd5 and White is winning, Ivanchuk-Shirov, Motril tt 2008;
C2) Since White has so weakened his dark squares, Black should eliminate his dark-squared bishop if the chance comes, hence the move 12...\(\text{	exttt{Qg4}}\)?
13.\(\text{	exttt{Qd5}}\) \(\text{	exttt{Qxe3}}\) 14.\(\text{	exttt{Wxe3}}\) \(\text{	exttt{Qc6}}\) 15.\(\text{	exttt{Qc4}}\) \(\text{	exttt{Qe6}}\) 16.\(\text{	exttt{Qd3}}\) \(\text{	exttt{Qh8}}\) 17.\(\text{	exttt{Wb6}}\) \(\text{	exttt{Qd7}}\) 18.\(\text{	exttt{Qxe7}}\) \(\text{	exttt{Wxe7}}\) 19.\(\text{	exttt{Qd5}}\) \(\text{	exttt{Qxd5}}\) 20.\(\text{	exttt{Qxd5}}\) \(\text{	exttt{Qd4}}\) 21.\(\text{	exttt{Whe1}}\) \(\text{	exttt{Wd7}}\) 22.\(\text{	exttt{Qb4}}\)

\[\text{22...\(\text{Qac8}\) 22...\(\text{Wc8}\)! F. 23.\(\text{Qd2}\) h6 24.c4 \(\text{Qc7}\) 25.\(\text{Qxc7}\) \(\text{Qxc7}\) 26.\(\text{Qc2}\) and an equal endgame has been reached, Liu Guanchu-Naer, Beijing tt 2012.}\]

A1) 12.a3?! A very interesting move, but not best. When my opponent played it, I remembered the right idea for meeting it, but not the correct move order, and so failed to reach the position I was aiming for. 12...\(\text{a4}\) 13.\(\text{Qd2}\) and now:

A11) 13...d5?! 14.exd5 \(\text{Qxd5}\) 15.\(\text{Qxd5}\) \(\text{Qxe4}\) 16.Qe1 \(\text{Qxe4}\) 17.\(\text{Qd7}\) 18.Qb1 \(\text{Qf6}\) 19.Qg5 \(\text{Qc6}\) 20.Qd3 Qd8 and White has the advantage, with very easy play. His light-squared bishop is very strong, and Black’s problem is that he has no counterplay and must just stand and await what White will do, Zherebukh-Andriasyan, Aix-les-Bains Ech 2011;

A12) 13...b5?!N A very extravagant move, involving a double pawn sacrifice, and a very strong attack. It seems to me that if White is not prepared for it, then he risks getting mated very quickly, but with correct play, he gets the advantage: 14.Qb5 \(\text{Qc7}\) 14...\(\text{Qb7}\) 15.Qc4\(\text{±}\). 15.Qe2 15.g4 \(\text{Qc8}\). 15...Qc8 16.Qd3 \(\text{Qbd7}\) 17.Qxa4 \(\text{Qxa4}\) 18.Qxa4 d5 19.exd5 \(\text{Qxd5}\) 20.Qc3 \(\text{Qxc3}\) 21.Qxc3 \(\text{Qxc3}\) 22.Qxc3 \(\text{Qxc3}\). 23.Qhe1\(\text{±}\);

A13) 13...\(\text{Qbd7}\) This move looks very good. And when you know Black’s idea, involving the sacrifice of the b5-pawn, then you want to play this move automatically. But now White manages to bring out his last piece.

A131) 14.f4 Only one game has been played with this move, and not on a very high level, but Black found a very strong rejoinder. For this reason, I tried to analyse other moves for White, but these also fail to bring him any advantage. 14...\(\text{Qxf4}\) 15.Qxf4
White faces a difficult choice. Mate in one is threatened, and the a2-pawn hangs with check. After some thought, I realised that the a2-pawn is not to be defended, so White has a choice of how best to let it go:

A21) 14.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}2N} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}xa2+} Less clear is 14...d5!? 15.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}5} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xc}5} 16.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}xc5} d4; or 16...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xa}2+} 17.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}1} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}4}. 15.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}1} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xb}3} 16.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xb}3} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}4} 17.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}6} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}6} 18.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}4} d5 and Black's attack comes first;
A22) 14.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}2} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xa}2+} 15.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}1} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}4} 16.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}6} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}7} 17.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xa}8} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{a}8} 18.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}6} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}8}

A221) 19.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a}4} d5 19...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}4}!? 20.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}1} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}5} 20.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}5} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xc}5}! White faces a dilemma – with what to take the bishop? He has an extra exchange, but his pieces are in bad positions and his king is under a terrible attack. 21.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xc}5}!? 21.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xc}5} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}8}! 22.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xa}5} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}8}! An excellent trick: first Black refrained from the exchange of queens, then when the knight comes to a5, he
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offers the exchange. All of White's pieces will hang on the a-file. 21...d4
22...ex6 wxe6 23.b3 w7! 23...wc6
24.wd2∞. 24.a4 It may look as though White is defending, but this is not so. From here on, it is Black to play and win. 24...b5! 25.xb5 w6 26.b3
a4! 27.xa4 xa4! 28.xa4 wa2+ 29.wc1 d7! I thought it was just perpetual check, but when I saw this move suggested by the computer, I could not believe my eyes. 30.xd2 c2 31.wc2 d3! 32.xf2 32.xd3? wc5+ 33.wc3 xa4+-.

32...f5!! 33.xf5 d6++ I was astonished. I doubt any human could find such a line.

A222) White should play 19.wxa5N. I am convinced all other moves lead to very bad outcomes, whereas the text leads to an equal endgame (19.wxa5? wa2+ 20.wa1 wc4): 19...xb3
20.xb4 wa2+ 21.wc1

21...xe4! 22.xe4 g5+ 23.wd2
23.xd2 wc4 24.wb1 xd2 25.wxd2
xb5∞. 23...b3 24.xg5 wa1+ 25.wd2 wc2+ 26.wc3 wc5+ 27.wf3 xd1+ 28.xd1 wxf2+ 29.wxf2 xd1=.

A3) 12.a4 c6 12...a6 13.wb1
b4 14.g4 transposes. 13.g4 13.wb1 transposes: 13...b4 14.g4, etc.

There is always a question over whether White should play g4-g5 or not. If he does not, then Black plays ...d6-d5, after which he has a strong attacking position, but if White plays g4-g5, then the knight goes via e8 to c7, where it stands excellently.

A3) 14.g5?! d8 Instead,
14...h5!? 15.wb1 f5 16.gxf6 wxf6
17.g5 h6 is unclear. Now:

A31) 15.f4 f5! 16.h4 fxe4 17.fxe5
dxe5→ 18.wb1
Here 18...d6 19.c5 g4 20.d5 xe5 21.xe5 f5 22.g1 xe3 23.xe3 f3 24.xe4 xc5 25.c4 h8 26.xg4 e3 27.g2 is known from the game Inarkiev-Brkic, Budva Ech 2009: 19.c5 g4 20.d5 xe5 21.xe5 f5 22.g1 xe3 23.xe3 f3 24.xe4 xc5 25.c4 h8 26.xg4 e3 27.g2. If one believes the computer, this position is equal, but assessing the position without the computer, I would prefer White.

An improvement for Black is 18...b5!N 19.xb5 c7. Black has such a strong attack that I doubt White will last five more moves.

A32) If 15.h1 b5! 16.xb5 c7

A321) 17.d3 b8→ 18.b7??→. 18.h4 xc2 19.xc2 xb3 20.xb3 xb3 21.h2 b7??;

A322) 17.c1N If one follows Steinitz’s principles, then this is the way to defend, with the pieces behind.

17...xb5 17...d5???. 18.axb5

18...d5! Or also 18...b7 with attack. 19.xd5 a4!??; or 19.exd5 f5 20.d3 d2 a4→. 20...xd3 21.cxd3 b4??;

A32) 14.b1 and now the time has come for concrete action. Black cannot afford to delay any longer, since White has evacuated his king, blocked the black counterplay on the queenside and threatens g4-g5, seizing the d5-square. If he succeeds in this, Black’s position will be close to lost. But here Black has an excellent pawn sacrifice, enlivening his minor pieces and giving him more than sufficient compensation.

A321) 14.d8?! 15.b6 f8 16.xa5 I regard this position as much better for White, but the computer claims it is (0.00). Even such a fan of the computer as I strongly advise you NOT to play this variation as Black. 16...xa5?!N 16...xc2 17.xc2 xb3+ 18.xb3 xa5 19.b5±; 16...xb3?! 17.xb4 xa4 18.xa4 xa4 19.b5± Inarkiev-Ter Sahakyan, Plovdiv Ech 2012. 17.xa5 a2+ 18.c1 d5 and now:

A321) 19.d3?
we have to trust implicitly, in order to avoid being mated in the next few moves. 20...�xd5 21.��xe4 22.��g5+ 22.��xd2 23.��xd2 g6 24.��a1 24.��c4 25.��f6=. 24...��c7 25.��xb7 25.��c4 26.��xc4 27.��d8+ 25.��xa2 28.��d8+ 26.��c3 27.��c2 b6∞ — hardly a standard position! Black is a pawn down, it is White to move and Black has no threats. But it turns out that not only does White have no advantage, but he has to play several accurate moves, in order to equalise! 25...��f6 26.��e3 Now Black is two pawns down, and it looks as though he will soon have to resign, but sacrificing a third pawn turns out to be the saving resource; Black achieves perpetual check. 26...e4! 26...��d5 is less clear. 27.fxe4 ��xh2+ 28.��e2 29.��fxe3 ��h2+=

A321) 19.��d2! dxe4 20.��xa2 21.��e2 22.��xd8+ 23.��xf3 24.��xa2 20.fxe4 b6! 20...��xa2+ 21.��e1 22.��e3 23.��e2 24.��b5+=; A322) 14...��e8

15.��f2! 15...b5 16.��xb5 d5 17.exd5 ��xd5 18.��d2± 19.��xb6±;

A323) 14...d5! The long-awaited break, even at the cost of a pawn. After this, the bishop on e7 is opened up, the knight on f6 transfers to the blockading square and his bishop on e6 begins to control the b1-h7 diagonal, along which is the weakest point in the white camp, the c2-pawn, next to his king. 20.�� 21...dxe4 As we have already said, the black pieces begin to regroup, after which they will occupy better attacking positions. The standard move 15...d4? does not work. White just keeps an extra pawn and a winning position: 16.gxf6 17.��xf6 18.��f2 19.��a6 20.��c4+ 17.��xd4 exd4 18.��xd4 19.��c1 20.��f6 21.��g1± 20.��xd4 21.��d2 22.��d3 23.��e3±.

16.exd5 ��f5

A sad situation for White, who has three ways to defend c2, all of which have their drawbacks. We will examine each in turn.

A3231) 17.��c1?! 17...b5!? 18.��xb5 19.��d2 19.��c4 b5! BOOM!!! A blow at the very point at which all the white pieces seem to be pointing. All White’s pieces have more than enough on their plate, and now it is too late to start thinking what to do with the pawn, which smashes all in its way. 20.axb5 a4 21.��c5 22.��e6+ 23.��e8! → A quiet rook move which indirectly defends e5 and increases the pressure on White.
Black retains all his threats and it is harder and harder to find a move for White;

A3232) 17...a1?! d6

What can one say about a position where the white knight on a1 defends the c2-pawn? Indeed, at several points, the computer recommends b2-b3, after which the knight is totally crippled, while Black's pieces are becoming more and more active. 17...b5?!N 18.axb5 (18...xb5±) 18...d6 (if 18...a4 19...c1) 19.b6±.

It is clear that Black is preparing the break ...b7-b5, and so I began to think how to stop this. I only came up with one idea, namely just putting the bishop in front of the pawn to stop the advance, but in that case, Black has other ideas and has a very strong initiative. One can also try another line, just strengthening the position with 18.h4, but here too, like lightning from a clear sky, there comes ...b7-b5, after which Black has a terrible attack.

A32321) 18.b6N
A323211) 18...xg5 19.xe5 f6
20.xd6 xc3

The bishop on c3 hangs but cannot be taken. White has an extra pawn and it is logical that he should try to exchange queens, to douse the flames of the black attack. 21.c5 The queen has to go here to offer the exchange, but the move also has some pluses, as White opens the path for his passed d-pawn, which will soon start its advance, while the c2-pawn is defended one more time. Not 21.bxc3? xc3 22.c5 a3 23.c4 xc8 24.c7 (24.d4 xa4+) 24...b6! 25.axb6 c3 26.d4 (26.b3 xc7 27.d4 xc3+) 26...xc2+ 27.c1 a3+ 28.d2 xd1++; 21.c7? e5!.

21...f6 22.d6 xc5 23.xc5 xc8 24.axb4 xb4 25.d3 xd3 26.xd3 f8±;

A323212) 18...d7?! 19.h4

The key moment. Black has two ideas: he can play 19...xc8 or 19...f6. The move 19...f6 has one drawback: it fails to a concrete white idea, and we will not bother to go too deeply into the numerous variations. Instead, I will just explain the ideas which one must use to neutralise this move: firstly, one must take on f6, then play b6-c5, to eliminate the knight on d6, so as to close forever the question of the advance ...b7-b5, and then put one's knight on e4, so as to solve the issue with the c2-pawn. If White manages to carry out this plan, he will obtain the advantage.

If 19...xc8 20.h2 After 20.xe5 a very sharp position arises, where Black has sacrificed two pawns, but needs to sacrifice an additional exchange, to secure his initiative: 20...xc3! 21.bxc3 xc2 22.xc2 xa4 23.d2 b3+ 24.c1 xb6 25.e3 c7∞.

20...c4 20...f6!? 21.e3 transposes to 19...f6 20.e3. 21.g1 ab8 with compensation for the pawn due to Black's initiative on the queenside.

A3232) 18.h4 It seems as though White has defended everything and can now march boldly forward, but he gets
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a nasty surprise in the shape of a further pawn sacrifice, after which Black has a very strong attack:

18...b5!N 19.axb5 19...xb5?! 20.axb5 d6 21.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d2 (21.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e4? xe4 22.fxe4 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)c4 23.b3 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xb5\text{\textrightarrow}) 21...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d7 22.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e4 xe4 23.fxe4 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xb5\text{\textrightarrow} 19...a4
20.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)c1 a3! 21.bxa3 The only move, but sufficient. It allows Black to continue his attack and White has to play a great many only moves to save the game:

19...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)c4! 20.d6 22.axb4? \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xb4\text{\textrightarrow}. 22...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xa3+ 23.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xa3 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xa3
24.dxe7 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xa1\text{\textrightarrow} 25.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)a1 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)c2+ 26.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)b2 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xe1 27.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)h3 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xe3
28.exf8e8+ \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xf8 29.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xe1 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)b4+ 30.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)c2 \(\textit{Q}\)f5+ 31.e4 f6\text{\textrightarrow} Black has queen against rook and knight, but White has a strong passed pawn on b5, which will advance with the rook supporting it from behind. However, with the text, Black does not rush to win the exchange, but makes room for his king and creates weaknesses on the kingside.

A3233) 17.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d2 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)c7 To prepare ...b7-b5. Black could have played the latter at once, and begun a strong attack, but here this move is not so strong and White can gain a large advantage with accurate defence: 17...b5!?N 18.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xb5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d6 19.e2 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d8 20.h4 (20.c6 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xc6 21.dxc6 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xe6 22.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)hd1 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)ab8\text{\textrightarrow}) 20...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xb5 21.axb5 a4 (21...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d7??\text{\textrightarrow})

22.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)a5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xa5 (22...a3 23.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)b6 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d7 24.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)c6 axb5 25.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)hd1\text{\textrightarrow} 23.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)b6 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)a8
24.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xd8 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xd8

25.d6! (25.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xe5? a3\text{\textrightarrow}) 25...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)f8? (25...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xc2?! 26.dxe7 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d4+ 27.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)a1 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d7 28.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xd4 exd4 29.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e8 30.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e5\text{\textrightarrow}; 25...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xd6 26.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e4 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xc2
27.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xd6 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xd6 28.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xd6 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d4+ 29.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xf5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xe2 30.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e1\text{\textrightarrow}) 26.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xe5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xc2+ 27.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xc2 a3. When I analysed this position, it seemed to me that White was winning easily, but when I looked more closely, I realised that there is only one path to a precise win: 28.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e4! \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)a5 29.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d1 axb2 30.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xa8 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xa8 31.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xb2\text{\textrightarrow}. 18.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d1 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e8 19.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e8 20.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)b5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d6 21.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e2 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xb5 22.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xb5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)a6 23.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)hd1 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)ad6 and White is winning, Topalov-Dominguez Perez, Sofia 2009. 20.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)c4

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20...b5!?N – as usual, we land the customary blow on b5. We are already fa-
miliar with the basic ideas of this, and we only need to confirm the details in concrete moves:

A32331) 21.\textit{\textsc{xb5}} \textit{\textsc{xb5}} 22.\textit{\textsc{xb5}} \textit{\textsc{dxd5}} 23.\textit{\textsc{xd5}} \textit{\textsc{dxd5}} 24.\textit{\textsc{xd5}} \textit{\textsc{dxd5}} 25.\textit{\textsc{c7}} \textit{\textsc{ad8}} 26.\textit{\textsc{xd5}} \textit{\textsc{dxd5}};

A32332) 21.\textit{\textsc{b3}} \textit{\textsc{d6}} 22.\textit{\textsc{e2}} \textit{\textsc{ab8}}

23.\textit{\textsc{hd1}} \textit{\textsc{dc8}}↑ 24.\textit{\textsc{f2}} A strange series of moves, which I myself found hard to understand, but after studying the position thoroughly, I came to the conclusion that both sides' pieces stand as well as possible, and one may even go so far as to say that we have reached a kind of mutual zugzwang — a highly unusual thing with so many pieces on the board! 24...\textit{\textsc{ba6}}

Back to the position after 10...\textit{\textsc{a5}}.

A32333) 21.\textit{\textsc{xb5}} \textit{\textsc{cxd5}}

21...\textit{\textsc{xb5}}!? 22.\textit{\textsc{xb5}} \textit{\textsc{d6}}→ 22.\textit{\textsc{xd5}} \textit{\textsc{dxd5}} 23.\textit{\textsc{xd5}} \textit{\textsc{dxd5}} 24.\textit{\textsc{xd5}} \textit{\textsc{dxd5}} 25.\textit{\textsc{c7}} \textit{\textsc{ad8}} 26.\textit{\textsc{xd5}} \textit{\textsc{dxd5}};

A32334) 21.\textit{\textsc{axb5}} \textit{\textsc{e8}}! 22.\textit{\textsc{we2}} \textit{\textsc{a4}}

22...\textit{\textsc{d6}}!? \textit{\textsc{e7}}! This move contains a hidden idea of a queen sacrifice, which White cannot accept, because of mate. 25.\textit{\textsc{xe5}}

25.\textit{\textsc{xb4}} \textit{\textsc{xc4}} 26.\textit{\textsc{xd8}}+ \textit{\textsc{dxd8}} 27.\textit{\textsc{d5}} \textit{\textsc{c8}}∞. 25...\textit{\textsc{xc4}}!

26.\textit{\textsc{xd8}}+ \textit{\textsc{xd8}} 27.\textit{\textsc{xe7}}

27...\textit{\textsc{xc2}}+ A beautiful finish to a beautiful game — Black gives perpetual with two knights. 28.\textit{\textsc{xc2}} \textit{\textsc{d2}}+ 29.\textit{\textsc{c1}} \textit{\textsc{b3}}+ 30.\textit{\textsc{b1}} \textit{\textsc{d2}}+.
clear after a few moves: firstly, the queen defends the rook on d1, and moves out of the attacks) 17...c5 18.exd5 exd5 19.c4 d6 20.d3

16.dxe4 16.fxe4 d4 17.h4 b4 18.e2 c7 16.dxe4 17.xd8 17.fxe4 c7 17...xd8 18.xd8+ xd8 19.fxe4=

B22) After 14.d3 Black has a pleasant choice, and either may complete his development with a double-edged position, or, if he is in a more determined mood, he may sacrifice a pawn for compensation: 14..d5!?N 14.c6 15.f2 c8 15.d7!?∞ (since White has hitherto played passively and lost control of d5, it seems to me that Black can fight for the advantage) 15.xe5 b4

B23) 14.f2 White wants to play b6, and win the black rook on a5, but in reply, Black has a fantastic resource, involving an exchange sacrifice, promising him excellent counterplay: 14...c7!N 15.b5 xb5 16.xb5 d5 17.exd5 xbd5 18.xd5 xbd5 19.d3 c6 20.xc6 xc6 21.b6 d6 22.e1 c8=;

B24) 14.e1 d5!N After 14...c7 15.b5 xb5 16.xb5 d5 17.exd5 xbd5 18.d2 c8 19.d3 Black has good compensation for the sacrificed exchange, but this position should nevertheless be assessed as better for White, because Black has no particular threats, Akopian-Xiu Deshun, Albena 2012. 15.d2 15.xd5 xd5 16.c4 b4 17.d2 xd2 18.xd2

B21) 14.g4 d5 15.g5 The battle starts, with lots of pieces hanging, but as often happens in such cases, the outcome is an equal endgame, by force. 15...x4
18...\(\text{c}3+\)!! 19.\(\text{wx}c3\) \(\text{wc}7\) 20.\(\text{wd}3\) \(\text{xc}4\) 21.\(\text{wx}c4\) \(\text{mc}5\) 22.\(\text{wd}3\) \(\text{mc}3\) 23.\(\text{wd}6\) \(\text{xc}2\) 24.\(\text{wx}c7\) \(\text{xc}7=\).

15...\(d4\) 16.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) The exchange sacrifice is both the normal continuation and also the only way not to obtain a bad position. 17.\(\text{ex}d5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 18.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{c}6\) 19.\(\text{we}1\) \(\text{b}4\) 20.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{xd}2\)

Chapter 8 - 6.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{e}5\): Knight goes to \(b3\)

21.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{c}5\) 22.\(\text{xa}3\) \(\text{a}6\) 23.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{a}4\) 24.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{c}7\) 25.\(\text{b}3\) \(b5\). Black has a very strong attack for his sacrifice, and White’s game is not simple to play, Shirov-Wojtaszek, Pamplona 2006.

16...\(\text{a}6\) Strangely, 16...\(\text{a}8!!\)\(?\) may be even stronger than the other, more active rook move, because in the corner, the rook is not vulnerable to a fork.

17.\(\text{we}2\) \(\text{c}6?!\) The position is roughly equal, but I prefer Black, because the white king is very weak and can always come under attack, Karjakin-Grischuk, Nice blind 2010.

C) 11.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 12.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{b}4\) Black exploits the fact that White has already played \(a2-a4\) and thus given the black knight a square on \(b4\), from where it will attack \(c2\) and take part in the fight for \(d5\).

B25) 14.\(\text{a}4?!\) With this move, White challenges his opponent, provoking him to sacrifice the exchange. The latter is happy to accept the challenge and after a sharp struggle, an equal endgame arises. 14...\(\text{xa}4!\)

15.\(\text{bxa}4\)

B251) 15...\(\text{d}5\) 16.\(\text{ex}d5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 17.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{b}4\) 18.\(\text{xb}4\) 18.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{c}3+\) 19.\(\text{wx}c3\) \(\text{xc}3\) 20.\(\text{xd}8\) \(\text{xd}8\) 21.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{xe}6=\).

15.\(\text{xa}4\) \(\text{xa}4\) \(\text{b}4\)

C1) 13.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}5\) There are positions where the black knight stands quite well on \(h5\). For the moment he stops White playing \(h2-h4\) and can at some moment jump into \(f4\).

C11) 14.\(\text{g}1\) The rook move prepares \(h2-h4\) and is ready for the advance of the black f-pawn.

C111) Of course, Black can dispense with the move ...\(f7-f5\) and can continue his play on the queenside: 14...\(\text{c}7?!\)\(\infty\)

15.\(\text{b}1\) 15.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{c}8\) 16.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{c}7=\).

15...\(\text{d}5\)

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C1111) 16.exd5?! This inaccuracy will cost White a great deal, and instead of obtaining the advantage, he will face an unclear fight, where Black's chances are not inferior. 16...e5! A move which shows up White's inaccuracy last move. If 16...exd5 17.exd5 (17.exd5? exd5 18.exd5 f6 19.b5±) 17...exd5 18.exd5±. 17.c1 f6 18.b5 d4 19.xf4 exf4 20.gd1 20.d4 d6=oo. 20...e6 21.dxe6 xd2 22.exf7+ xf7 23.xd2 d8=oo

C1112) Better is 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.exd5 f6 18.exd5 ad8. It may look as though White has miscalculated, but this is only a strong positional queen sacrifice, after which there is no doubt as to White’s advantage: 19.b5±

C12) 14.f5 15.h4 White has to decide what to do with the g-pawn. Leaving it where it stands is not possible, and advancing it spoils his pawn structure: 15.g6!? hgx6 16.xg6 f6=oo. 15...c8 16.b5 h8 17.b1 fxe4 18.fxe4 d5 19.h2 e5 with a double-edged position with equal chances, Vallejo Pons-Morozovitch, Novi Sad 2009.

C12) 14.b1 As we have seen, the rook move does not bring White anything, and it is not clear which side Black plans to play on. The king move is always useful and at the same time, acts as a waiting move.

14...c8 Black could play on the kingside, but he decides to play a useful move, which will always be necessary. 14...f6!N 15.g1 g6! 16.xf6 xf6 17.g5 xf3 18.xf2 h8=oo. 15.b5 f5=oo. 15...f5 16.g6 hgx6 17.xg6 f6 18.g1 f4 19.h2 h6 20.c1 f6 21.h4

Now the time has come to open the game, as the black pieces are better placed for such a game: 21.d5! 22.xd5 xfd5 23.xd5 xfd5 24.xf5 xxc5 and Black has the advantage, on account of his stronger pawn structure and active pieces, Sukandar-Xiu Deshun, Jakarta 2012.

C2) 13.b1 c8 14.h4 14.g5 h5 transposes to 13.g5. 14...d5 15.g5 e8 16.exd5 f5 17.c1 a1 d6=oo. 17.b6
For me, it has always been a mystery how white players can go into such a position, where they have an extra pawn, but Black has a super attack and even the materialistic computer gives only a microscopic advantage for White. It is hard to analyse the position accurately, because Black has such a rich choice of possibilities. We will examine them one by one.

C2 1) 18...\textit{d}a1 \textit{d}6; 

C2.2) 18...\textit{f}f2 \textit{f}6?!N 18...\textit{d}6!? 19.e3 \textit{f}d7 20.d2.

Black has two equally strong moves in this position, and I like both. Each gives Black a very strong attack, and if White has no home preparation here, or forgets his analysis, then the game is virtually over. 20...\textit{e}c3!?N 21.bxc3 \textit{e}6; or 20...b5 21.axb5 \textit{e}c3 22.\textit{e}xe5 \textit{c}c8 23.\textit{d}c4 \textit{xb}5 24.\textit{xe}5, Nijboer-Gharamian, Metz 2009. It is strange that Black agreed a draw here, because his position looks extremely threatening after 24...\textit{f}6!N. 19.\textit{h}h3 \textit{x}h3 20.\textit{x}h3 \textit{f}xg5 21.hxg5 \textit{x}g5 22.\textit{e}e3 \textit{xe}3 23.\textit{xe}3 \textit{xd}5 24.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 25.\textit{xb}6 \textit{ff}4\text{∞} The pawn structure is unusual and both sides' pieces are scattered all round the board, but thanks to the lack of material, the game soon ends in a draw;

C2.3) 18.\textit{b}5 \textit{d}6 19.\textit{e}2 \textit{xb}5 20.\textit{xb}5
20...\textit{a}c4 20...\textit{xc}3!? 21...\textit{xc}3 (21...\textit{xc}3?? \textit{xa}4 22...\textit{xb}4 a\textit{b}4+- and there is no defence to the threat of \textit{a}a8) 21...\textit{xa}4 22...\textit{b}3 \textit{xb}3 23...\textit{xb}3 \textit{xd}5\text{=}N. 21...\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}4 22...\textit{b}3? The position is already hopeless, but better was 22...\textit{hd}1, although even in this case, Black has a large advantage. 22...\textit{cc}8

23...\textit{xc}3! This nice sacrifice is not the only way to win, but in keeping with the Olympic motto, ‘faster, stronger, higher!’ 24...\textit{xc}3 \textit{xd}5 25...\textit{d}1 \textit{d}6 26...\textit{d}2 \textit{a}3+ 27...\textit{b}1 \textit{b}4 28...\textit{d}1 \textit{c}8 29...\textit{xe}5 \textit{xc}2! 30...\textit{xc}2 \textit{c}3+! 0–1 Smirnov-Vitiugov, Moscow 2009.

D) 11...\textit{a}4?! I do not like this move, because the fight going on is about the d5-square, and instead of fighting for this, the knight goes to the edge of the board. As Dr Tarrasch said, ‘a knight on the rim is dim’!

D1) 11...\textit{bd}7!? 12...\textit{b}5 After 12...\textit{g}4 the move 12...d5 looks natural, but in order to play it, one must find the subsequent knight sacrifice, after which we reach a sharp position with mutual chances: 12...d5! 13...\textit{xe}4N 14...\textit{xe}4 d4–. 12...d5 13...\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 I would not even call this a queen sacrifice, but rather a necessity, after which the advantage nonetheless remains on Black’s side. 14...\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 15...\textit{xd}5...g5

16.f4 \textit{xf}4 17...\textit{xf}4 exf4 18...\textit{xd}7

18...\textit{h}4!

D2) 11...d5! Of course! If Black can achieve this move so easily, there is no question that he should do so. It is just a matter of checking the concrete variations.

D21) 12...\textit{b}6 d4! 13...\textit{xa}8 13...\textit{xd}4? a4!–+. All white’s pieces are hanging, and he cannot defend them all. 13...\textit{c}6! 14...\textit{xd}4 exd4 15...\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 16...\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 16...\textit{xa}8
17...c4∞, 17...exd4 c5! 18...d1 xa8 and Black is slightly better;
D22) 12...c3 bbd7 13...bc5 xc5 14...xc5 a4=;
D23) 12...bc5 d4 13...xe6 fxe6 14...g1 e8!→. It is a shame that Dr Tarrasch cannot see this position and see the exception to his teachings. The knight heads to c7, so as to play ...d6-d5 and trap the knight on a4.
E) The idea of 11...f2 is to exploit the pin on the d-file and play c5, attacking the pride of Black’s position, the bishop on e6.
E1) 11...a4 12...c5 a3 13...b3 13...xe6?! fxe6 14...c4? The bishop move looks good but sadly, this is a mirage, and fails to a lovely tactic, after which the position is lost: 14...d5! 15.exd5 g4=+! 13...c7 13...a5 14...a4 bbd7 15...d2 ab8 16...b5 wxd2+ 17...xd2 d5 18.exd5 wxd5=.
E2) 11...c5!? is a quieter continuation, which does not go to meet White, and does not allow his knight to jump to c5. 12...b5 a6 13...a4 c7 14...b6 w8 and now:
E21) 15...a4?! a6 16.g4 a8! 17.g5 17...b5 a4=+! 17...h5 and Black has the initiative;
E22) 15...e2 (15...d3 transposes to this line) 15...a4 16...d2. It seems that White should have the advantage, but now the strong capture 16...xa2 follows, after which the position becomes unclear: 17...dc4 17...g4 e6=.
17...xc4 Interesting is 17...d8=∞.
18...xc4 a3 19...b1

White has two bishops and the better pawn structure, and it seems as though his advantage should be beyond dispute, but Black also has his trumps, as he has managed to push his pawn all the way to a3, weakening the white king, and now by means of 16...d5, he wants to take control of the centre (16...c8 17...d3 bbd7 is also unclear): 17.exd5 and now either
17...exd5!? 18...c4 c8 with interesting play, or 17...exd5 18...d4 bbd7 19...xe5 cxe5 20...xe5=.

Not one step back! Black sacrifices a pawn, but opens his pieces and begins an attack on the white king, which lacks pawn protection. 19...d5! 20.exd5 axb2 21...xb2 a3+ 22...b3! As the saying
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If 22.\texttt{b1!?} \texttt{\textit{xa}1} 24.\texttt{\textit{x}a1} \texttt{\textit{a}6} 25.\texttt{\textit{x}a6} \texttt{\textit{bxa6}} 26.\texttt{\textit{c4} \textit{d7}}

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

16...\texttt{\textit{xe}4}! A splendid piece sacrifice, after which White has to be very careful and play extremely accurately, to achieve equality. 17.\texttt{\textit{exe}4} \texttt{d4} and now 18.\texttt{\textit{xd}4} 18.\texttt{\textit{e}1} \texttt{\textit{c}8} \texttt{=} or 18...\texttt{\textit{a}5} \texttt{=} 18.\texttt{\textit{xd}4} \texttt{exd4} 19.\texttt{\textit{xd}4} \texttt{\textit{g}4} \texttt{=} 18.\texttt{\textit{xe}2} \texttt{\textit{b}6} 19.\texttt{\textit{d}3} (19.\texttt{\textit{xd}4} \texttt{exd4} 20.\texttt{\textit{xd}4} \texttt{\textit{c}6} \texttt{=} 19...\texttt{\textit{fc}8} \texttt{=} 18...\texttt{\textit{xd}4} 19.\texttt{\textit{xd}4} \texttt{\textit{g}4} 20.\texttt{\textit{xe}2} \texttt{\textit{xe}5} 21.\texttt{\textit{w}d}3 \texttt{f6} \texttt{=} a non-standard decision, but very appropriate and strong. The move neutralises the white bishop on d4, defends his own bishop on g5 and opens f7 for the other bishop.

White has to decide how to continue the attack, but out of three alternatives, two bring him a bad position:

A) 12.\texttt{\textit{b}1!?} \texttt{\textit{c}7} Now White has to decide which bishop to keep, or whether to retain both. In all three cases, the position is roughly equal, with play for both sides.

A1) 13.\texttt{\textit{g}4}

\begin{center}
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\end{center}

It is interesting that White voluntarily gives up his light-squared bishop, which defends all the light squares on the queenside. Without it, White will struggle. 13...\texttt{\textit{xb}5} 13...\texttt{\textit{b}8}?! 14.a4

\begin{center}
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15.\texttt{\textit{xb}5} \texttt{\textit{c}8} 16.\texttt{\textit{c}3} \texttt{\textit{a}6} 17.\texttt{\textit{e}3} \texttt{\textit{ac}6} 18.\texttt{\textit{g}4}

\begin{center}
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\end{center}
18...\texttt{xc3}! A standard but nonetheless nice exchange sacrifice, which promises Black a strong advantage. White has no satisfactory defence against the numerous threats. 19.bxc3 b5! 20.axb5 a4 20...\texttt{xb5!} 21.\texttt{d4} exd4 22.cxd4 d5 23.\texttt{a1} dxe4 24.\texttt{b1} \texttt{d6} 25.\texttt{c1 xc2} –+ Petr-Zakhartsov, Pardubice 2011;

A22) 14.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{xc7} 15.g4 15.a4 \texttt{fd8} 16.d5 \texttt{xd5} 17.exd5 \texttt{d7}!

A221) 16.g5?! \texttt{h5} 17.\texttt{d5}? \texttt{xd5} 18.exd5 a4 18...f5? It is strange that after playing so magnificently up to now, Black should miss the simple move 18...a4, which promises him an extra pawn and a winning position. 19.gxf6 \texttt{xf6} 20.\texttt{h1} \texttt{f8} 21.\texttt{g4} \texttt{f4} 22.\texttt{d4} exd4 23.\texttt{xf4} d3 24.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{xb2} 25.\texttt{e4} \texttt{f6} 26.\texttt{e7}+. As we know, when there are opposite-coloured bishops on the board, the attack gains in strength. White went on to win in Tiviakov-Shytaj, Bratto 2007. 19.\texttt{c1} \texttt{a5}!

A222) 16.\texttt{e2}

Black has an excellent position, and can continue quietly with the move 16...\texttt{f8}, but he also has an alternative, involving a pawn sacrifice, which gives him a strong attack: 16...a4! 17.\texttt{xa4} \texttt{c4} 18.\texttt{f2} d5 19.exd5 \texttt{xd5}

19...\texttt{b4}!? 20.d6 \texttt{xd6} 21.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{xd6} 22.\texttt{b5} \texttt{xb5} (Black can exchange both bishops for knight, and damage the pawn structure around the white king. As we know, queen and knight are an excellent attacking duo. 22...\texttt{xb3}?! 23.\texttt{xb3} \texttt{xc3} 24.\texttt{xc3} e4\texttt{0} 23.\texttt{xb5} \texttt{a6} 24.a3 \texttt{xb5} 25.axb4 \texttt{xb4} Bologan-Freitag, Izmir tt 2004. 20.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd5} 21.\texttt{b5}

White has an extra pawn, but his pieces are extremely badly placed, scattered over the whole board, and completely lacking any coordination, whilst Black has two bishops and excellent piece coordination. It is hardly surprising that he has a very strong move available: 21...\texttt{e4}!

A23) After 14.\texttt{a4} Black has a choice: either to play 14...\texttt{a6} and continue the battle, with equal chances, or to play 14...d5, a more concrete move, after which there follows a standard queen sacrifice and chances for both sides:

A231) 14...d5 15.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{xc7} 16.exd5 \texttt{fd8} 17.dxe6 \texttt{d2} 18.exf7+ \texttt{xf7} 19.\texttt{xd2} \texttt{d8} 20.a3 \texttt{g6} 21.\texttt{b5} \texttt{xa3} 22.\texttt{d3}+

22...\texttt{xd3}! 23.cxd3 \texttt{b4} 24.\texttt{de4} \texttt{d7} 25.\texttt{h1} \texttt{xc3} 26.\texttt{xc3} In most cases, two rooks are stronger than a queen, but in this concrete case, be-
A cause of the weakness of the white king, the position is objectively equal, Svidler-Naer, Moscow ch-RUS 2006;

A232) With 14...\(\text{a}\text{a}6\) Black declines to play with an extra queen and prefers an unclear position: 15.\(\text{w}\text{f}2\) \(\text{c}\text{c}8\)+
15...\(\text{a}\text{a}8\)!? 16.\(\text{e}\text{e}3\) \(\text{c}\text{c}7\)=. 16.\(\text{b}\text{b}5\)!!
\(\text{x}\text{b}5\) 17.\(\text{x}\text{b}5\) \(\text{a}\text{a}4\)!
18.\(\text{c}\text{c}1\) \(\text{a}\text{a}8\) 18...d5?!?.
19.\(\text{g}\text{g}4\) 19.\(\text{f}\text{f}3\) 20.\(\text{b}\text{b}3\)

20...\(\text{x}\text{g}4\)! 21.\(\text{f}\text{f}xg4\) \(\text{e}\text{e}4\) 22.\(\text{w}\text{f}1\)
\(\text{c}\text{c}3\)+ 23.\(\text{a}\text{a}1\) \(\text{d}\text{d}5\) 24.\(\text{x}\text{d}7\) \(\text{w}\text{d}6\)
25.\(\text{w}\text{x}\text{c}8\) \(\text{w}\text{x}\text{b}6\) 26.\(\text{f}\text{f}5\) \(\text{e}\text{e}4\) 27.\(\text{d}\text{e}2\)
\(\text{e}\text{e}2\) 28.\(\text{w}\text{e}2\) \(\text{f}\text{f}6\)+ 29.\(\text{c}\text{c}3\)=

Anisimov-Kornev, St Petersburg 2004;

A24) 14.\(\text{g}\text{g}4\)! 15.\(\text{b}\text{b}5\) \(\text{a}\text{a}4\)
16.\(\text{c}\text{c}1\) \(\text{c}\text{c}8\)+ 17.\(\text{e}\text{e}2\)!? 17.\(\text{g}\text{g}5\) \(\text{d}\text{d}7\).
17...\(\text{d}\text{d}5\) 17...\(\text{a}\text{a}6\)!?. 18.\(\text{g}\text{g}5\) \(\text{d}\text{d}7\) and now:

A241) 19.\(\text{e}\text{e}5\)? \(\text{f}\text{f}5\) 20.\(\text{c}\text{c}7\) \(\text{x}\text{c}7\)
21.\(\text{x}\text{c}7\) \(\text{w}\text{c}7\) 22.\(\text{d}\text{d}6\) \(\text{x}\text{d}6\) 23.\(\text{g}\text{g}3\)!

White is lost, but this move is strong, in that it poses maximum problems to Black, and gives some practical chances of making a draw, as happens in the game. 23...\(\text{b}\text{b}4\) 24.\(\text{w}\text{x}\text{b}4\) \(\text{e}\text{e}2\)+
25.\(\text{a}\text{a}1\) \(\text{c}\text{c}5\)! 26.\(\text{a}\text{a}3\) and now 26...\(\text{w}\text{c}6\)!
is winning, whereas 26...\(\text{b}\text{b}3\)+
27.\(\text{a}\text{a}2\) \(\text{x}\text{d}1\) 28.\(\text{x}\text{d}1\) \(\text{w}\text{c}2\) only led to a draw in Sebag-Vachier-Lagrave, Cap d'Agde rapid 2008;

A242) 19.\(\text{f}\text{f}2\) \(\text{d}\text{d}4\) 20.\(\text{g}\text{g}3\) \(\text{b}\text{b}6\)
21.\(\text{b}\text{b}x\text{d}4\) \(\text{c}\text{c}4\) 22.\(\text{w}\text{c}1\) \(\text{a}\text{a}6\) 23.\(\text{e}\text{e}\text{e}6\)
\(\text{a}\text{a}6\)!? Instead of the automatic capture on e6, which also gave a clear advantage, this move wins at once. The knight is going nowhere and the capture on b2 is threatened; White cannot defend.

B) I do not like the plan with 12.\(\text{g}\text{g}4\)!,
which gives up the light-squared bishop, since this bishop is very important in such positions and it is hard for White to manage without it: 12...\(\text{c}\text{c}7\)
13.\(\text{g}\text{g}5\) \(\text{b}\text{b}5\) 14.\(\text{b}\text{b}5\)
14.gxf6 \(\text{x}\text{c}3\)
15.\(\text{f}\text{f}e7\) \(\text{x}\text{a}2\)+ 16.\(\text{b}\text{b}1\) \(\text{w}\text{e}7\)
17.\(\text{w}\text{x}\text{d}6\) \(\text{w}\text{f}6\)+.

14...\(\text{a}\text{a}4\)N A good tactical resource,
which gives Black the possibility of seizing the initiative, instead of obtaining an equal but more passive position.
15.\(\text{g}\text{f}6\) 15.\(\text{c}\text{c}5\) \(\text{d}\text{c}5\) 16.\(\text{w}\text{x}\text{d}8\)
\(\text{x}\text{d}8\)!? 17.\(\text{g}\text{f}6\) \(\text{c}\text{c}6\) 18.\(\text{c}\text{c}7\) \(\text{a}\text{a}8\)
19.\(\text{c}\text{c}e6\) \(\text{x}\text{e}6\)+ 19.\(\text{x}\text{e}6\) \(\text{f}\text{f}6\)+. 15...\(\text{a}\text{b}3\) 16.\(\text{e}\text{b}3\)
16.\(\text{x}\text{e}7\)? \(\text{b}\text{a}2\)!+. 16...\(\text{w}\text{f}6\) 17.\(\text{b}\text{b}1\)
\(\text{w}\text{d}7\) 18.\(\text{c}\text{c}3\) \(\text{a}\text{a}6\)?; and not 18.\(\text{w}\text{x}\text{d}6\)!?
I 8 ... \( \text{c4} \) (19.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{a6} \) +)

19 ... \( \text{a6} \) =F;

**C1)** White has to remove his queen from the d-file, because she does nothing there. The queen has two good retreats, but first we will analyse 12.\( \text{f2?!} \), with the idea of putting the bishop on b6, so as to pressurise the black queenside.

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

**Cl)** The first of these is the pawn sacrifice 13 ... \( \text{a4} \) !?N 14.\( \text{xa4} \) \( \text{c8} \) 15.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 16.\( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{c7} \) 17.\( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{xc7} \) with big compensation for Black.

**C2)** 13.\( \text{b1} \) ?! \( \text{c7} \) 14.\( \text{a4} \)

C1) 13.\( \text{b6} \) ?! White has done what he wanted, and put his bishop on b6 to start pressure. The a5-pawn hangs, and it becomes clear that standard defensive measures are not good, so we will look at two black continuations, which I think are interesting.

C11) The first of these is the pawn sacrifice 13 ... \( \text{a4} \) !?N 14.\( \text{xa4} \) \( \text{c8} \) 15.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 16.\( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{c7} \) 17.\( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{xc7} \) with big compensation for Black. White can also play 14.\( \text{xa4} \), but then Black replies 14 ... \( \text{d5} \), after which he is better, having full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

C12) 13 ... \( \text{c8} \) 14.\( \text{xa5} \) \( \text{xb3} \) 14 ... \( \text{c5} \) !? 15.\( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{a7} \) 16.\( \text{b4} \) \( \text{dxc5} \) 17.\( \text{a3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 18.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{a5} \) !→, 15.\( \text{xb3} \)

15 ... \( \text{d5} \) ! This version of the pawn sacrifice, with \( \text{c8} \), is more to my taste:

16.\( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{c5} \) 17.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{d4} \) !

**C2)** 13.\( \text{b1} \) ?! \( \text{c7} \) 14.\( \text{a4} \)

Black has a pleasant choice. He can either bring his rook to the c-file, after which Black fights for the advantage, or play the long-awaited 14 ... \( \text{d5} \) !?N, and obtain the advantage at once: 15.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{dxd5} \) 16.\( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{dxd5} \) !

C3) 13.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{a4} \) !N Black can play more quietly, with 13 ... \( \text{c7} \), preparing the move ...d6-d5, and I don’t see any special way to prevent that, but of course he can also play more sharply, offering a pawn sacrifice, after which he has a strong initiative. Now:
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C3 1) 14.\( \text{\texttt{xa4?!}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c8}} \) A wonderful move, after an excellent sacrifice, with a simple idea: after any white move, there follows the standard sacrifice on c3, and Black will have a clear advantage.

\[ \text{\texttt{c3 11}} \] 15.\( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xc3}} \) 16.\( \text{\texttt{bxc3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c7}} \)

C3 11) 15.\( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xc3}} \) 16.\( \text{\texttt{bxc3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c8}} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xc3}} \); C3 12) 15.\( \text{\texttt{b6}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xc3}} \) 15...\( \text{\texttt{b4}} \)

16.\( \text{\texttt{bxc3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c8}} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xc3}} \);

C3 13) 15.\( \text{\texttt{g5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{h5}} \) 15...\( \text{\texttt{xe4?!}} \)

16.\( \text{\texttt{fxe4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xc3}} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{bxc3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) 18.\( \text{\texttt{a5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{bx4}} \)

19.\( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c7}} \) 20.\( \text{\texttt{xe7}} \) + \( \text{\texttt{xe7}} \);

16.\( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xc3}} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{bxc3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c7}} \)

C3 2) 14.\( \text{\texttt{xa4?!}} \) Taking this way makes no sense, because Black easily regains it and obtains a large advantage: 14...\( \text{\texttt{c7}} \)

15.\( \text{\texttt{c3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xb5}} \) 16.\( \text{\texttt{xb5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xa2}} \); C3 3) 14.\( \text{\texttt{d2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c7}} \rightarrow 14...\text{\texttt{a3}} \) 15.\( \text{\texttt{b3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{b4}} \); 15.\( \text{\texttt{xa4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) 15...\( \text{\texttt{xa2}} \) !?;

16.\( \text{\texttt{b3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{b4}} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{e2}} \)

17...\( \text{\texttt{d5}} \) + At first, White did not take the pawn and tried to keep lines closed, so as to stop Black developing an attack, but Black’s position is very threatening and White is forced to take the pawn and suffer a strong attack.

\[ \text{\texttt{12...\texttt{b8}} \] A) 12...\( \text{\texttt{c7?!}} \) is a strategical mistake, after which White achieves the important exchange of two minor pieces, and has a large advantage: 13.\( \text{\texttt{c5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xb5}} \) 14.\( \text{\texttt{xb5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{d5?!}} \) 15.\( \text{\texttt{xe6}} \) \( \text{\texttt{fxe6}} \) 16.\( \text{\texttt{f2}} \) ±. 14...\( \text{\texttt{c8}} \) 15.\( \text{\texttt{xe6}} \) \( \text{\texttt{fxe6}} \)

16.\( \text{\texttt{d3?!}} \) \( \text{\texttt{a6}} \) 16...\( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{hd1}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f7}} \)

18.\( \text{\texttt{a4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{fc8}} \) 19.\( \text{\texttt{bl}} \) ±. 17.\( \text{\texttt{a4}} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{hd1?!}} \)

\( \text{\texttt{e8}} \) 18.\( \text{\texttt{b3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f7}} \) 19.\( \text{\texttt{g3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 20.\( \text{\texttt{a4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \) 21.\( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) ±. 17...\( \text{\texttt{f7}} \) 18.\( \text{\texttt{hd1}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f8}} \)

19.\( \text{\texttt{b3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c8}} \) 20.\( \text{\texttt{b1}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 21.\( \text{\texttt{g4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c8}} \)

22.\( \text{\texttt{b6}} \) \( \text{\texttt{d7}} \) 23.\( \text{\texttt{g1}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \) 24.\( \text{\texttt{h3d2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 25.\( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{d7}} \) 26.\( \text{\texttt{h4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f7}} \)

27.\( \text{\texttt{h2}} \) +− Lastin-Dvoirys, Moscow ch-RUS 1999. An instructive game. All the white pieces occupy ideal positions, and Black’s position is sad to look at;
13. g4!

13... c8

13... c7 14. a4 c8 15. g5 h5 16. b1 b5! Our beloved ... b7-b5 once again, opening lines against the white king. White cannot prevent this or its consequences:

A) 17. x b5 x b5 18. x b5 18. x b5? c7 19... a4 19. c1 a5 20. c4

20... x b5! 21. cxb5 c4 22. g2 x b5 23. d2 d5 24. g4 b8 25. exd5 f4

B) 12... c8? 13. a4 b4 14. b1 c7 15. a3 c6 16. b6 a6 17. d5 x d5 18. exd5 b8 19. g4±; or 19... c4± It matters little how White chooses to win the game. He can play g4, aiming to give mate, or follow the more technical path of just exchanging queens and converting the technically winning ending.

18... x c3! This is not the standard exchange sacrifice we are used to, but only an exchanging operation, after which White will have rook and two pawns against two minor pieces. 19. x b8+ x b8 20. bxc3 a4 21. c1 a x b3 22. cxb3 f5 23. gxf6 x f6 and now either 24. g5± or 24. c4±. To my surprise, the computer assesses this position as equal. From a human standpoint, I would consider it better for White.

14. b1

As always, White faces the question of whether or not to play g4-g5. As we said earlier about such positions, there are pluses and minuses: 14. g5 We will examine the move 14... e8, where the black knight heads to c7, to eliminate the main blockader, the b5. But there is also the sharp 14... h5, leading to a fierce fight, with mutual chances: 15. b1 c7 16. a4 b5 transposes to the line 13... c7 given above.
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A) 15...\texttt{xe8} \texttt{xe8} 15...\texttt{xc3}!\texttt{N} 16.\texttt{xf7+} \texttt{xf7} 17.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{c8}!\texttt{N}.

B) 15.\texttt{b1} \texttt{c7} 16.\texttt{c4}? \texttt{xc4} 17.\texttt{xc4}.

C) 15.\texttt{f4} \texttt{c7} 16.\texttt{f5} \texttt{c4}. Lively play has started, with Black attacking on the queenside and White on the kingside, but it obvious even to the naked eye that Black’s attack is stronger and faster.

C1) 18.\texttt{we2}! \texttt{b5}!\texttt{N} 18...\texttt{c7} 19.\texttt{f6} \texttt{f8} 20.\texttt{b1} \texttt{b5} 21.\texttt{f2} \texttt{a4} 22.\texttt{a5} \texttt{e6} 23.\texttt{b6} \texttt{d7} 24.\texttt{d5} \texttt{xd5} 25.exd5 \texttt{a3} 26.\texttt{c6} axb2 – a sharp position, but one where Black’s chances are slightly better, Ter Sahakyan-Yilmaz, Chotowa Wch-jr 2010. 19.\texttt{f6} \texttt{b4} 20.\texttt{e2} 20.\texttt{d5} \texttt{d8}!\texttt{F}. And now 20...\texttt{a4}!\texttt{F}; or 20...\texttt{d8}?!\texttt{F};

C2) 18.\texttt{d2}!\texttt{N} This was the only move, which by accurate play retains equality. The idea is that after \texttt{f5-f6}, the black pawn on \texttt{d6} will hang. 18...\texttt{b5} 19.\texttt{f6} \texttt{d8} This is the moment where we feel the difference between the queen retreats. 19...\texttt{f8} 20.fxg7 \texttt{xg7}!\texttt{N} 20.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{b4} 21.\texttt{xb8} \texttt{axb8} 22.\texttt{a4} \texttt{b5} 23.\texttt{bc5} \texttt{xc5} 24.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{b6} 25.\texttt{d5} \texttt{c6} 26.\texttt{d1} \texttt{bc8} 26...\texttt{h6}?!\texttt{N}. 27.\texttt{g1} \texttt{h6}!\texttt{N} We might say that all the pieces are pinned. White has an extra pawn, but this is an irrelevance when one looks at the black pieces. Of-
ten such positions end with White returning the pawn and equalising.

14...\(\text{c}7\)

14...a4 15.\(\text{xa}4\) \(\text{b}4\) 16.g5 \(\text{h}5\)
16...\(\text{e}8\)!! 17.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xc}2\) 18.\(\text{c}1\)
\(\text{xe}3\) 19.\(\text{xc}8\) \(\text{xc}8\) 20.\(\text{b}6\) \(\text{c}7\)
21.\(\text{xa}8\) \(\text{xa}8\) 22.e2 \(\text{g}2\) and Black has a winning position, which he converted confidently in Ter Sahakyan-Gopal, Martuni 2010. 17.\(\text{c}3\)

17...\(\text{xc}3\)! Our favourite companion, the exchange sacrifice, after which forcing play ensues, and White obtains some advantage. 18.bxc3 \(\text{a}2\) 19.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{f}4\)
20.\(\text{d}2\) d5! 21.a1! d4! 21...\(\text{a}3\)??
22.b1 d4 23.a2 \(+\). 22.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\)
23.\(\text{x}a2\) \(\text{xc}3\) \(+\) 24.\(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{xa}2\) 25.\(\text{x}g5\) 26.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{h}5\)??

15.\(\text{a}4\)

15...b5!

In the game, White incorrectly accepted the sacrifice, and obtained a bad position which he was unable to defend:
16.\(\text{xb}5\)!! \(\text{xb}5\) 17.\(\text{xb}5\) 17.\(\text{xb}5\) \(\text{c}7\)
17...a4 18.\(\text{d}2\) d5 18...\(\text{b}7\)?? 19.g5

19...\(\text{a}5\)! 20.xf6?? A terrible mistake, after which White can resign with a clear conscience, although it was hard to find the only possible defence: 20.\(\text{a}6\) \(\text{a}3\) 21.b3 \(\text{c}6\)!! 22.xf6
\(\text{xc}6\) 23.exd5 \(\text{xd}5\) 24.\(\text{c}4\) axb3
25.cxb3 \(\text{b}5\)?? 20...\(\text{xb}5\) 21.b3
\(\text{xf}6\) 22.exd5 \(\text{xd}5\) 23.\(\text{d}3\) axb3
24.cxb3

24...e4! 25.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{xe}4\) 0-1 The attack ends with a beautiful mate, Visser-Klein, Amsterdam 2011.
But White had another option, which gave him chances to equalize:

16.\(\text{xb}5\)N \(\text{xb}5\) 17.\(\text{xb}5\) \(\text{c}7\)
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18.\(b6\)

Or 18.g5 \(d7\) 19.a4 \(ab8\) 20.\(e2\) \(c4\) with an attack for Black.

18...\(b7\)

19.\(f2\)

White has an extra pawn, and Black in return has excellently posted pieces and is ready to attack.

Neither side can decline the repetition. If 19.\(xa5\)? \(a6!\) 20.\(c6\) \(xa2+\) 21.\(c1\) \(xc6\) 22.\(xc6\)

22...\(d7\)! 23.\(xd7\) \(g5+\) 24.\(d2\) \(xb6\) 25.\(b5\) \(f2+\); or 19.\(xa5?!\) \(xb5\) 20.\(xb5\) \(xb3\) 21.\(xb3\) \(xa5\) 22.\(xd6\) \(xd6\) 23.\(xd6\) \(h5\)! and Black has a slight advantage.

19...\(c7\) 20.\(b6\) \(b7=\)

**Conclusion**

Looking at this chapter, we have obtained answers to many of the questions that interest us: can Black obtain sufficient play after 10...\(a5\) to make up for the strategic weakening of his position? We can conclude that he has good enough play in all lines, and in several cases can take over the initiative.

From this chapter, we can also identify various devices which are typical of the Najdorf: the pawn sacrifice ...\(b7-b5\), ...\(a5-a4\) and ...\(d6-d5\), and the standard Sicilian exchange sacrifice on \(c3\).
In this part, we will examine five minor alternatives on move 6 in five separate chapters. These are:

**Chapter 9 - The Positional 6.e2**

**Chapter 10 - The Aggressive 6.f4**

**Chapter 11 - Occupying the Flank: 6.a4**

**Chapter 12 - The Fianchetto 6.g3**

**Chapter 13 - The Poisonous 6.h3**
In this chapter, we will examine the move of the bishop to e2. This does not pretend to a large advantage, and the move is not the most principled; instead, White wishes to direct the game into positional channels, where his advantage will be minimal, but his position will be solid and reliable. White gives his opponent the chance to play 6...e6 and then after 7.a4, which is one of the strongest moves in the position, we reach a position typical of the Scheveningen Variation. I think the Scheveningen appeals more to players who prefer a defensive formation and base their plans on counterattack, and Najdorf lovers (myself included) are not so keen on it. Therefore, we will examine the move 6...e5, instead of 6...e6, for the above reasons.

The tempting move 6...e5 has one drawback. Black weakens the strategically important square d5 and practically all the subsequent play revolves around this square. The first plus of 6...e5 is that it drives the white knight from the central square d4. The second is that Black gains a tempo for the development of his pieces, and his light-squared bishop can come to e6, where it will help in the fight for d5.

In my opinion, after 6...e5, White has two main plans:

1. To play a2-a4 and not allow the advance ...b7-b5 and the activation of the black queenside. The subsequent part of the plan involves kingside castling and then White has two interesting ways to continue. The first is f2-f3, after which long positional play ensues. The second involves the sharper and more aggressive f2-f4, the idea of which is either to exchange pawns on e5, or, if allowed, to push f4-f5.

2. The other plan is the aggressive move g2-g4. With g4-g5 White wants to start an indirect fight for the important square d5. After driving the knight away from f6, White can play g4-g4 and try to exchange off the last defender of d5.
1.e4 c5 2.d3 f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.¢xd4 5.¢f6 5.¢c3 a6 6.¢e2 e5 7.¢b3

7.¢f3 Coming back with knight to f3 isn’t the best solution. White’s idea is to play 7.¢c4 and 7.¢e3 or 7.¢g5. But Black has the very strong move ...h7-h6, after which White has to develop his bishop on e3, entering a position with an important tempo less, compared with 6.h3 (see Chapter 13).

7...¢h6:
A) 8.0-0 7.e6 If 8...¢e7

9.¢c4! (9.¢e1 7.e6!) 9...¢c7 10.¢b3 White can fight for the advantage. 9.a4
9.¢e1 7.e7 10.¢f1 0-0 11.h3 7.bd7
12.¢d5 7.xd5 13.exd5 7.h7! 9...¢e7
10.¢e3 0-0 11.¢d2 7.c7 12.¢f3 7.bd7 13.a5 7.ac8=.

B) 8.a4 7.e6 9.0-0 7.bd7 10.¢e3 7.c8 11.a5 7.e7=;

C) 8.h3 7.e6 9.¢e3 7.bd7 10.0-0
10.¢d2 7.c8 11.¢c5. 10...7.c8 11.a4 7.e7=.

7...¢e7

In this position White has three main continuations. We will discuss all of them in some detail.

8.0-0

A) 8.¢g5 The bishop’s move is hardly being played currently. White players have tried everything, but it was not enough.

8...¢e6 9.¢xf6 7.xf6 10.¢d3 7.c6
11.0-0-0

9.¢c4! (9.¢e1 7.e6!) 9...¢c7 10.¢b3

A1) 11...¢d4?! is not an obligatory move. After it, Black faces difficulties. The best solution in the position is 11...¢b6, see line A2. 12.¢xd4 7xd4
13.¢d5 7 xd5 14.exd5 0-0 15.¢f3

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18.g4! \textit{$\text{Wxd5?!}$} 18...\textit{$\text{Aae8}$} 19.h4 \textit{$\text{Wxd5}$}
20.\textit{$\text{Wxd5}$} \textit{$\text{Wxd5}$} 21.g5 \textit{$\text{Ae8}$} 22.f4 \textit{$\text{Cc5}$}
23.\textit{$\text{He1}$} \textit{$\text{Ae1}$} 24.\textit{$\text{Ae1}$} \textit{$\text{Ff8}$} 25.a3 \textit{$\text{Cc8}$}
26.\textit{$\text{Axe7}$} \textit{$\text{C7}$} 27.\textit{$\text{Ae5}$}± Bezgodov-Kozlitin, Voronezh 2010. 19.\textit{$\text{Wxd5}$} \textit{$\text{Wxd5}$} 20.f4

Here, Black is slightly worse, but with the move \textit{20...Ae5?!N} he reaches not such a bad position, where he can fight.

The rook escapes from its troubles and returns home (20...\textit{$\text{Axe4}$} 21.b4 \textit{$\text{Cc8}$} 22.a4 \textit{$\text{Cc3}$} 23.\textit{$\text{Ae2}$} f5 24.\textit{$\text{Axf5}$} \textit{$\text{Axd3}$} 25.cxd3 \textit{$\text{Axf5}$} 26.\textit{$\text{Cc1}$} \textit{$\text{Axh4}$} 27.\textit{$\text{Hf1}$} \textit{$\text{Axh4}$} 28.\textit{$\text{Axf1}$} \textit{$\text{Ae8}$} 29.a5+-- Radjabov-Shirov, Morelia/Linares 2008; 20...g5 21.\textit{$\text{Axe5}$} \textit{$\text{Axe5}$} 22.\textit{$\text{Axe5}$} \textit{$\text{Ae8}$} 23.\textit{$\text{Hf1}$} \textit{$\text{Ae5}$} 24.h4 \textit{$\text{Gg7}$} 25.h5 h6
26.\textit{$\text{Ae3}$} and the endgame, despite the extra pawn for Black, is absolutely equal, Kulaots-Areschenko, Cappelle la Grande 2004; 20...g6? 21.b4!± V. Onischuk-Dvoirys, St Petersburg 2011).

21.\textit{$\text{g5}$} \textit{$\text{Ae8}$} 22.\textit{$\text{Hd1}$};

A12) 15...\textit{$\text{Ae5}$} 16.\textit{$\text{Ae8}$} \textit{$\text{Ff6}$}
17.\textit{$\text{Axf6}$} \textit{$\text{Axf6}$} 18.\textit{$\text{He1}$} \textit{$\text{Ff8}$}
19.\textit{$\text{Axe8}$}+ \textit{$\text{Axe8}$} 20.f4 g6 21.b4 \textit{$\text{Gg7}$} 22.\textit{$\text{Ab2}$} \textit{$\text{e7}$} 23.\textit{$\text{Bb3}$} \textit{$\text{Cc8}$} 24.\textit{$\text{Gg4}$} \textit{$\text{Ae4}$}
25.\textit{$\text{Ae1}$} \textit{$\text{Ae7}$} 26.\textit{$\text{Ab3}$} \textit{$\text{Ab8}$} 27.\textit{$\text{Ae3}$} \textit{$\text{Ae6}$} 28.\textit{$\text{g5}$} \textit{$\text{Gg7}$} 29.\textit{$\text{Cc3}$}. By means of splendid play in a roughly equal position, White gradually strengthened his position move by move, and pressed Black, until the latter could not stand the tension and lost. Carlsen in his element in Carlsen-Karjakin, Nice blind 2008.

A2) 11...\textit{$\text{Bb6!}$} 12.\textit{$\text{Wxd6}$} After 12.\textit{$\text{Axd4}$} (12...0-0 13.\textit{$\text{Ae2}$} \textit{$\text{Fd8}$} 14.\textit{$\text{Cxd5}$} \textit{$\text{Ae8}$} 15.\textit{$\text{Wxd5}$} \textit{$\text{Ae7}$})
13.\textit{$\text{Axe8}$}+ \textit{$\text{Axe8}$} 14.\textit{$\text{Axe8}$} \textit{$\text{Axe8}$} 15.exd5 0-0 16.\textit{$\text{Ae3}$} \textit{$\text{Aa5}$} 17.\textit{$\text{Ab1}$} \textit{$\text{Ff8}$}
18.\textit{$\text{Axe5}$} b5 19.\textit{$\text{Axe5}$} \textit{$\text{Aa7}$} 20.\textit{$\text{Ab3}$} g6 21.\textit{$\text{Ab3}$} \textit{$\text{Ae7}$} 22.\textit{$\text{Gg3}$} \textit{$\text{He1}$} and we have a dead drawn position, Felgaer-Gelfand, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005. 12...\textit{$\text{Ae7}$} 13.\textit{$\text{Ae5}$} 13.\textit{$\text{Ae3}$} \textit{$\text{xf2}$}.

13...\textit{$\text{Axe5}$} 14.\textit{$\text{Wxd5}$} 0-0 After 14...\textit{$\text{Ae8}$}? the position is absolutely equal, for example: 15.\textit{$\text{Ae4}$} \textit{$\text{Axd1}$}+ 16.\textit{$\text{Axd1}$} \textit{$\text{Ff2}$} 17.\textit{$\text{Ae1}$} \textit{$\text{Ae3}$}+ 18.\textit{$\text{Ab1}$} 0-0 19.\textit{$\text{Gg4}$} g6 20.\textit{$\text{Ae7}$} \textit{$\text{Axe4}$} 21.\textit{$\text{Axe4}$} exd4 22.\textit{$\text{Ab3}$} \textit{$\text{Gg7}$} 23.a3 \textit{1/2-1/2}
Smeets-Dominguez Perez, Wijk aan Zee 2009. 15.\textit{$\text{Cc4}$}
A21) 16...\textbf{\texttt{\texttt{W}}x\texttt{d2+}} \ 17.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{Q}}}xd2 Here White has some pressure, and his position is a little more pleasant, as shown in the following game: 17...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{B}}}ac8 18.b\texttt{b}1 b\texttt{b}5 19.d\texttt{d}5 c\texttt{c}7 20.f\texttt{f}3 f\texttt{f}c8 21.h\texttt{h}f1 f\texttt{f}6 22.c\texttt{c}3 h\texttt{h}5 23.f\texttt{f}2. White has the advantage, as his bishop dominates and his pawn structure is somewhat better, Hou Yifan-Ju Wenjun, Jiangsu Wuxi 2011;

A22) 16...\texttt{\texttt{H}}h4 17.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{W}}}e2 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{B}}}ac8

A23) 16...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{W}}}b6!N The queen stands here best of all, defending pawn \texttt{b7} and helping to exchange the rooks, after which the position becomes equal. 17.b\texttt{b}1 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{B}}}ad8 The main idea of this move is that Black can easily exchange both rooks. One important factor is that the pawn is on \texttt{b7} and not on \texttt{b5}. In the latter case the \texttt{c6}-knight wouldn’t be defended and White would always have the possibility of the unpleasant break \texttt{a2-a4}.

B) 8.g4 A daring move, but one with an interesting idea. White wants to play \texttt{g4-g5} and then put the bishop on \texttt{g4} and exchange the light-squared bishops. In a way this is similar to the variations connected with the move 6.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{Q}}}e3, but here White doesn’t lose the important tempo on the move \texttt{f2-f3} and plays \texttt{f2-f4} at once. 8...h6

B1) 9.\texttt{\texttt{E}}e3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{E}}}e6 10.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{F}}}f3 10.h4 d5!N As we are taught as children, if the opponent attacks on the flank, one should counter in the centre. This example amply illustrates the truth of this postulate. 11.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{Q}}}xd5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{B}}}xd5 12.exd5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{B}}}x\texttt{d}5 13.h7 11.f3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{B}}}xd5 12.exd5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{Q}}}h7 13.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{F}}}f2 White just needs to play
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h2-h4 and his position will be normalised, but all his dark squares are weak. For this reason, Black's move is obvious and strong, after which he has the advantage: 13...\texttt{h}4!\texttt{c}\texttt{Polgar-Karjakin, Benidorm 2003}.

10...\texttt{bd}7 In the main lines Black doesn't even have the slightest problem, but there is an interesting idea connected with the move 10...\texttt{a}5!? namely 11.a4 \texttt{a}6. 11.\texttt{w}e2 \texttt{c}8

12.0-0-0

12...\texttt{xc}3! This is a standard sacrifice, after which Black gets rich play on the queenside. 13.bxc3 \texttt{c}7 14.h4

14...\texttt{c}6!\texttt{N} Black's standard sacrifice a couple of moves ago weakened the white king and spoilt his pawn structure. But White is also ready to start counteraction with the move g4-g5, and for this reason, 14...\texttt{c}6 is a very strong prophylactic move, which stops g4-g5 and transfers the queen to the ideal attacking square a4. 15.\texttt{d}d2

10...\texttt{a}5!? This is an interesting move in this type of position, which is always
approved by our ‘iron friend’. The idea is simple: Black wants to push back the knight from b3, and if White plays a2-a4, he loses control of the b4-square and gives it to the black knight, after which Black can carry through ...d6-d5 with ease and comfort. 11.a4 c6

8...0-0 9...e3

A) If 9.h1 b5!
A1) 10.a4 b7
White must undertake concrete measures, as the pawn on e4 is hanging. He can exchange on b5 and then a8, but this does not help the e4-pawn, and although the black b-pawn would then hang, the exchange of b-pawn for e-pawn favours Black. White therefore has to choose between the move f2-f3, and the interesting jump d5. The former is very passive and leaves Black with an excellent game, so by a process of elimination, we come to the conclusion that:
A11) 11.d5 is the strongest.

11...b4! 12...xf6+ 12...xe7+ wxe7 13.f3 d5 14.exd5 axd5= Yakovenko-Naer, Krasnoyarsk 2003. 12...xf6 13.f3 c7 14...e3

14...d5 N 14...d7 15.c3 bxc3 16.c1 ac8 17.xc3 wb8 18.a5 xc3 19.bxc3 ac8 20.d5 wb2 21.d3 wc3 22.c1 wb4 23.c4 f7 24.wa5 wb8 25.b6 f8 26.exd7 xc8 27.xa6 and White has the advantage, Asrian-Jobava, Yerevan zt 2000. 15.exd5 xd8 16.d3

16...xd5! If 16...xd5 17.c3!! A fantastic move! It is clearly a computer move. The bishop on d3 is in the line of the xd8 and this move weakens its defence. But it is strong because it opens the c-file and White takes control of the square c5.
17.a5! A very strong positional move, which does not allow Black to play ...a6-a5 and strengthen his weak pawns.
Now his weak pawn on a6 is fixed and the b4-pawn remains without defence, moreover the development of the b8-knight and a8-rook becomes difficult, as after \( \text{W}e2 \) the a6-pawn will be under attack.

17...\( \text{W}c6 \) 18.\( \text{W}e2 \) \( \text{Q}d7 \) 18...e4?! 19.\( \text{fxe4 \varnothing xe4} \)

20.\( \text{Wxf6!!} \). The only move that allows White to fight for the advantage! In case of slow play, Black will exchange the strong bishop on d3 and snap the initiative. 20...\( \text{gx}f6 \) 21.\( \text{\varnothing d4} \) \( \text{Wd5} \) 22.\( \text{\varnothing f1 \varnothing c6} \) 23.\( \text{\varnothing f5 \varnothing xf5} \) 24.\( \text{\varnothing xf5 \varnothing e7} \) 25.\( \text{\varnothing g4+ \varnothing g6} \) 26.\( \text{\varnothing b6 \varnothing e8} \) 27.\( \text{\varnothing x} \) \( \text{b4 \varnothing e2} \) 28.\( \text{\varnothing g4} \) \( \text{\varnothing a8} \) 29.\( \text{\varnothing d3 \varnothing d2} \) 30.\( \text{b3 \varnothing h5} \) 31.\( \text{\varnothing g3 \varnothing h4} \) 32.\( \text{\varnothing g4} \). White has a very good position, due to his bishop pair and Black’s weak pawns.

19.\( \text{\varnothing ad1 \h6} \) Or 19...e4 20.\( \text{\varnothing xe4} \) \( \text{\varnothing xe4} \) 21.\( \text{\varnothing d4 \varnothing xd3} \) 22.\( \text{\varnothing xd3 \varnothing xd4} \) 23.\( \text{\varnothing xd4 \varnothing e8} \) 24.\( \text{\varnothing f2} \) \( \text{\varnothing e7} \) 25.\( \text{\varnothing d2 \varnothing xc2} \) 26.\( \text{\varnothing x} \) \( \text{b4 \varnothing xf2} \) 27.\( \text{\varnothing x} \) \( \text{f2} \)

14.\( \text{\varnothing a5!} \) \( \text{\varnothing c5} \) 15.\( \text{\varnothing x} \) \( \text{b7} \) \( \text{\varnothing x} \) \( \text{b7} \) 16.\( \text{\varnothing xa4} \). Khalifman-Loginov, St Petersburg 1995. 14.\( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{\varnothing xd5} \) 15.\( \text{axb5} \) \( \text{\varnothing xb5} \) 15...\( \text{axb5} \) 16.\( \text{\varnothing xa8} \) \( \text{\varnothing xa8} \) 17.\( \text{\varnothing x} \) \( \text{b5} \). Stellwagen-Bu Xiangzhi, Wijk aan Zee 2007. 16.\( \text{\varnothing x} \) \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{axb5} \) 17.\( \text{\varnothing x} \) \( \text{a8} \) \( \text{\varnothing a8} \) 18.\( \text{\varnothing x} \) \( \text{b5} \). A113) 11...\( \text{\varnothing xe4} \)?

12.\( \text{\varnothing a5!N} \). A very interesting move. Strangely, nobody has played this novelty, although this position was reached 5 times. Surprisingly, 4 out of these 5 games were won by Black, even though
the other moves chosen also gave White an advantage. 12...\textit{Wxa5} 13.\textit{Qxe7+ \textit{Qh8}} 14.\textit{f3 \textit{Qd8}} 15.\textit{Qf5+};

A1(4) \textbf{11...bxa4} 12.\textit{Qxa4} \textit{Qc6} 13.\textit{Qa3} \textit{Qxe4} 14.\textit{Qa5±} Kasparov-Anand, Las Palmas 1996.

A2) \textbf{11.axb5 axb5} 12.\textit{Qxa8} \textit{Qxa8} 13.\textit{Qd3 \textit{Qbd7}} 14.\textit{Qe3N} 14.\textit{Qd1} b4! 15.\textit{Qd5} \textit{Qxd5} 16.\textit{exd5 \textit{Qc7}} 17.\textit{Qc4} \textit{Qxc4} 18.\textit{Qf1} \textit{Qf6} 19.\textit{Qd3} \textit{Qb7} 20.\textit{Qg5} \textit{Qg6} 21.\textit{Qxe3} \textit{Qc7}.

White's attack has come to nothing, whilst Black has achieved a lot on the queenside. Black has a large advantage, Vogt-Suetin, Leipzig 1980. 14...b4 15.\textit{Qd5 \textit{Qxd5}} 16.\textit{exd5 \textit{Qg5}+};

A3) \textbf{10.\textit{Qf3}} b4 12.\textit{Qd5} \textit{Qxd5} 13.\textit{exd5 \textit{Qd7}} Black's position looks more pleasant, due to his better development and central pawns. Also, he has easy play in the kingside connected with the e- and f-pawns. For example: 14.\textit{c4} a5 15.\textit{Qe3} \textit{Qg5} 16.\textit{f4} \textit{Qxf4} 17.\textit{Qxf4} \textit{Qxf4} 18.\textit{Qd3} \textit{Qe5} 19.\textit{Qd4} \textit{Qg5} 20.\textit{Qf1} \textit{Qe8} 21.\textit{Qf2} \textit{Qad8} 22.\textit{Qf1} \textit{Qd7} 23.\textit{Qb3} \textit{Qd8} 24.\textit{Qh3} \textit{Qa6} and Black won in Panarin-Bu Xiangzhi, Internet Chess Club 2005;

A2) \textbf{10.\textit{Qd5} \textit{Qxd5}} 11.\textit{Qxd5} \textit{Qa7} 12.\textit{Qe3} \textit{Qe6} 13.\textit{Qd1} 13.\textit{Qd2} \textit{Qd7}! 14.a4 \textit{d5=}. 13...\textit{Qb7}! 14.\textit{Qa4} 14.\textit{Qc1} \textit{Qc6} 15.\textit{Qc4} \textit{Qd5} 16.\textit{Qxa5} \textit{Qxa5} 17.\textit{Qxb5} \textit{Qxa8} 18.\textit{Qf3} \textit{Qh6} 19.\textit{Qf2} \textit{Qg5} 20.\textit{Qg5} \textit{Qg5} with an absolutely equal position, Short-Kasparov, Novgorod 1994. 14...\textit{bxa4N} 14.\textit{Qc6} 15.\textit{Qd2} \textit{Qc7} 16.axb5 \textit{Qxb5} 17.\textit{Qa6} d5 18.exd5 \textit{Qxd5} 19.\textit{Qe5} \textit{Qb4} 20.\textit{Qxe7} \textit{Qxb7} 21.\textit{Qa7} \textit{Qc8} 22.\textit{Qxe7} and Black had a very large advantage in Ganguly-Saravanan, Nagpur 2002. 15.\textit{Qxa4} \textit{Qd7} 16.\textit{Qa1} \textit{Qc8} 17.\textit{Qc1}

17...\textit{Qh6}! A strong move! Firstly, Black wants to exchange his bad dark-squared bishop for its stronger white opponent and secondly, to make \textit{luft} for the king.

A3) \textbf{10.\textit{Qf4}?! \textit{Qb7} 11.\textit{Qf3} \textit{Qbd7}};

B) \textbf{9.a4} Always necessary for White in such structures. He does not allow Black to play ...b7-b5 and develop his pieces actively, and in addition, he wants to play a4-a5 and fix the black pawns.

9...\textit{Qe6} and now:

B1) \textbf{10.\textit{Qf3} \textit{Qbd7} 11.\textit{Qe1} \textit{Qc7}}

B11) \textbf{12.a5} Of course, this is not the fixing White dreamed of, because Black can play ...b7-b5 anyway, after which he has a weak pawn on a6, but active pieces, which compensate for this:

B111) \textbf{12...b5} 13.axb6 \textit{Qxb6} 14.\textit{Qa5} \textit{Qc4} 15.\textit{Qxc4} \textit{Qxc4} 16.\textit{Qd2} \textit{Qfc8} 17.\textit{Qb3} \textit{Qe6} 18.\textit{Qa2} \textit{Qb7} 19.\textit{Qe2} \textit{Qd8} 20.\textit{Qa4} 20.\textit{Qea1} \textit{Qb6} 21.\textit{Qa4} \textit{Qd4} 22.\textit{Qd1} d5 23.exd5 \textit{Qxd5} 24.\textit{Qxd5} \textit{Qxd5} 25.\textit{Qf3}. Black has carried out ...d6-d5, activating
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his bishop on e7, and has obtained slightly the better position, Shabalov-Naroditsky, Las Vegas 2009.

20...Ec6 21.Rea1 Mac8 22.Wd3 Qd7 23.c4 Qb6 24.Rd3 Qxe3 25.Wxe3 Qf8 26.Qe2 Nb8 27.Qa3 with a small advantage, on
account of the weak black pawn on a6, Areschenko-Nepomniachtchi, Sochi tt 2008;

B112) 12...Fc8 13.e3 h6 14.Qd2 b5 15.axb6 Qxb6 16.Qa5 Qc4 17.Qxc4

Black has two ways to recapture. After
the bishop capture White has the advantage. However, the queen on c4 is a bone in White's throat and does not allow him to carry out his plans in peace.

17...Wxc4N 17...Qxc4 18.Rc1! Qb7 19.b3 Qe6 20.Wd3 Qd8 21.Qa4 Qc6 22.c4 Qh8 23.Ab1 a5 24.Qe2 Nb8 25.Qd1 and White has a small but sta-
ble advantage, Leko-Karjakin, Nice blind 2008. 18.Qe2 Qc6 19.Qed1∞

B12) 12.Qd2 Mac8 13.Qf1

13...Qfe8! 13...Qc6 14.Qe3 b5? (14...Qc5?! 15.a5 Qf8 16.Qd5 Qxd5 17.exd5 Qc7=) 15.axb5 axb5 16.Qf5 Qfe8 17.Qe2 Qf8 18.Qd5 Qxd5 19.exd5 Qb7 20.Qg4 Qg6 21.Qh6+ Qxh6 22.Qxh6 e4 23.Qg2 Qxg2 24.Qf4 Qwb6 25.Qh3 Qdf6 26.Qd2 and Black has a winning position, but everything is possible in blitz, Alexeev-Karjakin, Moscow blitz 2008. 14.Qe3 Qc6= Even with his control of the d5-square White doesn't have an advantage, as the bishop on c1 can't get involved into the game, and also the pawn on c2 is always under attack, not allowing the c3-knight to comf ortably move to d5.

B2) 10.Qf4 exf4 11.Qxf4 Qc6 12.Qd4 12.Qh1 d5 13.e5 Qe4 14.Qd3 and I think 90% of players would play 14...f5 here, but the computer regards 14...Qc5 as equally good. It is a strong and interesting move, although even so, I would prefer 14...f5. 14...Qc5!N 15.Qxc5 Qxc5 16.Qf3∞. 12...Qb6 13.Qe3

13...Qxd4 13...d5! 14.exd5 Qxd5 15.Qxd5 Qxd5 16.Qf5 Qc5 17.Wxd5 Qxe3+ 18.Qh1 Qg6= 14.Qxd4 Qc7 15.a5 Qd7 16.Qd5 Qxd5 17.exd5 Qf6 18.Qe4 Qfe8 19.Qxf6 Qxf6 20.b4 Qb6 21.Qd3 bxa5 22.Qxf6 Qxf6 23.Wh5 White's attack has been repulsed and Black has an extra exchange, Volokitin-
Wojtaszek, Germany Bundesliga 2006/07;

B3) 10.\textit{g}5 \textit{bd}7 11.\textit{d}2

11...\textit{h}6!N As if to ask, 'do you want to exchange or retreat?'. In both cases, Black has an excellent position, for example 12.\textit{e}3 \textit{b}6

\textbf{9...\textit{e}6 10.\textit{d}2}

A) 10.\textit{f}4 \textit{exf}4 and now:
A1) 11.\textit{xf}4 \textit{c}6 12.\textit{d}4 In case of 12.\textit{d}5 \textit{xd}5 13.\textit{exd}5 \textit{e}5 14.\textit{b}4, after 14...\textit{d}7 Black has a brilliant position due to the dark-squared bishop, his outpost on e5 and his play on the dark squares: 15.a4 \textit{fe}8 16.\textit{h}1 \textit{d}8 17.\textit{g}1 \textit{c}8 18.a5 \textit{g}6 19.c3 \textit{e}4 20.\textit{d}4 \textit{e}5 21.\textit{a}4 \textit{xa}4 22.\textit{b}xa4 \textit{c}5 23.\textit{b}4 with a practical ending where chances are equal, Lutz-Bologan, Germany Bundesliga 1998/99.
12...\textit{xd}4 13.\textit{xd}4 13.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}8=.

12...\textit{d}5! 13.\textit{e}5 13.\textit{exd}5 \textit{xd}5 14.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 15.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 16.\textit{ad}1 \textit{ad}8 17.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}4= Ahmad-Adly, Amman 2008.
13...\textit{e}4! 14.\textit{d}3 14.\textit{xe}4 dxe4 15.\textit{d}2 \textit{g}5!=. 16.\textit{xe}4 (\textit{v}1/2-\textit{v}1/2 Karpov-Najdorf, Hastings 1971/72) 16...\textit{xf}4 17.\textit{xf}4 \textit{xe}5=.

14...\textit{f}5 14...\textit{c}5!? 15.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 16.a3 \textit{c}8= 15.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 15...\textit{xf}6!? 16.\textit{d}2 \textit{h}8 17.\textit{ae}1 \textit{g}8=.
16.\textit{e}2 \textit{N} 16.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 17.\textit{xe}4 \textit{c}4 18.\textit{d}6 \textit{xf}1 19.\textit{d}5+ \textit{h}8 20.\textit{h}5 \textit{g}6 21.\textit{xg}6 \textit{xg}2+ 22.\textit{gx}2

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Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

22...\(\text{\textbf{W}d7}\) (22...\(\text{\textbf{W}f7}\)  23.\(\text{\textbf{B}xf7}\) \(\text{\textbf{W}xd6}\))
23.\(\text{\textbf{B}c5}\) \(\text{\textbf{W}g7}\)  24.\(\text{\textbf{B}xf8}\) \(\text{\textbf{W}xg6+}\)
25.\(\text{\textbf{W}xg6}\) \(\text{\textbf{hxg6}}\)  26.\(\text{\textbf{B}d6}\) \(\text{\textbf{E}e8}\)  27.\(\text{\textbf{F}f1}\).
Although White has an extra pawn, it is extremely hard to win such a position, on account of the paucity of material, Karpov-Anand, Buenos Aires 1994.

16...\(\text{\textbf{W}xc3}\)  17.\(\text{\textbf{B}xc3}\) \(\text{\textbf{W}e7}\)=;
B) 10.\(\text{\textbf{W}d3}\)! is not a principal move, and Black has many good responses.

10...\(\text{\textbf{B}bd7}\) 11.\(\text{\textbf{C}d5}\) \(\text{\textbf{W}xd5}\) 12.\(\text{\textbf{exd5}}\):
B1) 12...\(\text{\textbf{C}c5}\) This seems to be stronger than 12...\(\text{\textbf{E}e8}\), as the text move equalises.
13.\(\text{\textbf{W}d2}\) 13.\(\text{\textbf{B}xc5}\) \(\text{\textbf{dxc5}}\) 14.\(\text{\textbf{B}ad1}\) \(\text{\textbf{B}d6}\)=. 13...\(\text{\textbf{B}fe4}\) Here we see what I think is a CLASSICAL game for this type of play. Anand brilliantly shows what should be done in such positions. His opponent, the very strong grandmaster Ponomariov, tried to hold him off, but did not succeed. This position suits Anand’s style very well, and he played an absolutely great game:

14.\(\text{\textbf{B}b4}\) a5 15.\(\text{\textbf{B}b5}\) \(\text{\textbf{C}c7}\) 16.\(\text{\textbf{C}c4}\) \(\text{\textbf{B}ac8}\)
17.\(\text{\textbf{F}fd1}\) f5 18.\(\text{\textbf{C}c3}\) \(\text{\textbf{W}d8}\) 19.\(\text{\textbf{B}b5}\) b6
20.\(\text{\textbf{C}d2}\) \(\text{\textbf{C}xd2}\) 21.\(\text{\textbf{C}xd2}\) \(\text{\textbf{B}f6}\) 22.\(\text{\textbf{B}ab1}\)

12...\(\text{\textbf{E}e8}\)! After this move we get some play in the position. In such positions I always like Black. The second player has very clear play, as in many other typical positions: Black just starts to push his e- and f-pawns with the support of his pieces.
13.\(\text{\textbf{C}c4}\) 13.\(\text{\textbf{F}fd1}\) g6
14.\(\text{\textbf{C}c4}\) b6 15.\(\text{\textbf{B}d2}\) a5 16.\(\text{\textbf{B}b1}\) h5
17.\(\text{\textbf{C}c3}\) \(\text{\textbf{g}4}\) 18.\(\text{\textbf{B}d2}\) \(\text{\textbf{c}5}\) 19.\(\text{\textbf{W}h3}\)
\[ \text{\texttt{t7}}: 20. \text{d3} \text{h7} 21. \text{c2} \text{g5} 22. \text{b3} \text{xd2} 23. \text{exd2} \text{f5} 24. \text{w3} \text{g5} 25. \text{f3} \text{h4 with an unclear position with mutual chances in Emelin-Sakaev, Tallinn 2001.} 13. \text{xf6} 14. \text{d2} \text{a5} 15. \text{d1N} \text{c5} 16. \text{w2} \text{g6} 17. \text{b1} \text{h5} 18. \text{xh5} \text{dxc5} 19. \text{w2} \text{g7} 20. \text{a4} \text{e7} 21. \text{d6} \text{e6} 22. \text{d7} \text{f5} 23. \text{w5} \text{e4} 24. \text{c3} \text{e3} \text{and now:} \]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B21) 25.} \text{g4!} \text{exf2+} 26. \text{xf2} \text{e3} 27. \text{w3} \text{e7} 28. \text{d5} \text{xd5} 29. \text{wxd5} \text{g7} \infty; \\
\text{B22) 25.} \text{wxb7?} \text{xb8 26.} \text{w3} \text{xb2} 26... \text{g7?} 27. \text{hxb1?} 27. \text{fxe3} \text{xe3} 28. \text{d5} \text{xe6} 27... \text{d4++} 28. \text{w3f7+} 28. \text{h3} \text{exf2+} 29. \text{xf2} \text{xb1+} 30. \text{xb1} \text{e1+} 31. \text{w1} \text{xe2+} 32. \text{w2} \text{f4} 33. \text{xe1} \text{exh3+} 34. \text{g3} \text{w4+}+ 28... \text{wxf7} 29. \text{x3+} \text{g7} 30. \text{xb2} \text{xe3} 31. \text{d5} \text{e2} 32. \text{xe2} \text{xe2+} 33. \text{f2} \text{d4} 33... \text{w4+}+ 34. \text{g3} \text{exh2+} 35. \text{e3} \text{d4+-}+. 34. \text{e1} \text{w4+} 35. \text{w1} \text{e6?? After} 35... \text{f3!} 36. \text{w3} \text{xc4+} 37. \text{w2} \text{wxa2} \text{Black is winning.} 36. \text{xe6} 1-0. \text{I simply blundered... Hovhannisyan-Andriasyan, Yerevan ch-ARM 2012;} \\
\text{B3) 25.} \text{fxe3} \text{xe3} 26. \text{w3} \text{f3} \text{xf1} 27. \text{xf1} \text{f5} 28. \text{w7} \text{bb8} 29. \text{w5} \text{w6e2.} \\
\end{array}
\]

Back to the position after 10. \text{w2}.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{10...} \text{bd7} 11. \text{a4} \text{c8} 12. \text{a5} \text{w7} \\
\text{One of the key positions of this variation, where White has several possibilities, but there is no great difference between them. We reach one and the same sort of position, which I think is objectively equal, but where from a playing point of view, I think Black's game is easier.} \\
13. \text{fc1} \\
\text{A) 13.} \text{f1d1} \text{c5} 13... \text{fe8} 14. \text{w1} \text{c5} 15. \text{xc5} \text{dxc5} 16. \text{f3} \text{ed8} 17. \text{a4} \text{xd1} 18. \text{xd1} \text{d7} 19. \text{c3} \text{c4} 20. \text{b6} \text{xb6} 21. \text{xb6} \text{c5+} 22. \text{xc5} \text{wxc5+} - \text{Black has already taken the initiative and has a small advantage, which Anand managed to realise, Fernandez Garcia-Anand, Santurtzi blind 2003.} 14. \text{xc5} \text{dxc5} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{A1) 15.} \text{d5??} \text{xd5} 16. \text{exd5} \text{d6} 17. \text{c4} 17. \text{a3} \text{c4} 17... \text{d7} \text{A playing} \\
\end{array}
\]

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position, but I prefer Black, who has a simple plan connected with play on the kingside: he just tries to push his e- and f-pawns;

A2) 15.f3?! 16.e1 17.xd1 18.a4 19.d7 20.g3 21.g2 22.d2 23.b4 24.xb4 25.c5 26.d8 27.d4 and despite the fact that White has won a pawn, Black has good compensation, Naiditsch-Hou Yifan, Moscow 2007.

A3) 15.wel 16.f3 16...d8 17.f3 f6 18.b3 19.b4 20.a4 21.b5 22.e7 23.a8 24.d1. As Dr Tarrasch said, 'he who has the bishops has the future', Ivanchuk-Karjakin, Wijk aan Zee 2009.

A4) 15.f3 16.e1 17.xd1 18.a4 19.d7 20.g3 21.h6 22.e3 23.a4 24.e1 25.b6 26.xc5 and Black had the advantage in Lautier-Gelfand, Tilburg 1996.

B) 13.f3?!

I have always disliked this move in this structure, as after it the c4-square remains without defence, and White will have to exchange his dark-squared bishop for the knight. 13...h6 14.wd5 15...e8 16.d5 17.axb6 18.b2 19.b1 20.a4 21.b5 22.d2 23.g3 24.b3 25.d4 26.c5 and despite the fact that White has won a pawn, Black has good compensation, Naiditsch-Hou Yifan, Moscow 2007.

17...c4 18.a4 19.b6 20.c3 e8 21.h6 22.e3 23.b4 24.a4 25.a8 26.d1. As Dr Tarrasch said, 'he who has the bishops has the future', Ivanchuk-Karjakin, Wijk aan Zee 2009.

15.wd5 16.exd5:

Here White has two continuations. In the computer's opinion, 15.d5 gives a small advantage to White, but I believe that in such a structure, from a purely practical standpoint, Black's game is at least not worse. On the other hand, 15.f3 is passive and causes Black no problems at all. He has plenty of moves which promise him equality.
16...\( \texttt{d6} \)? If Black plays \( \ldots \texttt{e5-e4} \) first, White will be able to exchange the dark-squared bishops, which is why I now think that it is stronger to play 16...\( \texttt{d6} \) at once. If 16...\( \texttt{e4} \) 17.\( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{d6} \)
18.\( \texttt{xd6} \) \( \texttt{xd6} \) 19.\( \texttt{d1} \) \( \texttt{d7} \) 20.\( \texttt{a3} \) \( \texttt{f5} \)
21.\( \texttt{b3} \) \( \texttt{b8} \) 22.\( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{exf3} \) 23.\( \texttt{xf3} \) \( \texttt{e8} \)
24.\( \texttt{h1} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) 25.\( \texttt{h3} \) \( \texttt{g6} \) 26.\( \texttt{c4} \) \( \texttt{be8?} \)
26...\( \texttt{b6=} \). 27.\( \texttt{f2?} \) 27.\( \texttt{xb7} \) \( \texttt{g3} \)
28.\( \texttt{f1} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 29.\( \texttt{xe7} \) \( \texttt{xe7} \). 27...\( \texttt{b6} \)
28.\( \texttt{axb6} \) \( \texttt{xb6} \) 29.\( \texttt{c3} \) \( \texttt{a5=} \), Andriasyan-Andriasyan, Yerevan-ch-ARM 2007.

15...\( \texttt{c4} \)

If 15...\( \texttt{cd8} \) 16.\( \texttt{e1} \) \( \texttt{c4} \) 17.\( \texttt{a4} \) \( \texttt{d7} \)
18.\( \texttt{b4} \) \( \texttt{c6=} \).
Or 15...\( \texttt{fd8} \) 16.\( \texttt{e1} \) \( \texttt{c4} \) 17.\( \texttt{a4} \) \( \texttt{d7} \)
18.\( \texttt{f1} \) \( \texttt{c6} \) 19.\( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{h6} \) 20.\( \texttt{h4} \) \( \texttt{h8} \)
21.\( \texttt{f1} \) \( \texttt{f5} \) 22.\( \texttt{exf5} \) \( \texttt{xf5} \) 23.\( \texttt{b6} \) \( \texttt{xb6} \)
24.\( \texttt{xb6} \) \( \texttt{c5=} \) 25.\( \texttt{xc5} \) \( \texttt{xc5}+ \) and Black has the advantage, Zubarev-Areschenko, Alushta tt 2007.

Conclusion

The present chapter dealt with one of the positional methods by which White can fight the Najdorf Sicilian. Such positions were often played by one of the kings of chess, the 12th World Champion, Anatoly Karpov. Despite the fact that the move is regarded as positional, in recent times, there has been a different trend in respect of the line. In several positions, White chooses the active move \( g2-g4 \), which leads to sharp and interesting play. You have seen this in several of the games examined in this chapter.

But to return to traditional positions, which we have already analysed in this chapter. We came to the conclusion that after the move 6.\( \texttt{e2} \), Black has good counterchances in all lines, and a fighting position. In recent games, Black is not experiencing problems equalising, or obtaining sufficient counterplay, in any of the positions.

Anatoly Karpov
If Black plays ...e5-e4 first, White will be able to exchange the dark-squared bishops, which is why I now think that it is stronger to play 16...d6 at once. If 16...e4 17.f4 d6 18.exd6 Qxd6 19.Qd1 Qd7 20.Qa3 f5 21.Qb3 Qb8 22.f4 exf3 23.Qxf3 Qfe8 24.Qh1 Qe7 25.h3 g6 26.c4 Qbe8? 26...b6=. 27.Qf2? 27.Qxb7 Qg3 28.Qf1! Qe5 29.Qxe7 Qxe7. 27...b6 28.axb6 Qxb6 29.Qc3 a5=, Asrian-Andriasyan, Yerevan ch-ARM 2007.

15...c4

If 15...cd8 16.Qe1 c4 17.Qa4 Qd7 18.b4 Qc6=. Or 15...Qfd8 16.Qe1 c4 17.Qa4 Qd7 18.Qf1 Qc6 19.Qg1 h6 20.h4 Qh8 21.Qf1 f5 22.exf5 Qxf5 23.Qb6 Qxb6 24.Qxb6 Qc5+ 25.Qxc5 Qxc5+ and Black has the advantage, Zubarev-Areschenko, Alushta tt 2007.


Conclusion

The present chapter dealt with one of the positional methods by which White can fight the Najdorf Sicilian. Such positions were often played by one of the kings of chess, the 12th World Champion, Anatoly Karpov. Despite the fact that the move is regarded as positional, in recent times, there has been a different trend in respect of the line. In several positions, White chooses the active move g2-g4, which leads to sharp and interesting play. You have seen this in several of the games examined in this chapter.

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Chapter 10

The Aggressive 6.f4

1.e4 c5 2.\textit{f}f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\textit{xd}4 \textit{f}6 5.\textit{c}3 a6 6.f4

The move f2-f4 is very aggressive and contains many ideas. White wants to commence active operations at once and delays the development of his pieces. He wants to put his queen on the square f3. The move f2-f4 also prevents the black knight reaching the excellent square e5, and from f3 the queen defends the e4-pawn and helps the white attack, as well as also being able to transfer to h3, from where it will exert pressure on the black king.

After 6.f4, Black has two main continuations, which are 6...e6 and 6...e5, of which I prefer 6...e5, since it is more active and does not allow White to play g2-g4 and begin active operations on the kingside. It also forces White to move his knight from d4 to f3, after which the white queen has to come to the kingside via e1 and g3, where she can always be attacked by the black knight jumping to h5.

After the retreat 7.\textit{f}f3, Black has two main continuations: 7...\textit{c}7 and 7...\textit{bd}7. In my opinion, the stronger move is 7...\textit{c}7, since after the other continuation 7...\textit{bd}7 White places his bishop on c4, where it is ideally located, simultaneously controlling the a2-g8 diagonal and attacking the square f7, creating problems for the black king. The move 7...\textit{c}7 is strong because it does not allow the white bishop this possibility, and forces it to the passive square d3, where it just defends its own pawn on e4. Then Black develops his pieces actively, to control the centre.
1. e4 c5 2. d4! d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. xd4 f6 5. c3 a6 6. f4 e6

7. f3

A) 7. b3 is not dangerous for Black. He has many good continuations, so we will show just one example: 7... bd7

8. g4N 8. a4 b6 9. e2 b7 10. f3 e7 11. h1 exf4 12. xf4 e5 14. d4 g6 15. e2 e8 16. ad1 fd7 with an unclear position, in which the chances of the two sides are about level, Hebert-Portisch, Rio de Janeiro Interzonal 1979. 8... d5! 9. exd5 b6 10. e2 fx d5 10... xd4 11. h4 12. xg4 xg4 13. d3. 11. xd5 xd5 12. 0-0 exf4 and Black is better;

B) 7. f5 and now:

B1) 7... d5 8. e3

8... b4N After 8... exd4 9. xd4 dxe4 10. wd8+ xd8 11. fxe5 xe6 12. c4 White has the advantage, as his king can castle and Black's cannot, plus White has the better development and his remaining pieces can come out more quickly. 9. xd5 xe4 10. e3 xc3+ 11. xc3 xd1+ 12. xd1 exf4 13. xf4 Despite the fact that the computer assesses this as absolutely equal, that does not seem right to me; the position is open and White has the two bishops, so he should have the advantage, albeit not a large one.

B2) 7... xe4 8. xg7+ xg7 9. xe4 d5 10. c3? 10... c6N 11. e2 0-0 12. 0-0 ef5 13. xd5 xc2 14. xc2 d4 15. xd1 xd5 16. fxe5 xe2+ 17. xe2 xe5= One can say that the position is a dead draw. Many pieces have already come off, and now the queens will follow, after which peace will soon be signed.
Here White has a choice of two possible continuations. The first, 10.a4, stops Black getting active counterplay on the queenside. But the move also has drawbacks, namely that it costs a tempo, and Black can exploit this to develop quickly. The other move is 10.\textit{We}1, which ignores Black's queenside activity and starts an attack on the king, but in this case, Black has counterplay.

A1) 10.\textit{We}1 \textit{bd}7! and now 11.a4 transposes to 8...\textit{bd}7. Instead, Black may try 10...b5?! 11.a4!

11...b4N 12.\textit{d}5 \textit{xd}5 13.\textit{exd}5 \textit{b}7 14.fxe5 dxe5 15.\textit{xe}5 \textit{c}5+ 16.\textit{h}1 \textit{xe}5 17.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xd}5 18.\textit{d}1 and White's position is slightly more pleasant, because the black queenside is weak and White's pieces are better developed.

A2) 10.a4 \textit{bd}7 11.\textit{h}1 \textit{c}5 12.\textit{e}1 Black has a mass of possibilities, and they are all about equally good. He has no problems at all and the positions are in general very similar to one another, with similar ideas. For example:

A21) 12...\textit{e}8 and now:

A211) 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.\textit{g}3

A211) 14.\textit{h}5 At the time, I did not know this variation very well, and had to improvise at the board. This did not work out so badly, but it could have been better. I obtained a slightly worse position, whilst at the same time my opponent was playing very quickly, and at one moment, even offered a draw in a slightly better position. But I realised that I could already count on more, and began an interesting knight transfer.

15.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 16.\textit{xe}5 \textit{f}6 17.\textit{c}4 \textit{xc}3 18.bxc3 \textit{xe}4 19.\textit{a}3 \textit{g}4 20.\textit{ab}1 \textit{ab}8 21.\textit{d}6 \textit{xd}6 22.\textit{xd}6 \textit{bd}8 23.\textit{c}5 \textit{c}8 24.\textit{d}4 \textit{d}6 25.\textit{fe}1 \textit{xe}1+ 26.\textit{xe}1 \textit{e}6 27.\textit{b}1 \textit{e}8 28.\textit{g}1 \textit{f}4 29.\textit{f}2 \textit{e}6 30.\textit{e}3
30...\(\textit{d}8\)! So as to defend the b7-pawn and so free the bishop on c8, after which the bishop will move to c6 and it seems to me that Black will already have slightly the more pleasant position. On move 38 my opponent made a serious mistake in time trouble, after which I could take his knight, with a great advantage. Unfortunately I have lost the game score, but Black won easily enough, Petrov-Andriasyan, Warsaw 2009.

A2112) 14...\(\textit{b}6\) 15.\(\textit{xe}5\) \(\textit{d}8\) 16.\(\textit{c}4\) \(\textit{xe}4\) 17.\(\textit{xe}4\) 18.\(\textit{xe}4\) \(\textit{f}4\) g5 20.\(\textit{ae}1\) \(\textit{b}7\) 21.\(\textit{d}6\) \(\textit{xd}6\) 22.\(\textit{xd}6\) \(\textit{xe}1\) 23.\(\textit{xe}1\) \(\textit{f}6\) (A. Fedorov-Lupulescu, Baile Herculane 2010) and the game was soon drawn.

A212) 13.\(\textit{h}4\) \(\textit{xf}4\) 14.\(\textit{xf}4\) \(\textit{e}6\)

The same sort of position that we have already seen. Black has no problems at all, having played well. 15.\(\textit{g}3\) \(\textit{b}6\) 16.\(\textit{b}1\) \(\textit{b}4\) 17.\(\textit{f}4\) d5! 18.\(\textit{d}2\) \(\textit{xe}4\)

Now White played 27.\(\textit{h}4??\) and after 27...\(\textit{g}7\) the situation was unclear in Hou Yifan-Zhou Jianchao, Xinghua ch-CHN 2012. Instead, she could have won with 27.\(\textit{h}4\)!!+- \(\textit{xf}7\) 28.\(\textit{e}7\) \(\textit{e}6\) 29.\(\textit{e}4\); or also 27.\(\textit{xb}7\)!!+-.

A22) 12...\(\textit{e}6\)!! 13.\(\textit{f}5\) \(\textit{d}7\)

14.\(\textit{g}4\) \(\textit{c}6\) 14...\(\textit{d}5?\) 15.\(\textit{g}5\)!!+- Tal-Saigin, 3rd match game, Riga 1954. 15.\(\textit{g}5\) \(\textit{h}5\) 16.\(\textit{f}6\) \(\textit{d}8\)
17.fxg7N In my opinion, it is better to open lines and the entry square, although the interesting 17.\(\text{\texttt{Nh4}}\) has also been played here; White has an excellent position anyway: 17...g6 18.\(\text{\texttt{Be3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{a6}}\) 19.\(\text{\texttt{cxd3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{h8}}\) 20.\(\text{\texttt{e2}}\) d5 21.\(\text{\texttt{g3}}\) dxe4 22.dxe4 \(\text{\texttt{d6}}\) 23.\(\text{\texttt{ad1}}\) with a very sharp position, in which it is difficult to give a definite assessment. The position is super-sharp and each side has his trumps, Nunn-Portisch, Brussels 1986.

17...\(\text{\texttt{hxg7}}\) 18.\(\text{\texttt{Be2}}\) \(\text{\texttt{a6}}\) 19.\(\text{\texttt{cxd3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{b6}}\) 20.\(\text{\texttt{h6}}\) \(\text{\texttt{e7}}\)

21.\(\text{\texttt{b1}}\) and White has a tremendous attack. This is the reason why I do not recommend 12...\(\text{\texttt{Be6}}\), coming under attack with tempo from the white pawns.

A23) 12.exf4 13.\(\text{\texttt{xf4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{e6}}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{d4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{d7}}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{g5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{h8}}\) 16.\(\text{\texttt{f5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{g8}}\) For some reason, Black starts to play passively and ends up worse, but then he gets the advantage, and finally loses! 17.\(\text{\texttt{g3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{xg5}}\) 18.\(\text{\texttt{xg5}}\) f6 19.\(\text{\texttt{g3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{ad8}}\) 20.\(\text{\texttt{f4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{f8}}\) 21.h3 \(\text{\texttt{xf5}}\) 22.\(\text{\texttt{xf5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{e7}}\) 23.\(\text{\texttt{ff1}}\) \(\text{\texttt{e6}}\) 24.b4 \(\text{\texttt{d7}}\) 25.a5 \(\text{\texttt{e5}}\) 26.b5 \(\text{\texttt{c8}}\) 27.\(\text{\texttt{e2}}\) d5 28.bxa6 bxa6 29.\(\text{\texttt{f4}}\) dxe4 30.\(\text{\texttt{xe4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{d4}}\) 31.\(\text{\texttt{f1}}\) \(\text{\texttt{f1}}\) 32.\(\text{\texttt{ab1}}\) \(\text{\texttt{f5}}\) 33.\(\text{\texttt{xf5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{xf5}}\) 34.\(\text{\texttt{f1}}\) \(\text{\texttt{c8}}\) 35.\(\text{\texttt{b6}}\) \(\text{\texttt{c4}}\) 36.\(\text{\texttt{f2}}\) \(\text{\texttt{g8}}\) 37.\(\text{\texttt{h2}}\)

B1) 11.\(\text{\texttt{e7}}\) The bishop stands somewhat better here than on g7, since it stops the queen coming to the excellent square h4, and does not cost additional development tempi. 12.\(\text{\texttt{d2}}\) 0-0 13.\(\text{\texttt{h4}}\)

13.g6! Strongly played! After this, I think the advantage goes to Black, who
has excellently-coordinated pieces.

14.\text{f}5 \ \text{\textit{g}}7 \ 15.\text{\textit{c}}e3 \ \text{\textit{g}}8 \ 16.\text{\textit{c}}g3 \ \text{\textit{d}}8 \ 17.\text{\textit{f}}f3 \ \text{\textit{c}}c5 \ 18.\text{\textit{g}}5 \ \text{h}6 \ 19.\text{\textit{h}}3 \ \text{\textit{f}}6 \ 20.\text{\textit{f}}f2 \ \text{b}4 \ 21.\text{\textit{d}}d5 \ \text{\textit{x}}d3 \ 22.\text{\textit{x}}d3 \text{and Black soon won in Chernobay-Savchenko, Moscow 2012.}

B2) \ 11...\text{g}6 \text{ and now:}

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

B21) \ 12.\text{b}4?! \text{N} \text{ is a pure computer move. The idea is simple: to play a2-a4 without allowing the reply ...b5-b4, so as to create weaknesses in Black's camp, in the form of the a6-pawn, which can then be attacked by \text{\textit{e}2}. \ 12...\text{\textit{g}}7 \ 13.\text{a}4 \text{bxa4} \ 14.\text{\textit{x}}xe5 \text{dxe5} \ 15.\text{\textit{c}}xa4 \text{0-0} \ 16.\text{c}4!;

B22) After 12.\text{a}4 White was slightly better, as see 12...b4 13.\text{\textit{d}}d1 \text{\textit{c}}c5 14.\text{\textit{f}}f2 \ \text{\textit{x}}d3 15.cxd3 \text{a}5 16.d4, Enklaar-Smejkal, Amsterdam 1973;

B23) \ 12.\text{\textit{x}}xe5 \text{dxe5} \ 13.\text{\textit{h}}4 \text{\textit{e}7}

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

14.\text{\textit{g}}3 \ 14.\text{\textit{g}}5! \text{ is a strong move, after which White has pressure. It is not easy for Black to cope with his kingside problems, and after castling, he will come under a strong attack. 14...\text{\textit{h}}5 \text{∞} \ 14...b4 \ 15.\text{\textit{d}}d5 \ \text{\textit{x}}d5 \ 16.exd5 \ \text{\textit{d}}d5 15.\text{\textit{f}}f2 \ 0-0 \ 16.\text{\textit{h}}6 \ \text{\textit{f}}e8 17.\text{\textit{d}}d2 \text{\textit{d}}d6 18.a4 \text{b}4 \ 19.\text{\textit{d}}e2 \text{\textit{f}}8 20.\text{\textit{g}}5 \text{\textit{g}}7 \ 21.h3 \ \text{\textit{e}}6 \ 22.\text{\textit{a}}e1 \text{\textit{a}}e8 \ 23.b3 \text{h}6 \ 24.\text{\textit{e}}3 \text{\textit{h}}7 \ 25.g4 \ \text{\textit{f}}6 \ 26.\text{\textit{h}}2 \text{\textit{x}}f1+ 27.\text{\textit{x}}f1 \text{\textit{f}}5f6. Here Black has a very small advantage, on account of his superior pawn structure and the weak white king. Tukmakov-Tal, Leningrad Interzonal 1973.}

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

\begin{itemize}
  \item 9.a4
  \item The alternative is 9.0-0 \text{\textit{e}7} 10.\text{\textit{h}}1 \text{0-0} \text{and now:}
  \begin{itemize}
    \item A) \ 11.\text{\textit{e}1} \text{\textit{c}5} 12.\text{\textit{x}}xe5 \text{dxe5} 13.\text{\textit{g}3}
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
13...\textit{e}6!N 14.\textit{W}xe5 \textit{d}6 15.\textit{W}xd4 \textit{cxd}3 16.\textit{c}xd3 \textit{g}4 17.\textit{W}g1 f5 18.\textit{g}5 \textit{c}5 19.d4 fxe4 20.\textit{c}xe4 \textit{a}7 and Black has excellent compensation for the pawn.

B) 11.fxe5 dxe5 12.\textit{h}4 \textit{c}5 13.\textit{g}5 \textit{d}8 14.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xd}3 15.\textit{c}xd3 \textit{xf}6

16.\textit{xf}6 \textit{gx}f6 17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 18.exd5 \textit{d}7 19.\textit{h}5 \textit{c}2 20.\textit{h}6 \textit{xd}3 21.\textit{xf}6 \textit{g}5+ 22.\textit{f}8 23.\textit{h}6+ \textit{g}8=;

C) 11.\textit{h}4 \textit{c}5 12.fxe5 dxe5 transposes to 11.fxe5.

\textbf{9...\textit{e}7 10.0-0 0-0 11.\textit{h}1}

11.\textit{e}1!? In case of 11.\textit{h}4?! Black gains an edge with 11...\textit{c}5! 12.fxe5 dxe5 13.\textit{f}5 \textit{xf}5 14.\textit{xf}5 \textit{ad}8=.

A) 11...\textit{exf}4?! 12.\textit{xf}4 \textit{e}5 and now:

A1) 13.a5 \textit{e}6 14.\textit{e}3 \textit{ac}8 If 14...\textit{c}4 White gets the upper hand with 15.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}4 16.\textit{f}2 \textit{ae}8 17.h3 \textit{d}7 18.\textit{f}4 \textit{e}5 19.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}6 20.\textit{d}4. 15.\textit{b}6 \textit{d}7 16.\textit{g}3 \textit{c}4

17.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}4 18.\textit{f}e1 \textit{f}e8 An equal position, where each side has his pluses; White with the more active pieces and control of some central squares, and Black the two bishops;

A2) 13.\textit{h}1 \textit{e}6 and now:

A21) 14.\textit{xe}5 dxe5 15.\textit{g}5

A21) Here I once played 15.\textit{h}8. This game was played a long time ago and I did not know the theory. I do not understand why I moved the king to \textit{h}8, as it definitely should not be there, but should instead remain closer to the centre, able to flee to \textit{f}8 if necessary. 16.\textit{d}1 16.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 18.exd5 \textit{e}7 19.\textit{e}4 \textit{g}6 20.\textit{ae}1 \textit{d}6 21.\textit{f}6 \textit{e}7 22.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}6 23.\textit{g}4 – something like this was what I wrote in my analysis after the game. Here, White is probably a bit better and Black should passively stand his ground, although things are probably not so bad for him after he plays ...\textit{f}7-\textit{f}6. However, White pushes the \textit{h}-pawn, and it is clear that play is for two results. 16...\textit{ad}8 17.\textit{h}4 \textit{h}5 18.\textit{d}5 \textit{xd}5 19.exd5 \textit{g}6 20.\textit{c}4 20.d6!? \textit{xf}6 21.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 22.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 23.\textit{b}4 \textit{g}7 24.\textit{c}2 \textit{f}g8 25.a5 \textit{e}4 26.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}5 27.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 28.g3 \textit{g}5 29.\textit{g}2 \textit{d}6 30.\textit{h}3 \textit{h}5 31.\textit{d}1 \textit{c}8 32.\textit{e}2 \textit{h}4 33.gxh4

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Here, after 33...f4 Black was slightly better and he eventually won, Mallahi-Andriasyan, Sevan 2006;
A212) 15...h5 16.\xcxe7 16.d5 \xd5 17.\xe7 18.exd5 transposes to 16.\xe7. 16...xe7 17.d5 \xd5 18.exd5 g6

A very interesting position, where each side has the advantage on one flank. White should try to advance the b-, c- and d-pawns, and Black the e- and f-pawns. I prefer Black, as the knight will be stronger than the bishop in the near future and Black has already established some sort of blockade on the dark squares, whereas it is not obvious how White can establish such a blockade. There can follow 19.a5 \ae8 20.c4 e4 21.e2 g7 22.\wc3 f5 23.b4 \g5 24.\ae1 \e3 25.\xf2 \e5 26.g1 h5 \n
A221) 15...\wc5 16.e3! \xd3 17.cxd3 White has pressure and a nice advantage, as it is not obvious where the queen should go, whilst White wants to play \df5, when Black will have to exchange it for his strong bishop on e6, remaining with passive pieces. 17...\wh5 18.\xf5 \fe8 19.d4 \xf5 20.\xf5 \g6 21.d2 \d7 22.d5 f6 23.\wb4 \ec2 1-0 Kindermann-Postl, Austria 1993;
A222) 15...d8! 16.e2 \e8 17.\xc6 \xe6= with a playable position where Black stands normally, controlling the dark squares and the two half-open c- and e-files.

B) 11...c5! This move is strongest. Black should not take on f4 and allow the bishop to come to a good square, at the same time opening the f-file for the white rook. If White wants to open the f-file, he must take on e5 himself, which for the moment he is not prepared to do. Now:
B1) 12.e3N \d7 13.h1 transposes to our game move 11.h1;
B2) 12.fxe5?! dxex and now:

B21) 13.g5?!N In such structures, it is favourable for White to force the move ...h7-h6, because after this, Black cannot play ...g7-g6, a move which would be very useful for him. Even so, Black's position is sufficiently
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

good that such minor matters do not greatly affect the evaluation. 13...\textit{e}6!
14.\textit{h}1 \textit{h}6 15.\textit{e}3 \textit{ad}8 16.\textit{d}1 \textit{d}7 17.\textit{g}3

17...\textit{fd}8! \textup{\textbullet};

B22) 13.\textit{h}4?!N White's basic idea involves \textit{we}1 and then continuing \textit{he}4-f5 and somehow obtaining counterplay. 13...\textit{xd}3 14.\textit{cx}d3 \textit{ad}8!
15.\textit{g}3 \textit{he}5! 16.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}4! 17.\textit{xf}4 \textit{xf}4 18.\textit{ef}5 \textit{f}8 19.\textit{ac}1 \textit{xf}5 20.\textit{exf}5 \textit{wc}5+ 21.\textit{h}1 \textit{xf}5 \textup{\textbullet};

B23) 13.\textit{g}3

B3) For 12.\textit{h}1 see 11.\textit{h}1 (game).

11...\textit{c}5

11...\textit{ef}4?! 12.\textit{xf}4 \textit{ce}5

13...\textit{e}6!N A typical idea in such positions, seen very often. Black sacrifices the e5-pawn, to open the g1-a7 diagonal for his dark-squared bishop and activate all his pieces, whilst White has not yet developed the \textit{ac}1 and \textit{ma}1, and those pieces that he has developed are not especially well placed, for instance the \textit{ad}3. 14.\textit{xe}5 \textit{d}6

White has many continuations and a lot of games have been played from this position, but White has no advantage anywhere. Black has an excellent position, in many cases being able to play to take the initiative, or just to play quietly:

A) 13.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}6 14.\textit{xe}5 dxe5 15.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6
Chapter 10 – The Aggressive 6.f4

A very interesting position. White’s pawn structure is good, whereas Black has doubled e-pawns, with a weakness on e6. However, it turns out that Black is not worse, and may even be slightly better because of his excellent pieces and especially because of the a7-g1 diagonal, which is ruled by the black bishop.

1. 16.\(\text{xf}6!\) 16...\(\text{d}5?!\) \(\text{xd}5\) 17.\(\text{exd}5\) \(\text{e}7\) 18.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{g}6\) 19.\(\text{ae}1\) \(\text{h}8\) is unclear. 16...\(\text{gx}f6\) 17.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 18.\(\text{exd}5\) \(\text{fe}8\) 19.\(\text{g}4+\) \(\text{f}8\) 20.\(\text{we}4\) \(\text{b}6=\);

B) 13.\(\text{we}1\) \(\text{e}6\) 14.\(\text{d}4\) 14.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{dxe}5\) 15.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}5=\). 14...\(\text{ac}8\) transposes to 11.\(\text{we}1;\)

C) 13.\(\text{wd}2\) \(\text{e}6\) 14.\(\text{d}4\)

C1) I would also not rush to move the a8-rook, as it is still not clear where it belongs, whether on the c-, d- or even the e-file: 14...\(\text{ad}8?!\) 15.\(\text{ae}1\) \(\text{fe}8\) 16.\(\text{df}5\) \(\text{xf}5\) 17.\(\text{ef}5\) \(\text{xd}3\) 18.\(\text{xd}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 19.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}6\) Now White played 20.\(\text{xe}7?!\) (it was necessary to play 20.\(\text{h}4\) and maintain equal chances), after which Black gained the advantage with 20...\(\text{hx}g5\) in Rogers-Kempinski, Polanica Zdroj 1996;

C2) 14...\(\text{fe}8\) 15.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{dxe}5\) 16.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{fxe}6\)

D) 13.\(\text{dd}4\) \(\text{e}6\) and now:

D1) 14.\(\text{ce}2\)

This position is not dangerous for Black. He has many good continuations: 14...\(\text{d}7\)! In the game, Black also
played in normal fashion: 14...$ad8!? 15.$g3 $g6 16.$d2 $g4 17.$e2 $xe2 18.$xe2 $d5 19.$c3 $d6 20.$xf6 $xf6 21.$h5 $e5 22.$f1 $c4 23.$f2 $e6 24.$xf6+ $h8 25.$g4 $f6 0-1 A. Onischuk-Kempinski, Polanica Zdroj 1999. 15.$g3 $g6! 16.$d2 $fe8?!

D2) 14.$h3N $ac8 15.a5 $fe8! with a dynamically equal position;

D3) 14.a5 $fe8 15.$g5 15.$xe6 $fxe6 16.$e2 $c5∞. 15...$fg4 16.$f4 $f6 17.$h3 $f8 Black is also fine here. (17...$ac8?!) 18.$g5 $fd7 19.$f5 $g6 20.$e3 $g7 21.$cd5 $c5 22.b4 $d4 23.$e2 $c6 24.c3 As White has a space advantage and the more active pieces, his position is better, Li Chao-Aveskulov, Beijing rapid 2008.

E) 13.$h4

13...$c5N 14.$e2 $e8 15.$f3 $e6 16.a5 $ac8 17.$e3 $c7 Black has an excellent position.

A) 24...$d6? In playing this move, I thought I was getting the advantage, but it turns out I am just getting a draw. 25.$g3 $xf4 26.$xf4 $e3 27.$xe3 $xe3 28.$g1 $xd3 29.$e5 $xd5 30.$xd7 $xd7 31.$f5 $b7 32.g4 $b6
Chapter 10 – The Aggressive 6.f4

B) There was another move that would have given me good winning chances: 24...b7! 25.e4 25.e5 fxe5 26.fx e5 a5= 25...f6 26.e5 xe5 27.xe5 f6 28.xf6 x e5 29.xe5 gxf6 30.xf6 x d5 31.g6+ f8 32.xh6+ f7 33.h7+ e8= We have by force reached a position in which White has three pawns for a piece, and the black king is exposed. Black has chances to save the game, but play is clearly for two results.

12...d7

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined one of the favourite moves of aggressive players, which has always been considered dangerous. But thanks to the computer, and the efforts of hard-working analysts, who have worked at home and found strong responses to White’s ingenious ideas, Black can be fully armed against this move.

Analysing the games, we come to the conclusion that if Black knows what he is doing from the very start, then soon it is White who has to think about his own weaknesses, which he has created by playing this aggressive move. We have seen that by sacrificing the pawn on e5, even after the exchange of queens, Black retains extremely good counterplay.

My advice is that if you react to 6.f4 correctly and accurately, not forgetting or mixing up the variations, you will not experience any problems.
Chapter 11

Occupying the Flank: 6.a4

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 f6 5.c3 a6 6.a4

The move 6.a4 is not the most principled in this position and in practice, does not pretend to fight for an advantage. Black can play 6...g6 and head to a structure from the Dragon Variation, but we will not consider this in the present book. To continue in Najdorf style, Black has the two possibilities 6...e6 and 6...e5. After 6...e6, we reach the Scheveningen structure, and because this is fundamentally different from the Najdorf and more defensive, most players prefer not to play this line.

We will examine 6...e5. In most cases, the position transposes into the variation 6.e2. The difference consists in the fact that White has already played a2-a4, as well as e2-e2, whereas if 6.e2 is played first, White retains the option of the move g2-g4, when a2-a4 would then become pointless – after all, the advance g2-g4-g5 drives the f6 away, when the pressure on the e4 pawn is removed and the white knight obtains access to d5, so he no longer need fear the advance of the black b-pawn. Indeed, in many cases the latter just becomes a waste of tempo.

A) 7.b3 will always transpose to lines with e2, for which I refer to the chapter on that move;
10. Bxd5 9. g5 0-0 10. Bxf6 Bxf6 11. g3 Bg6 12. d3 f5

B1) 8. exd5 Bb4 9. g5 0-0 10. Bxf6 Bxf6 11. g3 Bg6 12. d3 f5 and Black has excellent compensation for the pawn, with a mobile centre and strong dark-squared bishop;

B2) 8. Bxd5 Bxe4 9. e3 c6 and now:


13. 0-0 0-0

The key position. After White has returned the extra pawn and both sides have developed their pieces, the time has come for concrete action. Having two knights pointing at one and the same square is not usually very desirable, because they interfere with each other. This consideration led me to the interesting idea of exchanging off one of the knights and establishing the white pawn on c3, after which the black knight on c6 is not so well placed, and White's positional advantage becomes obvious. 14. Be4!N 14. f4? exf4+, for example 15. Bxf4 Be5 16. Be2 Bc8 17. Bcd5 Be4 18. b4 Bf6 19. Bxe6 Bxe6 20. Bf4 Bc8 21. c3 Bd7 22. Bc1 Bg6 23. Bf2 Bxf4 24. Bxf4 Bxc3 25. Bd6 Bxg2 and Black won in Palac-Brkic, Sibenik 2006. 14... Bxe4 14... Bxe4 15. fxe4 ±. 15. fxe4 Bg6 15... Bxe4 16. Bb6 Bb8 17. Bg4 Bg6 18. Bd7± 16. c3!±
7...\text{e}7

7...h6 8.\text{c}4 In case of 8.a5 \text{e}6! Black has an excellent position. The only drawback of 6...e5 is the weakening of the d5-square, which White should exploit by playing \text{f}1-c4. By delaying this in favour of a4-a5, White allows Black to play ...\text{e}6, after which White no longer has a way to fight for the central light squares, and so has no advantage. 8...\text{e}6 9.\text{xe}6 fxe6 10.\text{h}4 \text{e}3 \text{c}6 11.\text{h}4 \text{f}7. 10...\text{g}8 and now:

A) 11.0-0 g5 12.\text{f}3 \text{c}6 13.\text{e}3 \text{c}7=;

B) 11.f4 \text{c}6 12.\text{g}6 12.f5 d5 13.0-0 dxe4 (13...\text{c}5+ 14.\text{h}1 d4) 14.\text{e}3 \text{xd}1 15.\text{axd}1 \text{f}7=;

C) 11.\text{g}6 \text{c}6 12.f4 \text{f}7 13.f5 exf5 14.exf5 d5=.

8.\text{g}5!?

If 8.\text{c}4 \text{e}6, and now:

Here White has two main possibilities:

A) 9.\text{e}2:

A1) 9...\text{c}7! The queen move is strongest, because it forces White to solve the problem of his bishop: taking on e6 makes no sense, so it must retreat to b3, but this only leads at some moment to the line with 9.\text{b}3, where we have already seen that Black is fine. 10.\text{b}3 \text{c}6 11.0-0 \text{c}8 12.\text{g}5 \text{d}8? 12...\text{a}5! 13.\text{xf}6 \text{xb}3 14.\text{xb}3 \text{xf}6=.

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Berg Hansen, Calvia Olympiad 2004. White has an extra pawn, but realising it is extremely difficult, because the black bishop is very strong. The game is being played ‘for two results’, in that either White will win or it will be a draw.
The chances are about 50-50.

A2) 9...c6 10.0-0 0-0 11.\texttt{d}d1 \texttt{c}8
12.\texttt{b}b3 \texttt{h}6 13.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{c}7 14.\texttt{d}d5
14.\texttt{h}h4!? \texttt{a}a5 15.\texttt{x}e6 fxe6 16.\texttt{g}6
\texttt{fe}8=.

A2) 9...c6 10.0-0 0-0 11.\texttt{d}d1 \texttt{c}8
12.\texttt{b}b3 \texttt{h}6 13.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{c}7 14.\texttt{d}d5
14.\texttt{h}h4!? \texttt{a}a5 15.\texttt{x}e6 fxe6 16.\texttt{g}6
\texttt{fe}8=.

14.\texttt{h}h4!? 15.\texttt{c}c6 16.\texttt{d}d5 \texttt{b}b4

16.\texttt{b}b3! 16.c3 \texttt{b}xd5 17.exd5 \texttt{g}4.
16.\texttt{x}e4 17.\texttt{h}xh6 17.a5! \texttt{c}c5
18.\texttt{x}c5 \texttt{xc}5 19.c3 \texttt{c}6 20.\texttt{d}d5
\texttt{a}a7 21.\texttt{d}d2. 17...\texttt{c}c5! 18.\texttt{c}c4!

In this very complicated situation, where many pieces are hanging, Adams finds the only way to create sharp play. This does not really accord with his style, but the game was played in the European Club Championships, and the players needed a win at all costs.

A2) 18...gxf6?! 19.\texttt{x}xb4 \texttt{xb}3
20.\texttt{w}xb3 \texttt{xc}2 21.\texttt{w}xb7 \texttt{c}c7
21...\texttt{fe}8! 22.\texttt{xa}6 \texttt{a}8 23.\texttt{b}7 \texttt{xa}4
24.\texttt{ac}1 \texttt{e}4oo. 22.\texttt{xa}6 \texttt{xb}2 23.a5
\texttt{fc}8 24.g3 \texttt{f}6 25.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{f}6
26.\texttt{db}1?! 26.a6!±. 26...\texttt{w}c3 27.\texttt{e}e1?
27.\texttt{w}e2!. 27...\texttt{e}4! 28.\texttt{a}2

28...\texttt{w}c5? 28...\texttt{e}3!→ 29.\texttt{w}e2 exf2+ 30.\texttt{xf}2 \texttt{a}a8=. 29.a6 \texttt{c}6c7? 29...\texttt{e}3!
30.\texttt{d}d3 exf2+ 31.\texttt{xf}2 \texttt{w}e3∞.
30.\texttt{w}e2± Adams-Andriasyan, Ohrid tt 2009;

A2) 18...\texttt{e}4!? 19.\texttt{w}xb4 \texttt{xb}3
20.cxb3 d5 21.\texttt{d}d2 gxh6 22.\texttt{w}xb6
\texttt{xf}3 23.\texttt{d}d4 \texttt{d}7 24.\texttt{h}5 \texttt{c}c6
25.\texttt{g}4+ \texttt{g}6 26.\texttt{x}g6+ \texttt{fx}g6
27.\texttt{x}g6+ \texttt{h}8=;

A2) 18...\texttt{xb}3 19.\texttt{g}4 \texttt{f}6
20.cxb3 \texttt{c}6 21.\texttt{g}5;

B) In the event of 9.\texttt{xc}e6? \texttt{fxe}6
10.0-0 0-0 11.\texttt{e}e2 \texttt{c}6 12.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{c}8
Black is slightly better. It makes no sense to take on e6, as Black has the open f-file and covers his weakness on d5;

C) Since taking on e6 makes no sense, we will examine the retreat to b3. The recapture cxb3 does not look very pretty, but in reality, it is not so terrible.

9.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{c}6 10.0-0 \texttt{a}5 11.\texttt{a}2
11.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{fxe}6 12.\texttt{d}d3 \texttt{c}8 13.\texttt{g}5
\texttt{c}6 14.\texttt{h}h3 \texttt{d}4 15.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{h}6 16.\texttt{f}3
\texttt{xf}3+ 17.\texttt{xf}3 0-0=. 11.\texttt{c}8
12.\texttt{e}2 0-0 13.\texttt{d}d1 \texttt{w}c7 14.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{c}4
15.\texttt{xf}6 \texttt{xf}6 16.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{xc}4 17.\texttt{d}d2
\texttt{fd}8 18.\texttt{e}e1 \texttt{c}6= 18...\texttt{b}6!? 19.b3
\texttt{e}6 20.\texttt{d}d5 \texttt{xd}5 21.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{c}5
22.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{c}6 23.\texttt{d}d3 \texttt{d}5=. 19.\texttt{a}5 \texttt{h}6
20.\texttt{d}d3 \texttt{g}5 21.\texttt{w}e1 \texttt{b}6 22.g3 \texttt{b}xa5
23.h4 \texttt{c}7 24.\texttt{xa}5 \texttt{w}b6 25.\texttt{d}a1 \texttt{e}8
26.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{d}8 27.\texttt{f}a4 \texttt{b}7 28.b3 \texttt{b}5
29.\texttt{a}2

Chapter 11 – Occupying the Flank: 6.a4

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Black has sacrificed the exchange and obtained a strong attack in return, but the problem is that White can return the exchange with $\text{axa6}$ and obtain a small advantage. He subsequently managed to exploit this and win in Kamsky-Kempinski, Achaea 2012.

After this move, Black has many continuations, and I think he can equalise in various ways. Probably the most precise path was shown by Topalov, at the Candidates’ matches in Kazan. Instead of ...$\text{gxf6}$, I would recapture ...$\text{xf6}$, when the position is very similar to the one in Grishuk-Svidler:

A) 12...$\text{xa5+}$!

By very strong and energetic play, Topalov has first solved all his problems and then taken the initiative. Black has some practical advantage, perhaps, although objectively, the position is close to equal, Kamsky-Topalov, Kazan 2011; B) 12...$\text{b6}$ 13.$\text{xf6+}$
13...\textit{W}xf6! 13...gxf6? 14.\textit{W}xe6 fxe6 15.a5 \textit{Q}a8 16.c4= Hovhannisyan-Andriasyan, Yerevan ch-ARM 2010. 14.\textit{W}xe6 \textit{W}xe6 15.a5 \textit{Q}d7 16.0-0 0-0 17.c4 \textit{Q}c5 18.\textit{M}e1 f5 19.exf5 \textit{W}xf5 20.\textit{W}d5+ \textit{W}e6=.

C) Only after 12...\textit{Q}g5?! does White have slight pressure, but even here, it is not a great advantage: 13.0-0 0-0 14.\textit{Q}xg5 \textit{W}xg5 15.\textit{Q}e3 \textit{W}e7 16.\textit{M}e1 \textit{Q}f6 17.\textit{W}d3 \textit{M}fd8 18.a5 g6 19.\textit{W}xe6 \textit{W}xe6 20.c4 \textit{Q}g7 21.\textit{M}a4 \textit{M}c5 22.h3 \textit{W}c8 23.\textit{M}a2 \textit{M}c6 24.\textit{W}f1 b5 25.f4 bxc4. White has a space advantage, the more active pieces and some prospects of attacking on the f-file. For this reason, the position must be assessed as somewhat better for White, Hou Yifan-Ju Wenjun, Hefei rapid 2010.

12...\textit{Q}b6 13.\textit{W}xf6+ \textit{W}xf6 15.0-0

After 15.b3 0-0 16.\textit{M}d1 \textit{M}c6 the draw was agreed in Svidler-Grischuk, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011.

15...0-0

An absolutely equal position. We will give two games with similar play.

16.\textit{M}fd1 \textit{M}fd8

16...\textit{M}c6 17.b3 \textit{Q}d7= Zinchenko-Efimenko, Poltava 2006.

17.b3 \textit{Q}d7 18.c4 h6 19.\textit{W}e3 \textit{f}6 20.\textit{M}d2 b5!=

With equality in Zubarev-Amonatov, Tashkent 2008, which was drawn on move 40.

\textbf{Conclusion}

6.a4 is also one of the positional continuations. As we have seen, it does not in any way pretend to an advantage. And after looking at the games of the strongest players, we can see that Black can easily cope with the small problems he faces.

Although this book is written for the black player and the move 6.a4 is toothless, I would also not recommend this move to White.
Chapter 12

The Fianchetto 6.g3

1.e4 c5 2.\textit{f3} d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\textit{x}d4 \textit{f6} 5.\textit{c3} a6 6.g3

In this section of the book, we will examine the move 6.g3 and Black’s possible replies.

Black has three main continuations in his arsenal, just as after 6.h3 (see the next chapter). They are 6...e6, 6...g6 and 6...e5. As with 6.h3, we will look at our favourite move ...e7-e5. In essence, 6.g3 is harmless and simply not as good as 6.h3. Looking at the games in the database, we will see that eventually, White usually plays g3-g4 anyway, and it becomes clear that he has lost a tempo. We will see one particular black move which is interesting, and met with in half of the games in this position.

The move ...e7-e5 is quite strong for Black because after the move g2-g3, White puts his bishop on g2, where it fires only at its own pawn.

You may wonder why White plays g2-g3, rather than h2-h3, obtaining in several lines a position a tempo down on the latter move. The point is that the move g2-g3 is very strong if the opponent likes to play the Najdorf with ...e7-e6, instead of our choice ...e7-e5.

We will follow the game Dvoirys-Andriasyan, played at Magnitogorsk in 2011, at the final of the Russia Cup.

White has a choice of whether to retreat to b3 or e2.

Let us first look at the retreat to e2, from where the knight will be able to assist in the fight for the crucial square d5, and
in some also with the advance of the kingside pawns, by h2-h3 and g3-g4.

7.\text{\textit{de}}2 \text{\textit{ce}}7

Here White has three ways to continue: h2-h3, g2-g3 and a2-a4. The first two are effectively a transposition.

A) With the move 8.\text{\textit{g}}2, White ignores Black's activity on the queenside and wishes to castle as quickly as possible and exploit Black's ...b7-b5 move as a target for the advance a2-a4.

A1) 8...0-0 and now:

A11) 9.a4 \text{\textit{e}}6 10.0-0 \text{\textit{c}}7 11.h3 \text{\textit{bd}}7 After 11...\text{\textit{c}}6 Black does not manage to get the knight to b4, which would be nice, although even so, Black has an excellent position: 12.\text{\textit{d}}5 \text{\textit{xd}}5 13.exd5±. 12.\text{\textit{g}}4 h6 13.\text{\textit{g}}3 \text{\textit{fe}}8 14.\text{\textit{f}}5 \text{\textit{f}}8=; 12.\text{\textit{g}}4 Here White has used two moves to get the pawn on g4.

A12) 9.0-0 \text{\textit{bd}}7 10.a4 b6 11.h3 \text{\textit{b}}7 12.\text{\textit{g}}4 Black has a mass of possibilities here, all of which give him a normal position. In general, such positions are not dangerous for Black because he has play on the c-file and if White plays f2-f4, then Black will capture ...exf4 and have excellent play on the dark squares, which are weak in White's camp. So I will just quote two games – in both, Black has different ideas, but a good position:

A121) 12...\text{\textit{e}}8 13.\text{\textit{d}}5 \text{\textit{g}}5 14.\text{\textit{x}}g5 \text{\textit{x}}g5 15.\text{\textit{a}}3 \text{\textit{d}}8 16.\text{\textit{d}}2 \text{\textit{ef}}6? 16...\text{\textit{xd}}5! 17.\text{\textit{xd}}5 \text{\textit{c}}8 18.\text{\textit{d}}2 \text{\textit{c}}5=. 17.\text{\textit{xf}}6+ \text{\textit{xf}}6 18.\text{\textit{g}}3\pm g6 19.\text{\textit{d}}1 \text{\textit{e}}8 and Black was under some pressure, but managed to draw in Zhang Pengxiang-Karjakin, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007;

A122) 12.\text{\textit{e}}8 13.\text{\textit{g}}3 \text{\textit{c}}5 14.\text{\textit{g}}5 \text{\textit{fd}}7 15.\text{\textit{h}}4 g6 16.\text{\textit{e}}3 \text{\textit{e}}6 17.\text{\textit{h}}3 \text{\textit{f}}4 18.\text{\textit{xf}}4 \text{\textit{xf}}4 19.\text{\textit{ge}}2 f3 20.\text{\textit{d}}4

20...\text{\textit{x}}g5!± and Black won in Timofeev-Vitiugov, Moscow ch-RUS 2007.

A2) 8...b5 It seems to be that this move is stronger than the immediate castling, because it hinders White to play a2-a4, and seize space on the queenside. Meanwhile, as we have already commented, with the move ...b7-b5, Black starts his own offensive, planning ...\text{\textit{b}}7, ...\text{\textit{d}}7-c5, and an attack on the e4-pawn, plus the possibil-
ity if the chance arises of an exchange sacrifice on c3.

A21) 9.0-0 ½b7 10.h3 In case of 10.a4 b4 11.½d5 ½xd5 12.exd5 a5 13.c4 ½d7 14.½e3 ½c8 15.b3 0-0 Black has an excellent game, and I prefer his position: he will play ...½c5, ...f7-f5, White will answer f2-f4, and then Black will have a choice: either ignore the pawn or play ...e5-e4.

10...½bd7 11.g4 and now:

A21.1) 11...b4 12.½d5 ½xd5 13.exd5 a5 14.½g3

14...0-0!N 14...g6? 15.½h6 ½g5 16.½e4! ½xh6?! 17.½xd6+ ½f8 18.½xb7 ½b6 19.d6 ½f4 20.c4! ½b8 21.½d5 ½f6 22.½f3 g5 23.c5 ½a6 24.½e1+- Kamsky-Gelfand, Tilburg 1990. 15.½f5 ½e8 16.½xe7+ ½xe7 with initiative;

A21.2) 11...0-0 12.½g3 b4 12...½c5 13.½f5 ½e8∞. 13.½d5 ½xd5 14.exd5 ½e8 15.a3 a5 16.½e3

A22) 9.a4

16...½g5? 16...½c7! 17.½xg5 ½xg5 18.axb4 axb4 19.½f5 19.½e4!±. 19...½a6 20.½xa6 ½xa6 21.½e1 ½f6 22.½d2 ½b8 23.b3 g6 24.½g3 ½f4 25.½xf4 exf4 26.½e4 Kryvoruchko-Zhilgalko, Plovdiv Ech 2012. Thanks to the strong knight on e4, White’s position is a little more pleasant. He will play g4-g5 next and try to keep the knight on the key square e4, after which he will have a minimal advantage;

A22.1) 9...bxa4?! 9...b4 should be played. After the capture on a4, I started to have problems, although the position is normal. White started to press on the queenside, and Black has a weak pawn on a6, whilst White can advance his b- and c-pawns to b4 and c4, after which he will have the advantage, and Black will have to defend accurately, so as not to fall into a passive position: 10.0-0 ½bd7 11.½xa4 ½b7 12.½ec3 0-0
13.\texttt{We2} \texttt{Wc7} 14.\texttt{d1} \texttt{fc8} 15.b3 \texttt{c6} 16.\texttt{a2} \texttt{Wb7} 17.\texttt{a3} \texttt{b5} 18.\texttt{e3} \texttt{c5} 19.\texttt{xc5} dxc5 20.\texttt{d5} \texttt{xd5} 21.\texttt{xd5}? Better was 21.exd5! \texttt{d6} 22.\texttt{xa1}±. Now I managed to equalise with 21...c4 in Ter Sahakyan-Andriasyan, Yerevan ch-ARM 2011.

\textbf{A222) 9...b4! 10.\texttt{d5} \texttt{xd5} 11.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{a7} 12.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e6} 13.\texttt{d2}}

\textbf{A2221) 13...\texttt{b7}} A double-edged position, where the chances of the two sides are equal, and Black has no problems at all; he can quietly play this position: 14.\texttt{f4} b3 15.\texttt{f5} \texttt{c4} 16.\texttt{c1} d5 16...\texttt{d7}?! 17.cxb3 \texttt{xb3} 18.\texttt{xb3} \texttt{xb3} 19.\texttt{a3} \texttt{b8} 20.\texttt{xb3} \texttt{xb3} 21.0-0 0-0=. 17.\texttt{exd5} \texttt{d7} 18.\texttt{xb3} \texttt{xd5} with a draw on move 23, Boruchovsky-Rodshtein, Biel 2012;

\textbf{A2222) I also looked at another move for Black, also very interesting: 13...\texttt{d7}!! N 14.a5 14.\texttt{xb4} d5 15.\texttt{c5} \texttt{c6} 16.\texttt{b6} \texttt{xb6} 17.\texttt{xb6}}

17...d4! 18.a5 0-0 19.0-0 \texttt{Cc8} 20.\texttt{c1} \texttt{b4} 21.\texttt{d3} f6! with good compensation. 14...0-0 15.\texttt{f4} 15.0-0 \texttt{c6} 16.\texttt{fd1} \texttt{c7} 17.\texttt{f4} \texttt{xa5} 18.b3 \texttt{fd8} 19.\texttt{f2} g6 with chances for both sides. 15...\texttt{c6} 16.\texttt{f5} \texttt{c4} 17.b3 \texttt{b5} 18.\texttt{f2}

\textbf{B)} 8.a4
This move has another minus. Of course, White does not want to allow ...b7-b5, after which Black seizes space on the queenside, gives his bishop an excellent post on b7, his knight comes to d7 and c5, and there is always a threat of ...b5-b4, attacking the e4-pawn. However, after a2-a4, Black obtains the square b4 for his knight, from where it supports the advance ...d6-d5, and it is not clear how it can be ejected from the b4-square, since the move c2-c3 means that the knight should not have come to c3 in the first place.

B1) 8...c6 9.g2 b4 10.0-0 e6 11.b3

11...d5= In such positions, Black’s main idea usually consists of this advance, and if he achieves this, the position is equal. 12.exd5 cxd5 13.a3 xc3 14.xc3 xd1 15.axd1 xc2 16.xe7 xe7 17.d5+ xd5 18.xd5 xe6 with a draw on move 25 in Ghaem Maghami-Vachier-Lagrange, Dresden Olympiad 2008;

B2) 8...e6 is also an interesting move, giving Black a normal, playable position: 9.g2 bd7 10.h3 c8 11.g4 h6 12.g3 g6 13.0-0 wc7 14.a5 f8 15.e3 g7 16.f4 exf4 17.xf4 e5 with a draw on move 47, Kamsky-Lautier, Monaco rapid 1996.

C) 8.h3

8...b5! If we compare this position with the 6.h3 variation, then it is clear that White has simply lost a tempo, because he will have to spend three moves getting his pawn to g4, instead of two. So it seems to me that the variation with 6.g3 is not dangerous for Black. 9.g2 bd7 10.a3 g4 b4 11.d5 xd5 12.exd5 a5 13.0-0 h5 14.gxh5 xh5 15.d4 f6 16.c6 wc7 17.f3 f5 18.e1 wd7.

Black’s position is the more promising, as he has some attack, Alexeev-Dominguez Perez, Biel 2008. 10...b7 11.g4 b6 12.g3 g6 13.g5 fd7 14.h4 c8 15.f1 0-0 16.g1 c4 Black has a definite advantage, since the rook on h1 is not taking part in the game. But strangely, Black later lost the game, after wrongly sacrificing the exchange in a good position, sharpening the position, and then committing several inaccuracies in Short-Gelfand, Novgorod 1997.

7.e7 8.g2

White also has the option here of stopping b5 by playing a2-a4 himself, but then, as we have already seen, the black knight gets a good square on b4, and this helps him organise the advance ...d6-d5: 8.a4 c6 9.g2
Not a very dangerous position for Black, and I would even say that he can play for the advantage, as White has conceded the square b4 and the knight on b3 is out of place in such positions. It does not contribute to the battle for d5, while all of Black’s pieces take part in that battle. I will give two examples:

A) 9...b4 10.g5 e6 11.0-0 c8 12.e1 0-0 13.w2 h6 14.xf6 xf6 15.a5 wd7 16.d2 fd8 17.h4 c7 18.ed1 dc8=N Lopez Martinez-Dominguez Perez, Barcelona 2006;

B) 9...g4!? I very much like this move, because now White starts to have problems. If he plays d2, then he cannot develop the bishop from c1, whilst if he plays f2-f3, then he will later end up having to play f3-f4, weakening his king, which is not very desirable.

B1) 10.wd2

10...b4! 10...a5 is also not bad, as was played in Movsesian-Kokarev, Olginka tt 2011, but to my mind, 10...b4 is rather stronger. Black prepares the advance ...d6-d5, whilst the white pieces are not harmoniously placed - the queen interferes with the development of the other pieces and he still has to expend a tempo on castling. 11.d5 bx d5 12.exd5

12...c8=N Black is simply better. He will play ...d7, ...f7-f5 whilst White’s subsequent play is not entirely obvious, because his pieces do not cooperate well and it is hard to imagine how he will restore this coordination. 12...a5 13.0-0 0-0 14.wd3 dc8 15.c3 fc5, with good play for Black, was seen in Vydeslaver-Colovic, Kallithea tt 2008. 13.0-0 dc7;

B2) 10.f3 d7 11.0-0 b4 12.e3 0-0 13.a5 c8 14.f2 e6 15.d2

15...w8! A strong idea. Black transfers his queen to c6, after which he plays
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

...\textit{fd8} and ...\textit{d6-d5}, and will then stand a little better. 16.\textit{c1! h5} 16...\textit{w6}?! 17.\textit{d3 \textit{xd3} 18\textit{xd3 \textit{fd8} 19\textit{d5!+-} 17.\textit{d3 \textit{xd3} 18\textit{xd3 \textit{h4=}; B3) 10.\textit{f3} \textit{h3!} White is hardly likely to castle kingside, and in order to castle queenside he needs first to move the bishop and queen, besides which he has already played a2-a4, creating a weakness there.

Back to the position after 8.\textit{g2}.

8...\textit{b5} 9.\textit{g5}

A) 9.a4 b4 10.d5 \textit{xd5} 11.wxd5 \textit{a7} 12.e3 \textit{e6} 13.d3 13.d2 transposes to 9.0-0, see the game Kasimdzhanov-Karjakin in line C. 13...\textit{d7} 14.0-0 0-0 15.fc1

15...\textit{e8} Without the move f2-f4, the \textit{e8} does nothing, and Black will not manage to get in ...\textit{g5} because White has played a4-a5 and he can put his bishop on b6 with tempo. So it was necessary to play 15...\textit{g5} at once, or 15...\textit{c8}, whereas 15...\textit{e8} turns out to be a wasted move: 15...\textit{g5}?! 16.f4 \textit{h6} 17.e1 \textit{e8}. 16.a5 \textit{c8} 17.c3 bxc3 18.xc3 \textit{c7} 19.ac1 \textit{xc3} 20.xc3 \textit{b7} 21.wc2 \textit{c8} 22.xc8+ \textit{xc8} 23.d2

But here White has pressure, and although his advantage is not great, the position is unpleasant for Black. White has a very simple plan. He wants to play b2-b4-b5, transfer the \textit{g2} via f1 to c4 and bring the knight via b1 to c3. White won on move 36 in Zherebukh-Ter Sahakyan, Athens Wch-jr 2012;

B) 9.d5 It was better to start with the preliminary 9.a4 as in line A, and only after 9...b4 to play 10.d5. Here, Black stands fine. 9...\textit{xd5} 10.wxd5 \textit{a7} 11.e3 \textit{e6} 12.d2 \textit{d7} 13.0-0

13...\textit{d5} 14.exd5 \textit{xd5} 15.xd5 \textit{xd5=} Filipenko-Voitsekhovskiy, Tolyatti 2011;

C) 9.0-0 0-0 10.a4 b4 11.d5 \textit{xd5} 12.wxd5 \textit{a7} 13.e3 \textit{e6} 14.d2 We have transposed into the position after 9.a4 with the only difference that here, the queen is on d2 instead of d3. 14...\textit{b7}
I looked at this position before my game with Dvoirys at the Russian Cup. It happened that we met in the first cycle, and before this, he lost in this line to Sjugirov. For this reason, I did not think he would play the same way again, although he probably had little choice. In the first game, I was White, and after playing a very strong novelty, I obtained the advantage. I could not realise it, but I was full of determination to win the match in normal time, which I managed to do.

An alternative is 9...\texttt{\texttt{Q}}bd7 and now:

A) 10.\texttt{\texttt{Q}}d5 Qxd5! 11.\texttt{\texttt{Q}}xd5 Qb6

12.\texttt{\texttt{Q}}xe7 Qxe7 – although the king is in the centre, he stands quite comfortably there, as White has no pieces with which to disturb him, having no dark-squared bishop and the Qb3 being unable to help. If Black exchanges queens, he will have the advantage: 13.\texttt{\texttt{Q}}d2 f6

13...Qc7!? 14.0-0 Qe6∞. 14.0-0 Qe6

15.c3 Qc8 16.h4 Qc4 17.Qe2 Qb6

18.Qc1 b4 and Black was OK in Alexeev-Nepomniachtchi, Moscow ch-RUS 2006;

B) 10.a4 and now:

B1) 10...b4?! 11.Qd5

11...h6!N 11...Qxd5?! 12.Qxd5 Qa7

13.Qxe7 Qxe7 14.0-0 Qf6 15.Qd2 a5

16.c4 bxc3 17.Qxc3 Qe6 18.Qd2 Qb6 19.Qc4 Qc5 20.Qe3 Qxc3 with
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a later draw, Olsson-Micheli, Skopje Olympiad 1972. 12.\(\text{d}x\text{e}7\) \(\text{w}x\text{e}7\) 13.\(\text{d}e3\) 0-0 14.0-0 \(a5=\);

B2) 10...\(\text{d}x\text{b}7\) 11.\(\text{a}x\text{b}5\) \(\text{a}x\text{b}5\) 12.\(\text{d}x\text{a}8\) \(\text{w}x\text{a}8\) 13.\(\text{d}x\text{b}5\) 13.\(\text{x}f6\) \(\text{x}f6\) 14.\(\text{d}d3\) 0-0 15.0-0 \(c6\) 16.\(\text{a}a1\) \(\text{b}8=\).

13...0-0 14.\(\text{c}c3\)

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14...\(\text{e}4!\) 14...h6? 15.\(\text{x}f6\) \(\text{x}f6\) 16.\(\text{a}1!\) — after this move, White was slightly better in Deepan-Areschenko, Mumbai 2009. 15.\(\text{d}x\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}e4\) 16.\(\text{d}x\text{e}7\) \(\text{c}x\text{c}2\) 17.\(\text{w}x\text{c}2\) \(\text{w}h1=\). 18.\(\text{d}d3\) \(\text{d}e8\) 19.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{e}8\) 19.\(\text{x}d6\)

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16.\(\text{h}3\) 16.c3?! \(\text{b}x\text{c}3\) 17.\(\text{d}x\text{e}6\) \(\text{f}x\text{e}6\) 18.\(\text{d}x\text{c}3\) \(\text{b}6\) 19.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{e}7\) 20.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{f}6\) 16...\(\text{b}6\) 17.\(\text{x}b6\) \(\text{w}b6\) 18.\(\text{d}d3\) \(\text{f}d8\) 19.\(\text{f}d1\) \(\text{c}6\) 20.\(\text{x}e6\) \(\text{f}x\text{e}6\) 21.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{d}c8\) 22.\(\text{g}4\) d5 23.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{h}8\) 24.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{f}8\) 25.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{c}8\) 26.\(\text{d}d3\) \(\text{d}x\text{e}4\) 27.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{d}8\) 28.\(\text{w}x\text{e}4\) \(\text{w}x\text{e}4\) 29.\(\text{d}e4\) \(\text{d}6\) and Black had pressure and eventually won, Dvoirys-Sjugirov, Irkutsk 2010.

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

For some reason, I did not look very deeply at this position. I thought that if it arose, I would be able to play it without any special preparation. However, frankly speaking, once it arose, I was not happy that I had not looked at how best to play it, and maybe I did not at first play it in the best possible way.

10.\(\text{f}3\)

11.f4 \(\text{h}6\)

11...\(\text{b}d7\) 12.\(\text{f}5\) \(\text{c}4\)

12...\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{a}5\) 13.\(\text{g}4\) 0-0 15.0-0 \(d7\) I did not think that Dvoirys would repeat this move sequence, because I did not see anything special here for White, and I was quite calm about the position.
13.\( \text{d}2 \text{e}8! \) At the board, of course, I did not want to go in for this position, here it is easily possible to lose the bishop on c4, but when you are sitting quietly at home with the computer on, then you understand that Black has no problems.

\[ 12.\text{xf6 } \text{xf6} 13.\text{f5 } \text{c8} 14.\text{a4 b4} 15.\text{d5} \]

15...\( \text{a5} \)

15...\( \text{d7?!} \) 16.\( \text{xb4} \) (16.\( \text{d3 } \text{b7} \) 17.\( \text{xf6+ } \text{xf6} \) 18.0-0-0 \( \text{c6} \) 19.\( \text{a5 } \text{e7} \) 16...\( \text{a5} \) 17.\( \text{d5} \) 0-0. I did not especially wish to give the pawn on b4, because a draw meant that the match would continue with rapid games, and I did not want to risk anything.

16.\( \text{xf6+} \)

I was very surprised by this decision; why give up the pride of White’s position, for the bishop which has no great future? At the time, I was more afraid of 0–0 and then \( \text{f}3 \), with the idea of \( \text{f}1 \) and \( \text{c}4 \) or \( \text{b}5 \), followed by \( \text{d}3 \) and perhaps c3.

16...\( \text{gxf6} \)

Although the computer prefers White here, during the game I did not feel this way, but I understood that White has to hurry. If he plays too slowly, he will just be worse on account of his damaged pawn structure and poor minor pieces.

17.0-0

Not a good move, which does not fit the spirit of the position. It was necessary to play \( \text{d2} \) or \( \text{d5} \), so as to play a quick 0-0-0 and create problems for Black by attacking the d6-pawn. Instead, White starts to play slowly and obtains a bad position.

17.\( \text{d5 } \text{a7} \) 18.0-0-0 \( \text{b7} \) 19.\( \text{d3} \) (with the idea of \( \text{d2} \) and \( \text{c4} \). In the event of 19.\( \text{xd6 } \text{xd6} \) 20.\( \text{xd6 } \text{e7} \) Black has excellent compensation for the pawn).

17...\( \text{b6+} \) 18.\( \text{h1 } \text{a6} \) 19.\( \text{d5 } \text{b7} \) 20.\( \text{d2 } \text{d7} \) 21.\( \text{fd1} \)

21...\( \text{e7} \) 22.\( \text{c3 } \text{bxc3} \) 23.\( \text{xc3} \)

After 23.\( \text{bxc3} \) (since White is strategically lost, he must capture bxc3, in order somehow to try to complicate Black’s task, but after playing 23.\( \text{xc3} \) he lost easily, as he had no counterplay) 23...\( \text{c5} \) 24.\( \text{xc5 } \text{xc5} \) 25.\( \text{ab1 } \text{c6} \) Black also has the advantage. Any exchange of heavy pieces favours him and strategically, White’s position is lost.
Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to the move g2-g3. I have to say that I do not like this move at all, for several reasons. The first thing is that it is rather passive, and after looking at the theory and the games of strong grandmasters, I am convinced that it does not offer White any chances to fight for an advantage.

The second reason is that the bishop on g2 is very bad after Black plays ...e7-e5. As we have already seen, in the Najdorf, the white king’s bishop stands best on the a2-g8 diagonal.

If White wishes to employ the idea of placing the bishop on g2, it is more expedient to start with the move 6.h3, which will be examined in the next chapter.
In this last chapter of the book, we will look at the advance of the rook’s pawn one square. At first glance, this looks harmless and not worth attention. But the move has hidden depths. Looking at the games of top players, played in recent years, it is clear that the move is quite poisonous and contains many dangers for the opponent. After a deeper look at the position, some of the world’s best players have come to the conclusion that it makes good sense in this position to play h2-h3, with the idea of advancing g2-g4.

After this move, like after 6.g3 in the previous chapter, Black has three main responses. These are the moves 6...g6, 6...e6, and 6...e5. In this book, we will only examine 6...e5, because the other two moves are each a different story, whilst the move 6...e5 seems to me to be more uncompromising and gives Black the chance to fight for the full point.

For the reasons given above, after Black has played 6...e5 7.\( \text{Q} \text{de2} \), we will look in more detail at the move 7...h5. The idea is quite simple: Black does not allow White to play g2-g4, whereas if Black instead plays 6...b5, then White continues 7.g4 and obtains an extra tempo over the line 6.g3.

Comparing the moves 7.\( \text{Q} \text{f3} \) and 7.\( \text{Q} \text{de2} \), it becomes obvious that the knight stands rather better on e2, because it takes part in the fight for d5, and can sometimes end up on that square. Another plus is that from e2, the knight can also follow a course via g3 to f5, whereas on f3, the knight has no future.
After $7.\textit{\v{c}}f3$ we have:

A) $7...\textit{\v{c}}bd7$ and now:

A1) $8.a4 \textit{\v{c}}c7$ transposes to $7...\textit{\v{c}}c7$, but it is correct to begin with $...\textit{\v{c}}c7$, because after $...\textit{\v{c}}bd7$ White has the resource $\textit{\v{c}}c4$, which I do not like. Here I will just give a few games by well-known grandmasters, so you can see how the play might continue:

A1 1) $9.\textit{\v{c}}e3 \textit{\v{c}}e7$ 9...b6 10.$\textit{\v{c}}d2 \textit{\v{c}}b7$ 11.$\textit{\v{c}}c4 \textit{\v{c}}c5$ 12.$\textit{\v{c}}f3 \textit{\v{c}}h6$ 13.0-0 $\textit{\v{c}}e7$ 14.$\textit{\v{c}}xc5 \textit{\v{c}}xc5$ 15.$\textit{\v{c}}b3$ 0-0 16.$\textit{\v{c}}c4$ $\textit{\v{c}}xe4$ 17.$\textit{\v{c}}xe4$ $\textit{\v{c}}xe4$ 18.$\textit{\v{c}}xe4$ d5 19.$\textit{\v{c}}xe5$ $\textit{\v{c}}f6$ 20.$\textit{\v{c}}d6$ dxc4 21.$\textit{\v{c}}xc5$ bxc5 22.$\textit{\v{c}}xc4$ and White has sight pressure, Timofeev-Khismatullin, Irkutsk 2010.

10.g4

10...h6 11.g5 hxg5 12.$\textit{\v{c}}xg5$ b6 13.$\textit{\v{c}}g1$ $\textit{\v{c}}b7$ 14.$\textit{\v{c}}a3$ d5 15.$\textit{\v{c}}xd5$ $\textit{\v{c}}xd5$ 16.$\textit{\v{c}}e3$ $\textit{\v{c}}a3$ 17.$\textit{\v{c}}xa3$ $\textit{\v{c}}c3+$ 18.$\textit{\v{c}}d2$ $\textit{\v{c}}xa3$ and Black is winning, Nepomniachtchi-Lastin, Olginka tt 2011;

A1 2) $9.\textit{\v{c}}g5$ h6 10.$\textit{\v{c}}e3$ $\textit{\v{c}}c5=$ 11.$\textit{\v{c}}d2$ $\textit{\v{c}}e6$ 12.$\textit{\v{c}}e2$ $\textit{\v{c}}e7$ 13.0-0 0-0

14.$\textit{\v{c}}f3$ $\textit{\v{c}}ac8$ 15.$\textit{\v{c}}e1$ $\textit{\v{c}}fd8$ 16.$\textit{\v{c}}d5$ $\textit{\v{c}}xd5$ 17.$\textit{\v{c}}xd5$ $\textit{\v{c}}f5$ 18.$\textit{\v{c}}a5$ $\textit{\v{c}}d7$ 19.$\textit{\v{c}}c3$ $\textit{\v{c}}h7$ 20.$\textit{\v{c}}a4$ $\textit{\v{c}}f8$ 21.$\textit{\v{c}}c4$ f5 22.$\textit{\v{c}}b6$ with a double-edged game, and mutual chances, Nakamura-Nepomniachtchi, Moscow 2010.

A2) $8.\textit{\v{c}}c4$! $\textit{\v{c}}c7$ 9.$\textit{\v{c}}b3$ $\textit{\v{c}}e7$ 10.0-0 Here White has the advantage – he will play $\textit{\v{c}}g5$ and take the knight on f6, after which he will occupy the d5-square with his minor pieces.

B) $7...\textit{\v{c}}c7$? $8.\textit{\v{c}}g5$ $\textit{\v{c}}bd7$ 9.$\textit{\v{c}}d3$

9.a4 h6 10.$\textit{\v{c}}e3$ $\textit{\v{c}}c5$ 11.$\textit{\v{c}}d2$ (after 11.$\textit{\v{c}}d5$ Black grabs the initiative with 11...$\textit{\v{c}}xd5$ 12.$\textit{\v{c}}xd5$ $\textit{\v{c}}e7$ 13.$\textit{\v{c}}a5$ 0-0 14.$\textit{\v{c}}d2$ $\textit{\v{c}}f5$ 15.$\textit{\v{c}}e2$ $\textit{\v{c}}h7$ 16.0-0 f5 17.$\textit{\v{c}}c4$ f4 18.$\textit{\v{c}}xc5$ $\textit{\v{c}}xc5$ 19.$\textit{\v{c}}b6$ $\textit{\v{c}}ad8$→) 11...$\textit{\v{c}}e6$ 12.$\textit{\v{c}}f3$ $\textit{\v{c}}f6$ 13.$\textit{\v{c}}a5$ $\textit{\v{c}}d8$ 14.$\textit{\v{c}}e2$ $\textit{\v{c}}e7$ 15.0-0 0-0 16.$\textit{\v{c}}fd1$ 16...d5 17.$\textit{\v{c}}xd5$ $\textit{\v{c}}xd5$ 18.$\textit{\v{c}}xd5$ $\textit{\v{c}}xd5$ 19.$\textit{\v{c}}f5$ $\textit{\v{c}}e6$ 20.$\textit{\v{c}}f3$ $\textit{\v{c}}g5$ is unclear.

9...$\textit{\v{c}}e7$ 10.0-0 h6 11.$\textit{\v{c}}d2$ 0-0 12.$\textit{\v{c}}e2$

$\textit{\v{c}}c5$ 13.$\textit{\v{c}}c4$ b5 14.$\textit{\v{c}}d5$ $\textit{\v{c}}d7$

15.$\textit{\v{c}}xf6+$ $\textit{\v{c}}xf6$ 16.$\textit{\v{c}}d5$ $\textit{\v{c}}b7$ 17.$\textit{\v{c}}xb7$ $\textit{\v{c}}xb7$ 18.$\textit{\v{c}}fe1$ a5=.

7...$\textit{\v{c}}h5$

Here Black has an interesting choice between the moves 7...b5 and 7...$\textit{\v{c}}h5$. I always prefer 7...$\textit{\v{c}}h5$, since this prevents White playing $g2-g4$ followed by $\textit{\v{c}}g3$ and seizing space on the kingside. Admittedly, the move ...$\textit{\v{c}}h7$-$\textit{\v{c}}h5$ also has its
disadvantages: firstly, it concedes the g5-square to the opponent, where a bishop will stand ideally, whilst after kingside castling, Black can come under attack with g2-g4. For this reason, he does not rush with castling, so as to make White commit himself first:

7...b5 8.g4 and now:

A) 8...b4 9.Qd5 Qxd5 9...Qb7
10.Qg2. 10.Wxd5 Qa7 11.Qe3 Qe6
12.Wd2

12...Qd7! It is important to create the threat of ...d6-d5, whilst the rook would not be doing anything on b7 (12...Qb7 13.Qg2†). Now White must solve concrete problems, as 13...d5 is threatened, and it is not obvious how to prevent this move. There are two ways to play: one is to take on b4 and have an extra pawn, the other to try to blockade on the light squares. Let us look at the two continuations:


A11) 16.0-0-0 Castling queenside is very dangerous, as the white pieces are not well placed to defend the queenside, and his queen is also on a very unstable square. The black attack develops quickly and strongly and all the black pieces will be involved. The silicon machine may be able to defend without a great problem, but for a human, it is perhaps even an insurmountable task:

16...Qd6 17.f4 0-0! 18.Qa5 Qc6! 19.Wxc6 Qxc6 20.Qd2 20.fxe5!? Qxe5 21.Qe1 Qxa2! 20...d3!
21.Qxd3 Qxa2 22.Qxe5 Qxe5 22...Qc5!
23.Qf4 Qc8 24.Qc3 Qb3 25.Qd2
Qd4! 23.Qc2 Qxd3 Or 23...Qb8
24.Qc1 Qc7+ 25.Qc3 Qb1+ 26.Qxb1
Qxc3 with good play for the material.
24.Qa1?! Qc8+ ++ Voboril-Jakubiec, Czechia tt 1993;
A12) 16.b4 Qc6 17.a3 Qa7 18.Qg3
Qb5 19.Qh5 f6 20.f4 Wc6 21.Qd3
Qd6! 21...f5 22.gxf5 Qxf5 23.Qg3
Qe6 24.fxe5±.

22.0-0 0-0 and Black has full compensation, as the white queen is offside and needs permanent defence from its own pieces, to prevent her being trapped.

A2) 13.c4 Qxc4 14.Qg3 Qxf1
15.Qxf1 d5 16.exd5 Qxd5 17.Wc2
Qe7 18.Qf5 0-0 19.We4 Qe8
20.Qxe7+ Qxe7 21.Qc1 Qe8 22.Qg2
Wxa5 23.Qxd1 Qxd1 24.Qxd1 Wxa2
25.Wxb4 Wc6 26.Qd6 Wc7 White has
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excellent compensation for the pawn, but since so little material remains on the board, this compensation is only sufficient for a draw.

B) 8... الب7 9...ال g2

Here Black has several continuations, which we will examine. If he plays 9... الدbd7 or 9... ال e7, then White plays g4-g5 at some moment and brings his knight via g3 to f5, and obtains the advantage. Concrete play after ...b5-b4 only favours White. But the best move is 9...ه6, not allowing the opponent to obtain a space advantage with g4-g5.

B1) 9...ه6 10...ال g3 الدbd7 11.0-0→
B2) 9...ال e7 10...ال g3:

B21) 10...ب4 11...ال d5 الدxd5 12.exd5 0-0 12...g6? 13...ال h6± الد g5 14...ال xg5 الد xg5 15...ال e4 الد e7 16...ال d2! a5 17.ا3 0-0 18.axb4 axb4 19.0-0 and Black won in Kupreichik-Mukhutdinov, Cetinje 1992. 13.ا3 ا 3 14.0-0 الد a6 Or 14...g6 15...ال h6 الد e8 16...ال d2 الد a6.

Now 17.axb4 axb4 18...ال h1 الد c7 19.f4 الد h4 20...ال e4 الد c5 21...ال x a8 الد x a8 22...ال x b4 الد x d5 23...ال f6+ الد x f6 24...ال x d5 led to a draw in Nestorovic-Ivanov, Plovdiv Ech 2012.

It was also possible not to hurry with the exchange of pawns and play 17...ال h2!, since in any case, it is unfavourable for Black to take on а3, whilst White himself may take later. Now f2-f4 is threatened, to open the f-file, whilst the main thing is that White has control of the square f8. Moreover, if Black exchanges dark-squared bishops, all the dark squares in his camp will be weak. For example: 17...ال c8 18.axb4 (now it is possible to exchange pawns, as the rook has left the open a-file) 18...ال x b4 19.f4 الد h4 20...ال g5 الد x g5 (20...ال x g3+ 21...ال x g3 f6 22...ال h6±) 21.fxg5 الد c5 22...ال x b4 الد x g5 23...ال a7±.

15.axb4 axb4 16...ال f5↑

This position is better for White.

B22) 10...g6 11...ال h6
Chapter 13 – The Poisonous 6.h3

11...\( \text{f8} \) Less good is 11...\( \text{c6?} \) 12.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 13.\( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{b8} \) 14.\( \text{d2} \) and White was slightly better in Rotstein-Marcks, Cologne 1998. 14.0-0?!? also gives White an edge.

Now: 12.\( \text{d2} \) (or 12.\( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 13.\( \text{d2} \pm \); if 12.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{c7} \) 12...\( \text{xh6} \) 13.\( \text{wh6} \) \( \text{c6} \) 14.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 15.\( \text{exd5} \) \text{a5} \pm 16.\( \text{c3} \) \text{e7} 17.0-0 0-0-0 18.\( \text{a4} \).

B3) After 10...0-0, White begins attacking operations on the king, and it is very hard for Black to meet this attack: 11.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{fd7} \) 12.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{b6} \) 12...\( \text{xg5} \) 13.\( \text{g4} \) h6 14.\( \text{g1} \) g6 15.\( \text{xh6} \) \( \text{e6} \) 16.\( \text{h6} \) \( \text{f6} \) 17.\( \text{wh4} \) b4 18.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 19.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{e8} \).

20.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{e6} \) 21.\( \text{e3} \pm \). White is attacking with all his pieces, and his position is close to winning, as Black is in a deadly pin. 13.\( \text{h4} \) b4 14.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 15.\( \text{exd5} \) g6 16.\( \text{h6} \) \( \text{g7} \) 17.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{c8} \) 18.\( \text{xb4} \) a5 19.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{a6} \) 20.\( \text{c3} \) \text{c5} 21.\( \text{c2} \) \text{a6} 22.\( \text{c4} \) f5 23.\( \text{d2} \pm \).

C) With 9...b4

Black wants to develop some sort of counterplay on the queen's wing, but he is clearly too late. 10.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 11.\( \text{exd5} \) and now 11...\( \text{d7} \) On 11...\( \text{e7} \) 12.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 13.\( \text{f5} \pm \) is another way of obtaining the advantage. 12.0-0 \( \text{e7} \) 13.\( \text{a3} \) a5 14.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{a6} \) 15.\( \text{f5} \) 15.axb4? 15...0-0 16.\( \text{e1} \) g6 17.\( \text{xe7} \) + \( \text{xe7} \) 18.\( \text{e3} \) with an edge for White.

D) 9...\( \text{bd7} \) 10.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{g8} \) 11.\( \text{h4} \) 11.\( \text{g3} \) h6 12.\( \text{h4} \) hxg5 13.hxg5 \( \text{xh1} + 14.\text{xh1} 11...\( \text{h6} \).

12.\( \text{e3} \) and White holds the initiative.

Finally, back to the main line.

\begin{center}
\textbf{8.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{e7} \)}
\end{center}

The alternative is 8...\( \text{e6} \)? After this move, we reach different positions from those after 8...\( \text{e7} \). I have tried both and can say that in each case, Black
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

gets a position with no problems at all. It is just a matter of taste which one prefers.

A) Let’s see what happens if White attacks this bishop immediately: 9.f4 \( \square bd7 \) 10.f5 \( \& c4 \) and now:

A1) 11.b3 \( \& xe2 \) 12.\( \& xe2N \) It was essential to take some action to defend the e4-pawn, since the move 12.\( \& xe2 \) fails to a concrete response, after which the advantage goes to Black, who took over after 12...\( \& c7 \) 13.\( \& f3 \) \( \& c8 \) 14.\( \& xf6 \) \( \& xf6 \) 15.\( \& d5 \) \( \& xd5 \) 16.\( \& xd5 \) \( \& xc2 \) 17.\( \& xb7 \) \( \& a5+ \) 18.b4 \( \& h4+ \) in Zhang Pengxiang-Zhou Jianchao, Hefei rapid 2010.

A11) 12...\( \& c8 \) 13.\( \& d5 \) \( \& a5+ \) 14.\( \& d2 \) \( \& a3 \) 15.\( \& d3 \) \( \& xd5 \) 16.\( \& xd5 \) \( \& b2 \) 17.\( \& d1 \) \( \& c7 \) 18.a4 If 18.\( \& c4 \) \( \& b6 \) 19.\( \& a5 \) \( \& d4 \) 20.\( \& f1 \) Black gets good play with the exchange sacrifice 20...\( \& xc4 \) 21.bxc4 \( \& e7+ \).

21.\( \& xc5 \) \( \& xc5 \) 22.b4 \( \& c8 \) 23.b5 White has excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but in my opinion, it is only enough for equality.

A2) If White keeps the knight on the board with 11.\( \& g3 \):

A21) Not so good is 11...\( \& xf1? \)!

12.\( \& xf1 \)

A211) 12...\( \& e7 \) 13.\( \& xf6 \) \( \& xf6 \) 14.\( \& d3 \) \( \& c8 \) 15...\( \& b6 \) 16...\( \& e4 \) 17.\( \& f3 \). Strategically, Black’s position becomes hopeless after the retreat of the knight. 16.\( \& e3 \) \( \& h5 \) 17.\( \& e5 \) \( \& h6 \) 18.\( \& b1 \) \( \& f8 \) 19.\( \& e3 \) \( \& g5 \) 20.\( \& a7 \) \( \& b8 \) 21.\( \& d3 \) \( \& g8 \) 22.\( \& hdl \) \( \& g3 \) 23.\( \& b6 \) \( \& e8 \) 24.\( \& c4 \) \( \& c8 \) 25.\( \& xd6 \) \( \& xd6 \) 26.\( \& xd6 \) Black has to sacrifice a second exchange, in order to obtain any sort of play, although after this, I think it will
be very hard for White to find a path to an advantage, over the board: 26...\texttt{cxc}3 27.bxc3 \texttt{exe}4 28.\texttt{d}6d3 \texttt{wc}8 29.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{c}5 30.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{e}4 31.\texttt{b}6 \texttt{xc}3+ 32.\texttt{c}xc3 \texttt{wc}3 33.\texttt{xb}7 e4 34.\texttt{b}8+ \texttt{h}7=;

A212) 12...\texttt{b}6!N If the light-squared bishop is to be exchanged, it is important to get some sort of compensation in return, and the queen move gives that. 13.\texttt{a}e3 \texttt{xb}2 14.\texttt{ed}5 \texttt{xd}5 15.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{c}8 16.0-0! \texttt{d}4+ 17.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{exd}4 18.\texttt{fb}1 \texttt{b}6 19.\texttt{b}4 \texttt{xc}2 20.\texttt{d}xe4 \texttt{f}6 21.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{b}2 22.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{c}2 23.\texttt{b}4 \texttt{c}7 24.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{c}7

A22) Stronger than taking on f1 is 11...\texttt{c}8!

12.\texttt{f}3 This is an improvement on 12.\texttt{xc}4?! \texttt{xc}4 13.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{d}4! 14.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}7 15.0-0 \texttt{c}4 16.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{h}4 17.\texttt{ge}2 \texttt{e}7 18.\texttt{ac}1 \texttt{b}5 19.b3 \texttt{c}5 20.a3 with a draw in the game Vallejo Pons-Lopez Martinez, Palma de Mallorca 2009. Now:

A221) 12...\texttt{a}5?!N 13.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{xc}4 14.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{h}4 15.\texttt{ge}2 \texttt{e}7 16.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{c}8 17.a3 \texttt{c}7 with equal chances, for example: 18.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{c}5 19.\texttt{xc}5 \texttt{xc}5 20.0-0-0 \texttt{b}5 with the initiative for Black;

A222) The inferior 12...\texttt{h}4?! runs into 13.\texttt{xc}4! \texttt{xc}4 14.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{c}7 15.\texttt{xf}6 \texttt{xf}6 16.0-0-0

16...\texttt{d}5! Only this, as other moves lead to a positionally lost game. 17.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{d}4 18.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{xc}4 19.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{xe}2 20.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{xe}4 21.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{f}2 22.\texttt{he}1 \texttt{xd}1 23.\texttt{xe}5+ \texttt{d}7 24.\texttt{xd}1 White has an extra pawn, but Black retains chances to save the game, Naiditsch-Olszewski, Trzcianka 2012;

A3) 12...\texttt{e}7 13.0-0-0 \texttt{a}5 In case of 13...\texttt{c}7 14.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{xc}4 15.\texttt{xf}6 \texttt{xf}6 16.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{b}5 17.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{c}6 18.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{d}8 19.\texttt{cd}5 \texttt{xd}5 20.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{b}6 21.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{xe}3 22.\texttt{xe}3 \texttt{c}4 23.b3 \texttt{c}6 24.\texttt{h}3 Naiditsch-Spoelman, Germany Bundesliga 2009/10. White has a clear advantage, on account of his more active pieces and the very weak black king, which has nowhere to hide from the numerous white threats.

14.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{xc}4 15.\texttt{xf}6 \texttt{xf}6 16.\texttt{ge}2 0-0 17.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{c}7?? It was essential to play 17...\texttt{b}5, with mutual chances. 18.\texttt{g}4 \texttt{c}6 Now White could have gained a winning advantage with 19.\texttt{b}3!, but instead he played 19.\texttt{d}5? and later lost in Zhou-Gabuzyan, Maribor 2012.

B) Taking on f6 does not give White the advantage, so only the move 9.\texttt{g}3 remains as a means to fight for an advantage: 9...\texttt{g}6! A strong move, dominating the white knight at g3 and also defending the h5-pawn.

9...\texttt{b}6!?
10.f4!N A sharp move, after which Black has to react very precisely, in order not to get into a bad position.

10...exf4 11.e5! fxg3 12\.xf6 \.b6 13\.f3 \.f2+ 14\.xf2 gxf2+ 15\.xf2 \.g8=;

C) 9.g3?! \.e7 10\.g2

C1) 10...\.c6 11\.d2 \.h7 12\.xe7 \.xe7 13.0-0-.d8 14.f4 b5 15.\.d5 \.b7 16.g4 h4 17.g5±;

C2) I believe that in such positions the knight stands better on d7 than c6, because from d7, it has many possibilities – if necessary, it can replace its colleague on f6, or it can come via b6 to c4. 10...\.bd7 and now:

C21) 11\.d2 If 11.f4 \.c4; after 11.a4 0-0 12.0-0 b5 13\.xf6 \.xf6 14.axb5 axb5 15\.xa8 \.xa8 16.\.b5 \.b8 17\.d3 \.c8 18.b3 \.xh3 19.c4 h4 (Naiditsch-Urkedal, Stockholm 2011) White has achieved a great deal on the queenside, but in that time, Black has not been sleeping and has created interesting counterplay on the other wing. Chances are about equal.

11...b5 11...\.c8 12.f4 b5 13.a3 \.b6 14.b3 \.c5 15.\.d1 b4 16.axb4 \.xb4 17.0-0 h4 18.\.xh4 exf4 19.\.xf4 \.cd7 20.\.d5 \.xd5 21.exd5 \.xf4 22.\.xf4 \.xc2 23.\.d4 and White has a virtually winning position, on account of his active pieces and the black king being stuck in the centre, Movsesian-

Swiercz, 1st rapid match game, Wroclaw 2010. 12.a3 0-0 13.0-0 \.c8

9.\.g3!? 10.\.xf6 10...\.c6 11.\.d5 11...\.c8 12.\.a4 12.\.c6 12.\.e6 13.\.e6 13.\.h3 14.\.e7= Kalashian-Andriasyan, Jermuk 2010.

11.\.ec3 11.h4 12.g3 13.\.e6 13.\.h3 14.\.c6 is equal. 11...\.e6 11...\.c6 12.\.e4 12.\.e2
12...h4! By fixing the white pawns and seizing the dark squares, Black achieves an equal position and after kingside castling, he can play ...g7-g6, with the idea of ...f7-f5.

9...g6!
The knight should not be allowed into f5, where it stands superbly, whilst giving up the light-squared bishop for the knight is also not good, because it leaves Black with too many weak light squares in his camp. Therefore, the move 9...g6 meets all the requirements of the position. 9...h4?! 10.f5! xf5

A) 11.xf6 e6! 12.xe7 xe7 13.d5 xd5 14.xd5 0-0 15.e2 c8 16.c3 d7 17.d1 c6=;

B) Black has given up his light-squared bishop, hoping for quick development and the chance to exploit the temporarily weak pawn on f5. However, even if White loses this pawn, he will have excellent compensation. 11.exf5 and now:

B1) 11...bd7 12.c4

B11) After 12...b5? it has been proved that 13.h3 gives White an edge: 13.c8 14.e2 b4 15.a4 a5 16.b5 17.d1 h5 18.c4 c6 19.e3 xf5 20.a3 a5 21.axb4

B12) 12...c8!N It is important to pose White as many problems as possible, while he has not yet developed all his pieces or castled. 13.h3 h5 14.d2 b5 15.0-0 c5 16.xf6 d1 b4 17.xf6 bxc3 18.xe7 cxd2 19.exd8 xd8 20.xd2 xf5=. 16.xf6 17.a4 b4 and now 18.d5 xf5 19.xb4 gives White an edge. 18.e4 is equal, see for example 18...xe4 19.e2 xf5 20.xe4
27...e4! Black breaks his bonds and himself takes over the initiative. The bishop on c6 does not take part in the game, and the presence of opposite-coloured bishops gives Black a significant advantage. It seems to me that his attack will become irresistible, starting with the move ...\textit{\textbf{cb}}8 and the transfer of the bishop to the h2-b8 diagonal.

B2) 11...\textit{\textbf{c}}6 12.\textit{\textbf{c}}4 \textit{\textbf{d}}4 13.\textit{\textbf{x}}f6 \textit{\textbf{x}}f6

White has succeeded in blockading the black central pawns, and soon he will complete his development by castling kingside, and begin to occupy the blockading squares d5 and e4. 14.0-0 14.\textit{\textbf{d}}5!? \textit{\textbf{x}}f5 15.\textit{\textbf{e}}4 \textit{\textbf{c}}7 16.c3 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 17.\textit{\textbf{f}}3 g6 18.0-0-0 \textit{\textbf{f}}8 19.g4 \textit{\textbf{h}}6 20.\textit{\textbf{e}}3 and White is winning,

Howell-Van Wely, Amsterdam 2010. 14...\textit{\textbf{c}}8 14...\textit{\textbf{x}}f5 15.\textit{\textbf{d}}5 \textit{\textbf{d}}7 16.\textit{\textbf{f}}d1 0-0 17.\textit{\textbf{e}}4 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 18.a4 \textit{\textbf{a}}c8 19.a5 \textit{\textbf{c}}6 20.c3 \textit{\textbf{g}}5 21.b4 \textit{\textbf{f}}4 22.b5 axb5 23.\textit{\textbf{w}}xb5 \textit{\textbf{c}}7 24.\textit{\textbf{d}}5\pm RYBKA-HIARCS, Leiden 2010. 15.\textit{\textbf{d}}5 \textit{\textbf{d}}7 16.\textit{\textbf{e}}4 \textit{\textbf{x}}f5 17.\textit{\textbf{x}}f5 \textit{\textbf{x}}f5 18.\textit{\textbf{x}}d6 \textit{\textbf{d}}8 19.\textit{\textbf{a}}3 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 20.\textit{\textbf{b}}3 \textit{\textbf{d}}7 21.\textit{\textbf{a}}d1 0-0 22.\textit{\textbf{x}}d7 \textit{\textbf{x}}d7 23.\textit{\textbf{d}}1 \textit{\textbf{c}}6 24.\textit{\textbf{d}}5\pm White has a strong knight which occupies the central square and dominates, whilst Black's light squares are weak, which White can exploit by placing all of his pieces on light squares.

10.\textit{\textbf{c}}4 \textit{\textbf{e}}6 11.\textit{\textbf{b}}3

Instead, 11.\textit{\textbf{x}}e6?!N \textit{\textbf{f}}xe6 12.\textit{\textbf{w}}d2 \textit{\textbf{bd}}7 13.0-0 (13.f4 \textit{\textbf{a}}5\infty) 13...\textit{\textbf{c}}7 looks unclear. Black has achieved the main thing, in exchanging the lightsquared bishops on e6, after which this square is occupied by a pawn, controlling the only weakness in the black camp, the square d5.

11...\textit{\textbf{c}}6\infty

The square c6 is probably the only place where the knight stands well, but first we will examine what happens if it develops elsewhere, such as with 11...\textit{\textbf{bd}}7, and then we will see how White is able to achieve all he wants af-
ter 11...\textit{Qf}d7. Strategically, the move is good, but it fails for a specific reason, involving the weakness of the pawn on d6. But the new move has various pluses, the most decisive being the chance of occupying d4.

A) 11...\textit{Qbd}7 12.0-0 12.\textit{Qf}3 \textit{Cc}8
13.\textit{Qd}1 (13.\textit{Qf}1 \textit{Qb}6 14.\textit{Qe}3 \textit{Qh}7
15.\textit{Qxe}7 \textit{Qxe}7 16.\textit{Qcd}5 \textit{Qxd}5
17.\textit{Qxd}5 \textit{Qf}6 18.\textit{Qb}3 \textit{Qf}8 and
19...\textit{Qg}7 with an equal position.

Kryvoruchko-Ftcacnik, Czech tt 2012/13) 13...\textit{Qc}5 14.0-0 and after
14...0-0 15.\textit{Qd}2 gives White something. Instead, in Vallejo Pons-Rytshagov, Istanbul Olympiad 2000, there followed 14...\textit{Qxb}3 15.\textit{axb}3 \textit{h}4
16.\textit{Qge}2 \textit{Qh}5 17.\textit{Qxe}7 \textit{Qxe}7 18.\textit{Qd}3
\textit{Cc}6 19.f4 exf4 20.\textit{Qd}4 0-0 21.\textit{Qxf}4
\textit{Qxf}4 22.\textit{Qxf}4. Here White is better, as his pieces are more active, and there are various weaknesses in the black position, which White will soon exploit.

12...\textit{Qxc}5 13.\textit{Qxe}6 \textit{Qxe}6 13...fxe6
14.\textit{Qxf}6 \textit{Qxf}6 15.b4±.
14.\textit{Qxf}6 \textit{Qxf}6 15.\textit{Qd}5±. White has managed to exchange the two defenders of d5 and left Black with his bad bishop, and for this reason, he has the advantage.

B) 11...\textit{Qfd}7N 12.\textit{Qxe}7 \textit{Qxe}7
13.\textit{Qd}2 \textit{Qc}6 14.0-0-0

Here Black faces a choice. Firstly, he can defend the d6-pawn for now with 14...\textit{Qd}4, but then White will prepare the exchange of this knight and Black's position will be bad. The second idea is to castle queenside and abandon the d6-pawn, with the idea of trying to catch the rook on d6, although this does not work, due to concrete action by White. The third and strongest option is to play 14...\textit{Qd}8, also sacrificing the d6-pawn, with the same idea, but with the nuance that the black king remains in the centre where it is better placed.

B1) 14...\textit{Qd}8 14...\textit{Qd}4 15.\textit{Qxe}6
\textit{Qxe}6 16.\textit{Qb}1±. 15.\textit{Qxd}6 \textit{Qxd}6
16.\textit{Qxd}6 \textit{Qd}4 17.\textit{Qxe}6 fxe6 18.f4 exf4

There is no reason not to take the pawn.

19.\textit{Qxh}5 gxh5 19...\textit{Qxh}5 20.\textit{Qxd}4
\textit{Qg}5 21.\textit{Qd}2 \textit{Qf}6 22.\textit{Qf}2. 20.\textit{Qxd}4
\textit{Qg}8 20...\textit{e}5 21.\textit{Qd}6 \textit{Qg}8 (21...\textit{Qc}5
22.\textit{Qg}6 \textit{Qf}7 23.\textit{Qh}6±) 22.\textit{Qg}1! \textit{f}3
23.\textit{Qf}1±. 21.e5! \textit{Qxg}2 22.\textit{Qxf}4 \textit{Qe}7
23.\textit{Qh}4 \textit{Qf}8! 24.\textit{Qb}1 \textit{Qgf}2!\textit{w}

C) 14...0-0-0 15.\textit{Qxd}6 \textit{Qxd}6
16.\textit{Qxd}6 \textit{Qd}4 17.\textit{Qxe}6 fxe6 18.f4 exf4

Here, as in the position above, the pawn should be taken.

19.\textit{Qxh}5 gxh5 20.\textit{Qxd}4 \textit{Qb}6 20...\textit{e}5 21.\textit{Qd}6 \textit{Qhg}8
22.\textit{Qd}5 \textit{Qxg}2 23.\textit{Qd}1 \textit{Qg}7 24.\textit{Qh}6±.
21.\textit{Qxd}8+ \textit{Qxd}8 White has the advantage, with his extra pawn, though to be fair, one should say that it very hard to realise such a pawn.
12. \( \text{g}2 \text{e}2 \text{ 0-0} \text{ 13. } \text{d}3 \)

13. \( \text{h}6 \text{ e}8 \text{ 14.0-0 b}5 \text{ 15. } \text{d}3 \pm \)

13... \( \text{h}7 \)

13... \( \text{d}7 \text{ 14. } \text{xe}7 \text{ xe}7 \text{ 15.0-0-0 } \text{xb}3 \text{ 16.axb3 } \text{g}5+ \text{ 17. } \text{d}2! \pm \)

White has coped with all that Black has asked of him. Now Black loses the d6-pawn, without any compensation at all.

14. \( \text{h}6 \)

\[ \text{Conclusion} \]

In this chapter, we have looked at the relatively new and interesting move 6.h3, which has become popular and has been seen frequently in recent years. This is because in the main lines, White has no clear path to an advantage, whereas 6.h3, as we have seen, leads to complicated and fresh positions.

Looking at the move 6...e5, which is a very common reply to 6.h3, we can see that in all lines, Black has a good position, and in general he retains counter-chances, which is a very important factor in preparing the opening in our day.

In my opinion, our move is more subtle than 6...e6. After the latter move, in many variations Black is only fighting for a draw because the resulting positions are roughly equal, but White always has some pressure. Black can neutralise this, but he has insufficient resources to take the initiative himself. Of course, this is not suitable for a stronger player, playing a weaker opponent.

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

14... \( \text{e}8 \text{ 15. } \text{xe}6 \text{ fxe}6 \text{ 16.0-0-0 } \text{g}5+ \text{ 17. } \text{xe}5 \text{ fxe}5+ \text{ 18. } \text{b}1 \text{ ad}8 \)

A strong move, preparing active operations. Black has managed to exchange the two bishops, and in exchanging light-squared bishops, he has succeeded in forcing White to exchange on e6, so the f7-pawn occupies that square. But even so, it is not all so simple: Black has a major problem, in that his king is very weak, whilst the enemy king is located on the other flank. This allows White to develop an attack with tempi, and it is very hard for Black to defend against this.

19. \( \text{hf}1 \text{ ef}8 \text{ 20.g}3 \pm \)

15. \( \text{d}1 \text{ e}8 \text{ 16.a}3 \text{ c}6 \text{ 17. } \text{xe}6 \text{ fxe}6 \text{ 18. } \text{d}3 \text{ g}5 \text{ 19. } \text{xe}5 \text{ fxe}5+ \)

\( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \)
Exercises

After examining the Najdorf Variation for Black and familiarising ourselves with the main ideas of this very interesting line, which contains many new ideas, I would like to give you the chance to test yourself.

Solving these exercises will strengthen your knowledge and help you to revise the material you have seen above, but this time in the form of tests.

Such exercises are extremely useful from the practical viewpoint, because all of the positions are taken from games played in various tournaments and the players themselves had to solve the same problems at the board.

By solving these, you will be better prepared for practical play.

Good luck!
Exercise 17

Exercise 18

Exercise 19

Exercise 20

Exercise 21

Exercise 22
Solutions

Kiprian Berbatov
Samvel Ter Sahakyan
Aix-les-Bains Ech 2011 (6)
20...\(\text{Nxd4} 21.\text{cxd4}\)
21.\(\text{We3}\)?! \(\text{f2}\)+! (21...\(\text{xe5}\)?! 22.\(\text{xd4}\) ♂\(\text{f2}\)+
23.\(\text{g1}\) ♂\(\text{h3}\)+! 24.\(\text{f1}\) (24.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{xd4}\) 25.\(\text{xd4}\)
\(\text{d3}\)+) 24...\(\text{b5}\)+ 25.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{xe2}\)+ 26.\(\text{xe2}\) \(\text{c6}\)+
27.\(\text{f1}\) (27.\(\text{gh3}\)? \(\text{f3}\)+ 28.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{hx5}\)+)
27...\(\text{f6}\)+) 22.\(\text{gl}\) (22.\(\text{xf2}\) \(\text{b4}\) 23.\(\text{xb6}\)
\(\text{xb6}\)+) 22...\(\text{d3}\) 23.\(\text{cxd4}\) \(\text{xe1}\) 24.\(\text{xe1}\) \(\text{d8}\)
25.\(\text{d1}\) a5!\(!\)
21...\(\text{xd4}\) 22.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{xb2}\) 23.\(\text{ab1}\) \(\text{xe5}\)+

Dimitri Reinderman
Viswanathan Anand
Wijk aan Zee 1999 (1)
24...\(\text{h5}\)!++ 25.\(\text{b6}\) \(\text{h4}\) 26.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{g5}\)!
27.\(\text{f3}\) h3—

Nigel Short
Garry Kasparov
Amsterdam VSB Euwe-mem 1996 (4)
31...\(\text{xc3}\)! 32.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{b6}\)+ 33.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{c7}\)
34.\(\text{a8}\) \(\text{c4}\)! 35.\(\text{b7}\) \(\text{xb7}\)
35...\(\text{d8}\)+
36.\(\text{xb7}\) \(\text{b8}\) 37.\(\text{a6}\) \(\text{b6}\) 38.\(\text{a1}\) \(\text{cc6}\)
39.\(\text{xb5}\) \(\text{xb5}\) 40.\(\text{a8}\)+ \(\text{g7}\) 41.\(\text{a7}\) \(\text{f8}\)
42.\(\text{a8}\)+ \(\text{g7}\) 43.\(\text{a7}\) \(\text{f8}\)
\(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\)
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

Arkady Naiditsch
Viswanathan Anand
Dortmund 2003 (5)
16...e5! 17...f5?!
17...d2 b4 18.axb4 xb3 19.cxb3 d8±.
17...xf5 18.e5 xf5 xb3 19.cxb3 b4
20.axb4 xb4 —+

Solution 4

Michael Feygin
Alexey Shirov
Germany Bundesliga 2008/09 (12)
13...xe4! 14.xe6!
14.xe7 xc3 15.xd8 xe2 ±.
14...ixe6 15.xe7 xe7 16.xe4
16.fxe4 d7 ±

Solution 5

Hichem Hamdouchi
Maxime Vachier-Lagrange
Pau ch-FRA 2012 (2)
14...b4
14...h4! 15.g4 f6 16.fe1 (16.d3 a5! ±)
16...c7 ±; 14...f6 15.fe1 c7 16.g5∞.
15.axb4 b8 16.c4
16.b5! axb5 17.e5 —
16...xb4 17.b3∞

Solution 6

Judit Polgar
Boris Gelfand
Dos Hermanas 1994 (9)
14...h5! 15.h3 gxh6 16.xh5 a7!
17.ad1 e5 —+

Solution 7

Santiago Gonzalez de la Torre
Evgeny Naer
Kallithea tt 2008 (5)
28...a5! 29.b6 c7± 30.a6?! a4 31.a2
d5 32.e5 d7 ±

Solution 8
Thal Abergel
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
Pau ch-FRA 2008 (10)
26...d7! 27...xg7? xd3+!
27...d1+?! 28.a2 d5 29.g5! c3+ 30.bxc3 hxg5 31.xg5 c2+ 32.a1 xc3+ 33.a2 c2+.
28.a2 d5! 29.g4 c3+ 30.bxc3 c2+
31.a1 xc3+ 32.a2 c2+ 33.a1 c1+ 34.a2 c8 0-1

Jacek Tomczak
Andrey Volokitin
Lublin 2009 (1)
26...xf3+! 27.xf3 xe4 28.d3 xd3
29.cxd3 f6=

Michail Kostromin
Alexander Areschenko
Rogaska Slatina tt 2011 (1)
18...xc3! 19.bxc3 xe4 20.e1 c8
20...a5!↑.
21.d5 xc5 22.xb7 xd1 23.xc8 xc8 24.d2 f6!

Atousa Pourkashiyan
Wesley So
Jakarta 2011 (3)
29...xd1! 30 xd1 g6! 31.xd6 c1+ 32.e2 g5↑

Rustam Ponomariov
Arkady Naiditsch
Porto Carras Ech- tt 2011 (4)
18...c5! 19.xe6 fxe6!
19...xe6 20.d5 f2+ 21.xf2 xf2
22.e7+=.
20.hxg4 xd3 21.xc5 xc5=[]
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

**Solution 14**

Gata Kamsky  
Vassily Ivanchuk  
Lucerne Wch-tt 1993 (2)

17...d5!? 18.\(\Box\)xd5 \(\Box\)xd5 19.exd5 \(\Box\)f6  
20.\(\Box\)e5! \(\Box\)xe5 21.\(\Box\)xe5 \(\Box\)xd5 22.h3 \(\Box\)e8!

**Solution 15**

Heiko Mertens  
Ivan Cheparinov  
Reykjavik 2012 (2)

28...f5! 29.exf5 \(\Box\)xf5 30.\(\Box\)xb7 \(\Box\)f4 31.\(\Box\)e4 \(\Box\)e6→

**Solution 16**

Juan Manuel Bellon Lopez  
Lajos Portisch  
Linares 1981 (7)

22...\(\Box\)b8! 23.\(\Box\)d3 \(\Box\)a7+ 24.\(\Box\)h2 \(\Box\)xd3  
25.cxd3 \(\Box\)d8 26.\(\Box\)d1 h5 27.g3 h4! 28.g4 \(\Box\)h7†

**Solution 17**

Michael Rahal Vives  
Alexander Areschenko  
Zurich 2009 (2)

14...d5! 15.\(\Box\)xd5  
15.exd5 \(\Box\)xd5 16.\(\Box\)xd5 \(\Box\)d2+ 17.\(\Box\)xh2 \(\Box\)xd5  
18.\(\Box\)xe7 \(\Box\)xe7†.  
15...\(\Box\)xd2+ 16.\(\Box\)xh2 \(\Box\)xd5! 17.exd5 \(\Box\)xd5  
18.\(\Box\)xe7 \(\Box\)xe7†

**Solution 18**

Jovita Ziogaite  
Natalia Zdebskaja  
Dresden ol-W 2008 (4)

12...d5! 13.\(\Box\)xb6 \(\Box\)xb6 14.\(\Box\)xd5?  
14.exd5 \(\Box\)c5†.  
14...\(\Box\)xd5 15.exd5 \(\Box\)c5++
Kazim Gulamali
Matthew Herman
ICC INT US Chess League 2012 (3)

23...d5! 24.eb4
24.exd5 ebxd5! (24...ebxd5? 25.e4+-)
25.ed5 ebxd5 26.eh7+? eh7! 27.ed5 e4!
28.eh5+ eh8--.

24...ebc3! 25.bxc3 dxe4 26.ee4 hxg4
27.hxg4 eb4 28.ee4 eb4 29.wxe4 eb4--

Alyona Goreskul
Vassily Nedilko
Odessa 2009 (6)

17...d5! 18.fxe5
18.f5 ebxf5! 19.eb5 eb4+-

18...eb4 19.eb4 dxe4 20.eb4 eb5

Dario Dutina
Miroslav Zufic
Sibenik tt 2012 (7)

19...ebh4! ebh8 20.eh1?
20.gxh5?! eb5! 21.eh2 (21.eb6? ebh7--)
21...ebxe4--

20...ebxe3--
20...eb5--

Gennady Ageichenko
David Navara
Pardubice 2010 (2)

25...eb8! 26.eb2 b6 27.axb6 ebxb6 28.ea3
eb8 29.b4 e4+--
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

Zaven Andriasyan  
Andreas Skytte Hagen  
Plovdiv Ech 2012 (8)  
11.g4 d5?! 12.exd5  \( \mathcal{Q} \)xd5 13.\( \mathcal{Q} \)xd5 exd5  
14.\( \mathcal{Q} \)f5±

Zaven Andriasyan  
Tobiasz Smal  
Warsaw rapid 2011 (1)  
11...\( \mathcal{B} \)bd7? 12.\( \mathcal{Q} \)xe6 fxe6 13.\( \mathcal{Q} \)g5±

Zaven Andriasyan  
Semen Dvoirys  
Magnitogorsk 2011 (1)  
9.\( \mathcal{A} \)a3! \( \mathcal{B} \)bd7 10.\( \mathcal{B} \)b5 \( \mathcal{W} \)c7 11.\( \mathcal{Q} \)xd7+ \( \mathcal{Q} \)xd7  
12.\( \mathcal{Q} \)g5 \( \mathcal{W} \)c8 13.\( \mathcal{Q} \)xf6 gxf6 14.0-0±

Zaven Andriasyan  
Shamil Arslanov  
St Petersburg 2011 (3)  
30.g4!+-

Zaven Andriasyan  
Mohamad Al Sayed  
Dubai 2011 (6)  
18...0-0! 19.\( \mathcal{W} \)a4 exf3 20.\( \mathcal{W} \)f1 f2+  
20...e5!—+

21.\( \mathcal{W} \)e2 e5 22.\( \mathcal{Q} \)g3 d4 23.\( \mathcal{W} \)c6 \( \mathcal{W} \)xb2  
24.\( \mathcal{Q} \)d1 \( \mathcal{W} \)b8 25.\( \mathcal{W} \)c4 \( \mathcal{W} \)b7 26.\( \mathcal{W} \)c6 \( \mathcal{W} \)b8  
27.\( \mathcal{W} \)c4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)c5? 28.\( \mathcal{W} \)xf6! gxf6 29.\( \mathcal{W} \)xd4!±
Zaven Andriasyan
Tigras Kotanjian
Yerevan ch-ARM 2011 (3)
21.\textit{a}a1!? \textit{b}b3 22.\textit{f}d1 \textit{e}6 23.\textit{g}4! \textit{g}6
24.\textit{e}7+ \textit{x}e7 25.\textit{f}5 \textit{e}5 26.\textit{d}xe7 \textit{e}7
27.\textit{d}4±

Zaven Andriasyan
Daniel Naroditsky
Groningen 2010 (2)
46.\textit{a}a7+ \textit{g}8 47.\textit{e}6! \textit{h}5
47...\textit{x}c6 48.\textit{a}a8+ \textit{f}7 49.\textit{d}8++–
48.\textit{c}7 \textit{xc}7 49.\textit{xc}7++–

Zaven Andriasyan
Vugar Gashimov
Warsaw Ech blitz 2010 (11)
15.\textit{e}6! \textit{b}6 16.\textit{d}5
16.\textit{x}g7+! \textit{f}8 17.\textit{e}6+! \textit{fx}e6 18.\textit{h}3±
16...\textit{xd}5 17.\textit{ex}d5 \textit{f}6↑

Zaven Andriasyan
Alexander Raykhman
Kalamaria Open 2010 (4)
19.\textit{e}4!! \textit{f}8 20.\textit{xf}7! \textit{xf}7 21.\textit{d}6+! 1–0

Anatoly Donskov
Zaven Andriasyan
St Petersburg 2012 (7)
21...\textit{c}4! 22.\textit{e}6+ \textit{xe}6! 23.\textit{d}xe6 \textit{f}8
24.\textit{he}1 \textit{e}4! 25.\textit{c}5 \textit{xe}6++
Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian

1. Winning with Nils Grandelius
   Zaven Andriasyan
   Plovdiv Ech 2012 (9)
   34...\textit{b7}! 35.\textit{c3} \textit{e6} 36.\textit{xf4} \textit{xb6}+ 37.\textit{h2} \textit{h6}+ 38.\textit{g3} \textit{g6}+ 39.\textit{h2} \textit{d4}++

2. Winning with Bosko Tomic
   Zaven Andriasyan
   Plovdiv Ech 2012 (3)
   12...\textit{h4}! 13.\textit{g4} \textit{f6} 14.\textit{f5} \textit{e2} \textit{b5}+

3. Winning with Marcin Tazbir
   Zaven Andriasyan
   Cappelle la Grande 2012 (5)
   15...\textit{g5}! 16.\textit{e2} \textit{h5} 17.\textit{g3} \textit{h4}?
   17...\textit{d5}!!
   18.\textit{g4} \textit{d7}+

4. Winning with Evandro Amorim Barbosa
   Zaven Andriasyan
   Cappelle la Grande 2012 (1)
   19...\textit{d7}!!+ 20.\textit{e2} \textit{xb2}+! 21.\textit{xb2} \textit{b8}+ 22.\textit{a2} \textit{b4}+ 23.\textit{xb4} \textit{xb4} 24.\textit{d2} \textit{hb8} 0-1

5. Winning with Robin van Kampen
   Zaven Andriasyan
   Groningen 2010 (9)
   16.\textit{e5}! \textit{dxe5} 17.\textit{e4} \textit{c7} 18.\textit{d6}+ \textit{f8} 19.fxe5 \textit{g5} 20.\textit{f2} bxc4 21.h4!+-
Antonios Pavlidis
Zaven Andriasyan
Kalamaria Open 2010 (5)
13...g5! 14.\(\text{\text{f}}\)f3?! 14.e5!? dxe5 15.fxe5 \(\text{\text{f}}\)xe5\(\infty\)
14...gxf4 15.\(\text{\text{f}}\)xf4 \(\text{\text{x}}\)xc3\(\infty\)

Eltaj Safarli
Zaven Andriasyan
Moscow 2010 (6)
45...f5! 46.gxf5 \(\text{\text{f}}\)xe4 47.\(\text{\text{h}}\)e3 \(\text{\text{h}}\)h8 48.\(\text{\text{g}}\)g3 \(\text{\text{e}}\)e5\(\infty\)

Artur Gabrielian
Zaven Andriasyan
St Petersburg 2009 (7)
31...f5! 32.exf5 \(\text{\text{x}}\)xc2! 33.\(\text{\text{b}}\)b3 \(\text{\text{c}}\)c4\(\infty\)

Alvaro Tejedo Meneses
Zaven Andriasyan
Benasque Open 2009 (1)
26...e5! 27.f5 f6 28.\(\text{\text{g}}\)g3 \(\text{\text{f}}\)f8 29.\(\text{\text{h}}\)h3 h6 30.\(\text{\text{e}}\)e3 d5\(\infty\)

Dmitry Chuprov
Zaven Andriasyan
Moscow 2008 (2)
17.hxg6! exd4 18.g7
18.gxf7+!\(\rightarrow\)
18...\(\text{\text{g}}\)g8 19.\(\text{\text{x}}\)xd4 0-0-0\(\infty\)
Nigel Short
Garry Kasparov
Riga Tal-mem 1995 (9)
21...♕xb1+! 22.♕xb1 fxg4 23.hxg4 h3
23...♕xc2! ♔.
24.♕c3 hxg2+ 25.♕xg2 ♕g8 26.♕xc8+
♕xc8 27.♕f1 ♕xg4 28.♕d2 e5 29.♕c3
♕b7 30.♕c7

Vugar Gashimov
Alexander Grischuk
Bursa Wch-tt 2010 (4)
22...♕h8! 23.♕f4?! ♕b4+ 24.c3 ♕xc3
25.♕d2 ♕d5 26.♕f7+ ♕c6 27.♕c1 ♕b6
28.♕e3+ ♕a5! 29.a3 ♕a4 30.axb4 ♕xd3
31.♕a5+ ♕b3 32.♕xc3+ ♕xc3+ 33.♕d2
b6! 34.♕xb6 ♕e5+ 35.♕d1 ♕b7 36.♕xb7
♕hd8 37.♕f3+ ♕a2 38.♕f2 ♕b1 39.♕f3
♕ac8 40.♕b3+ ♕b2 41.♕xb2+ ♕xb2 0-1

Ilya Smirin
Alexander Grischuk
Kallithea tt 2008 (6)
16...d5! 17.♕xc4 ♕xc4 18.♕g5 d4 19.♕xf6
♕xf6 20.♕d5 ♕xc2 21.♕xf6+ gxf6 22.♕h4
♕g7 23.♕g4+ ♕h8 24.♕h4 ♕g7 25.♕g4+
♕h8 26.♕h4 ♕g8! 27.♕xf6+ ♕g7 28.♕g1
♕e8†

Alexander Motylev
Alexander Grischuk
Moscow ch-RUS 2004 (1)
15...♕xc3!? 16.♕xc3 ♕xc3 17.bxc3 ♕h2
18.♕f4 ♕h5 19.♕g5 ♕xg5 20.♕xg5 ♕fd7∞
Sergey Karjakin
Alexander Grischuk
Odessa 2010 (3)
33...\textit{xc}2! 34.g6 f5!±

Peter Leko
Alexander Grischuk
London 2012 (8)
16...\textit{x}h2! 17.\textit{x}h2 exd4 18.\textit{h}4±

Vladimir Akopian
Alexander Khalifman
Plovdiv Ech 2012 (11)
26.\textit{b}5+! axb5 27.\textit{x}d7 \textit{xf}4+ 28.\textit{b}1 \textit{gx}g5
28...\textit{a}6 29.\textit{ee}1!!+–.
29.\textit{c}7 \textit{a}6 30.\textit{xf}8! 1-0

Alexey Shirov
Alexander Grischuk
Wijk aan Zee 2011 (8)
21.h4! gxh3 22.\textit{h}xh3 b5 23.\textit{e}2 f6
24.\textit{bh}1 \textit{c}6 25.\textit{h}8 \textit{a}7 26.f4!±

Vassily Ivanchuk
Alexander Grischuk
Sochi tt 2010 (7)
28.\textit{xd}5! cxd5 29.\textit{xd}5+ \textit{e}8 30.\textit{d}1!+–
\textit{c}7 31.\textit{a}8+ \textit{f}7 32.\textit{f}1+ \textit{e}6 33.\textit{xa}6+
\textit{d}7 34.\textit{d}1+ \textit{e}8 35.e6! \textit{d}8 36.\textit{b}5+
\textit{e}7 37.\textit{b}4+ 1-0
Explanation of Symbols

The chess board with its coordinates:

- White stands slightly better
- Black stands slightly better
- White stands better
- Black stands better
- White has a decisive advantage
- Black has a decisive advantage
- balanced position
- unclear position
- compensation for the material
- strong (sufficient)
- weak (insufficient)
- better is
- weaker is
- good move
- excellent move
- bad move
- blunder
- interesting move
- dubious move
- only move
- with the idea
- attack
- initiative
- lead in development
- counterplay
- mate
- correspondence

- White to move
- Black to move
- Good move
- Excellent move
- Bad move
- Blunder
- Interesting move
- Dubious move
- King
- Queen
- Rook
- Bishop
- Knight

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I hope that, in reading this book, you have found many interesting new opening ideas and have learnt to understand the positions arising in the Najdorf Variation.

Even players who have never played the Najdorf in their lives, after reading this book, can undoubtedly start to play this most fascinating and fairly sharp variation of the Sicilian Defence, because we have tried to present all the main ideas of the line, including all the main moves for White and the corresponding defences for Black, which allow him to achieve satisfactory play.

In many variations, we have tried to sidestep the most popular lines and instead, in quite a few cases, have tried to find new moves, which give the possibility of reaching fresh, sharp positions that have not yet been tested. In addition, we have also analysed quite deeply some relatively rare continuations, but ones which are quite poisonous and contain much of interest.

In many variations, we have not tried to analyse everything out to a bare draw, or to find every way of obtaining equality, but have instead tried to obtain complications, and play with mutual chances, where, of course, there is an element of risk, but where there is scope to play for a win. It should be noted that in order to obtain such positions as Black, one needs to employ rare or new continuations, or non-standard ideas, which will change the course of the game.

But of course, there are some variations where even with the computer’s help it is very difficult to enliven the position, and in these situations, one has to keep oneself in hand and not take unfounded risks, which can just lead to the ruin of one’s position. In such dry positions, one must adopt a pragmatic approach and console oneself with the thought that in modern-day chess, a draw as Black is a satisfactory result.

After studying this book, to learn the nuances of the opening, I would advise you to look further at those games which are quoted only in part in the book. To improve your play and master the intricacies of the opening, I recommend that you play training games against a player of similar strength, which will deepen your knowledge of the subtleties, and after the games, analyse them and try to find the typical mistakes which you are making.

Having played quite a few different openings as Black, I have come to the conclusion that the Najdorf is the best way for Black to play for a win. Without risking ending up in a rather unpleasant position, he can often reach a really very promising position. In open tournaments, where it is essential to play for a win in every game, the Najdorf has been my best and most trusted friend, which has enabled me to achieve some highly important victories, often in the middle of the tournament, against players of varying strengths.

**PLAY THE NAJDORF AND WIN !!!**
Index of Variations

1. e4 c5 2. d3 f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. cxd4 f6 5. c3 a6

6. g5 e6 7. f4 b6

6. c4 e6

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Zaven Andriasian was born on 11 March 1989 in Erevan. He has been playing chess since the age of five. He was Armenian under-10 champion and went on to win many other Armenian championships at various junior categories. At 15, he became Armenian rapid champion, and he repeated this success the following year. He became an International Master in 2005 by winning the B-Group at the Aeroflot Open, and the same year became European under-16 Champion. In 2006, he became European under-18 Champion and World under-20 Champion, the latter success also bringing him the grandmaster title.

Since the end of 2007, he has written regularly for New In Chess Yearbook. Starting that same year, he has won many European open tournaments and in 2010 he won the Russian Cup. A three-time bronze medallist in the Armenian Championship (2009, 2010, 2011), he also won a silver medal in the European Club Championship, with the MIKA team. His most recent tournament win came at Groningen 2012.
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The Complete Najdorf — John Nunn, Joe Gallagher, Batsford 1998

Journals and Magazines

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Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian
An Uncompromising Repertoire for Black

With a foreword by Levon Aronian

The Najdorf Variation of the Sicilian Defence continues to be extremely popular. Advocated by great fighting champions like Garry Kasparov and Bobby Fischer, this flexible, wonderfully rich system offers one of the best ways for Black to play for a win.

Young Armenian grandmaster Zaven Andriasyan has developed and successfully employed his very own attacking repertoire for Black in the Najdorf. In this book he points out ways to avoid the most dangerous white systems, such as the English Attack, and presents ideas for Black to fight for the initiative right from the start.

Revisiting all major Najdorf battlegrounds, Andriasyan challenges accepted views and sheds new light on this great opening. In his search for new paths he has found a great number of radical improvements, resulting in a complete, surprising and punchy repertoire.

After you have read and studied Winning with the Najdorf Sicilian, you will be ready and happy to take on 1.e4 players at all times!

Zaven Andriasyan (1989) was both European under-18 and World under-20 champion in 2006. He is currently one of the strongest grandmasters in Armenia. Zaven Andriasyan regularly writes for the New In Chess Yearbooks.

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