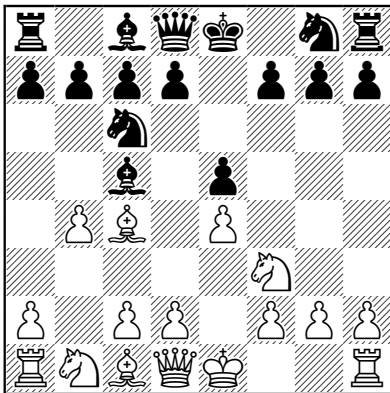

Chapter 7

The Evans Gambit

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5 4.b4



From the rich inheritance of the great masters of the 19th century, the Evans Gambit occupies a special place. Our forefathers' brilliant combinations, their imaginative attacking plans and even certain endgame analysis have entered forever into the thesaurus of chess, nobody can argue about that. However, the chance that an opening system invented long before the formulation of the principles of positional play should preserve its viability almost two centuries after its birth looks much more problematic.

And yet, this is precisely the case with the Evans Gambit. "The most wonderful of the openings", as it was called by Adolf Anderssen,

was thought up by Captain William Davies Evans around 1824 during one of his regular sea voyages. Having been the favourite weapon of such outstanding players as Anderssen, Morphy and Chigorin, the gambit fell into oblivion for almost a century. It wasn't until 1995 that the great champion Kasparov unearthed this formidable weapon to crush Anand and Piket. Even though the 13th World Champion never repeated the experiment after that, his choice speaks volumes about the soundness of the whole system.

Recently, I read a comment claiming that computer assistance will enable the definitive refutation of such openings as, among others, the Evans Gambit and (no kidding!) the Marshall Attack. I believe there is too much lack of respect for human intelligence in this statement. If several of the greatest players in chess history employed a certain variation regularly, computers will most likely prove their correctness, if only they are used properly.

It is precisely because of such negative comments that this chapter is structured in a different way from the others. Instead of focusing on making the whole variation playable for Black, I have first tried to illustrate what a formidable weapon it is for White!

First of all, we have to understand why such an early pawn sacrifice should be viable at all.

Did Black do anything wrong to deserve such treatment?

In a certain way he did. Moving the king's bishop while the knight is on its initial square still is a slight violation of one of the basic rules of development. This should not be enough to put Black in trouble, but it certainly offers White plenty of ideas. It is quite symptomatic that in the Evans Gambit Black has problems with the proper development of his king's knight.

What does White get in exchange for the sacrificed pawn? First of all, after

4...♙xb4

he gets a vital tempo for preparing the occupation of the centre with

5.c3 ♟a5 6.d4

Black has problems consolidating his e5-pawn. After 6...d6 White has the strong 7.♞b3, practically forcing the awkward 7...♞d7, which places the queen in front of the bishop. White usually continues with 8.dxe5, opening the position in his favour.

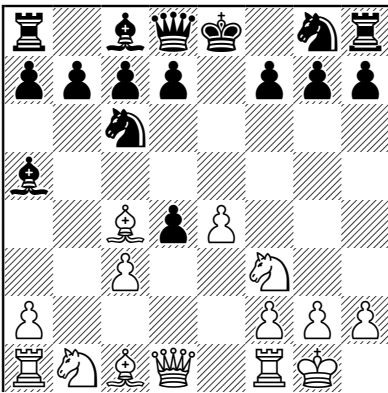
However, Black can play

6...exd4

when the generally desirable 8.cxd4 is impossible as yet because the c-pawn is pinned. Capturing with the knight is quite illogical now, because it gives up the idea of building a strong pawn centre. Therefore,

7.0-0

renewing the threat of cxd4 is better, which leads us to a first critical moment.



White is two pawns down already, but has managed to open several lines and diagonals and threatens to put the black position under strong pressure with such moves as ♟a3, ♞b3, e5 or ♞g5.

Black faces a choice regarding the evolution of the structure in the centre, which is tightly connected with that of the material balance.

He can return one pawn immediately with a) 7...♟b6, aiming for a solid position after 8.cxd4 d6, or, on the contrary, increase his material advantage with the greedy b) 7...dxc3. There is also a more balanced approach, to leave the situation in the centre as it is and proceed with the development of the kingside with either c) 7...♞f6 or d) 7...♞ge7.

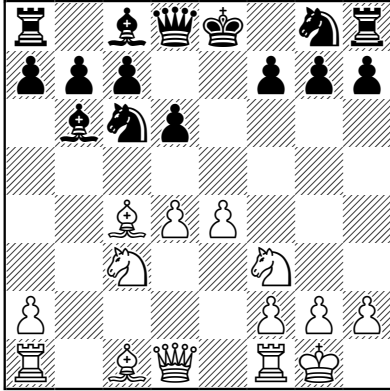
Although play tends to become very concrete in the near future, choices are difficult to make only on the basis of calculation, because the position might be just too complicated for that. General considerations should be taken into account, too.

On general grounds, I would discard a) and b) as being too cooperative. The former allows White to build up his centre while the latter leads to an increment of his advance in development.

However, this would mean falling into the other extreme. Therefore, I shall give a brief examination of some typical lines possible after the first three moves, in order to support in a more explicit way my final choice of the fourth one for the repertoire.

a) 7...♟b6 8.cxd4 d6 9.♞c3

We have reached one of the classic tabiyas of the Evans Gambit. As compensation for the sacrificed pawn, White is one tempo ahead in development (considering the fact that it is Black's turn to move). From this point of view, we can consider that the balance is more or less even, but there is an additional element that slightly inclines it in White's favour: his strong and mobile pawn centre. This detail makes it difficult for Black to continue his development with natural moves.



The most desirable continuation would be 9...♖f6, placing the knight on the most active square, but this allows White to obtain a strong attack with 10.e5. For instance 10...dxe5 11.♙a3 ♗xd4 12.♜b3, and Black's king is helpless.

Another natural move would be 9...♙g4 increasing the pressure against the white centre, but after 10.♙b5! Black is short of just one tempo to get rid of the pin by castling. Instead, 10...♗f8 11.♙xc6 bxc6 12.e5! followed by ♙a3 leaves him struggling in a position where it seems that White's advantage in development tends to increase.

9...♗a5!?

Since normal developing continuations have serious drawbacks, Black tries to change the course of the game. The obvious aim of his move is to force the bishop to abandon the a2-g8 diagonal, in order to continue his development with ...♗e7. However, White's position already contains sufficient dynamism to prevent such a peaceful scenario.

10.♙g5

10.♙d3, leaving the knight rather misplaced on a5, is entirely playable as well and should be regarded as White's best chance if he cannot find an advantage in the main line.

10...♗e7

Theory considers this to be a reliable defence. White is given the opportunity to start a sacrificial attack which, supposedly, does not lead to more than a draw by perpetual. This is

the last moment when Black can switch back to a calmer course of events by playing 10...f6. However, this move has the obvious drawback of weakening the a2-g8 diagonal. After 11.♙f4 it becomes clear that the bishop is not really en prise, since 11...♗xc4?! can be met by 12.♜a4† ♜d7 13.♜xc4 when after 13...♜f7 14.♗d5 White maintains a strong initiative for the sacrificed pawn, as could be seen in several games played by Chigorin.

11...♗e7 looks safer, although it does not solve all Black's problems.

11.♗d5 f6 12.♙xf6!

Not having solved the problem of the hanging light-squared bishop yet, White sacrifices his other bishop in order to open the enemy king's position.

12...gxf6 13.♗xf6† ♗f8 14.♗g5 ♗xc4

Finally, the knight has put into practice the threat created five moves earlier. In the meantime, White has obtained compensation of another nature.

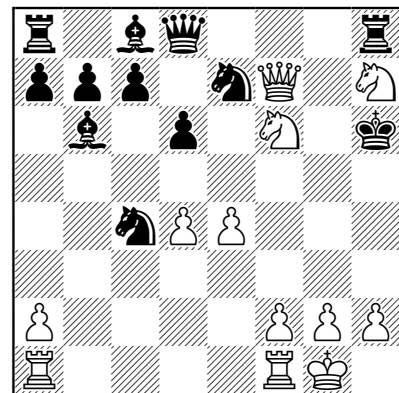
15.♜h5

Dark clouds are gathering around the black king, but there is a long way till mate.

15...♗g7!

Bravely fighting for its own life. It suddenly appears that the cooperation of the white attacking pieces is not optimal for creating a mating net.

16.♜f7† ♗h6 17.♗gxh7!

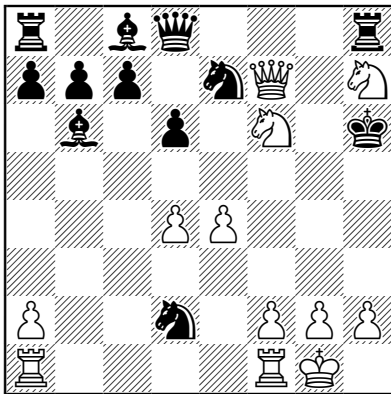


Curiously, such a great attacking player as Chigorin ended his analysis here with 17. ♖h5†, forcing a draw by perpetual. Did he not have sufficient energy to look for a continuation of the attack, or did he discover something that appealed to him more in some other line? Hard to say.

In any case, the merits of 17. ♖g×h7 are not easy to see. At first glance, it might look as if White chaotically concentrates his forces around the enemy king, without causing him any trouble. In fact, White's coordination is almost perfect now. Several back rank squares are under strict control now, preventing the black major pieces from providing help for their king. Besides, the king is completely immobilised and all it takes for mate is one check. This can be accomplished with the not very obvious advance of the g-pawn.

Black's main trump cards are his two (!) extra pieces, but this might remain a mere statistical detail if he cannot activate in an efficient way his a5-knight or the b6-bishop.

17... ♖d2!



Only this move, anticipating the inevitable weakening of the f3-square, keeps Black alive, although from a practical point of view making the right choice is anything but easy.

17... ♗e6? is not very logical, because the bishop was actually doing a job from its initial square. White can get a decisive advantage with

18. ♖xe6 ♖xh7 19. ♖xh7† ♖xh7 20. ♖ac1 ♖g6 21. ♖f7† ♖h6 22. ♖c3 ♖h4 23. ♖g3 (23. ♖h3? would allow Black to turn the tables after 23... ♖xh3 24. g×h3 ♖d2) 23... ♖h5 24. ♖xc4 (now ♖h3 becomes a serious threat) 24... ♖g7 25. f4+-.

The only game where this position has occurred so far went 17... ♗xd4? The main idea is to eliminate one of the enemy knights, but White's attacking potential, reinforced by the advance of the g-pawn, remains enormous after 18. g4 ♗xf6 19. ♖xf6 ♖g8 (It is already too late to bring the knight one step closer with 19... ♖e5 because of 20. g5† ♖xg5 21. ♖g7† ♖5g6 22. f4† ♖h4 23. f5 with the deadly threat ♖f4) 20. f4 ♖xg4† 21. ♖h1 ♖h8 and now White would gain an irresistible attack with 22. ♖g1!, instead of 22. f5? which was strongly answered by 22... ♖e5 in Smith – Clarke, corr. 1978. Remarkably, on the basis of this game, theory sustained Chigorin's point of view that White should take a draw when given the opportunity.

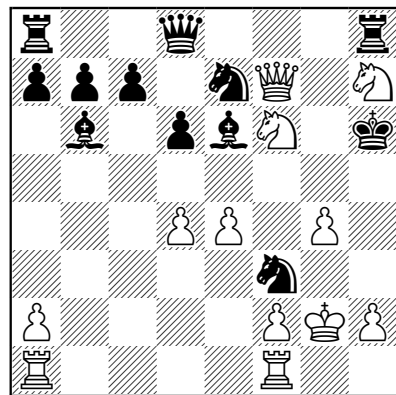
18. g4 ♖f3†

Temporarily taking the g5-square under control.

19. ♖g2

With the deadly threat ♖xf3 followed by g5 mate.

19... ♗e6!



Now that the knight has caused some temporary chaos in White's territory, this move,

intended to distract the queen from its main job, is entirely adequate. Instead, 19...♘g5 leaves White with a strong attack after 20.♖h5† ♔g7 21.♗xg5† ♔f7 22.♗ad1 (Defending the d4-pawn and preparing the activation of the rook along the third rank. 22.e5 would lead to unclear consequences after 22...♙xd4.) 22...♗xh7 23.♞xh7 ♖h8 24.♗f4† ♔g7 25.♞g5 (Renewing the threat ♗d3) 25...♗f8 26.♗g3 and White's attack (which can possibly be reinforced with the advance of the impressive mass of pawns) persists, in conditions of approximate material equality.

20.♗xe6 ♞h4† 21.♔g3 ♗xh7!

Very soon the approximate material balance will be restored, with a rather unclear position. Although from a theoretical point of view Black seems to be OK in this line, the course of the game rather suits White's intentions to get a highly unbalanced game. Any unexpected novelty is likely to provoke a disaster over-the-board, since the position is enormously complicated. Besides, there are several lines like this one, which makes Black's task of being up-to-date and remembering everything when needed very difficult.

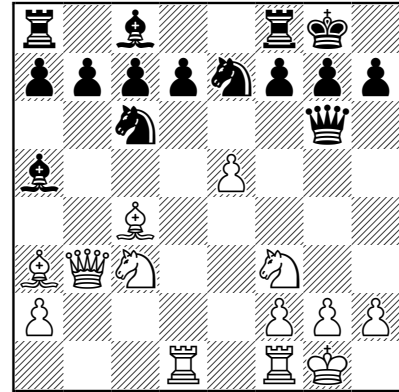
b) 7...dxc3

Several top players from the 19th century considered this greedy move to be playable. Black physically removes the potential danger of being crushed by White's pawn centre and hopes to be able to return some or all of his material advantage in order to complete his development in good conditions. The main drawback of this variation is that it allows White to develop his pieces on the best squares without any special effort.

8.♗b3 ♖f6

There is no other favourable way to defend the f7-pawn, but the queen's exposed position will be White's main trump in the ensuing middlegame. The next few moves are natural and do not require any comment.

9.e5 ♖g6 10.♞xc3 ♞ge7 11.♙a3 0-0 12.♗ad1



Nowadays, we do not often see such wonderful development for White. His main plan is to attack the f7- or the h7-squares, making use of the exposed position of the black queen in order to win time. Black has to react energetically if he does not want to perish with most of his pieces on the last two ranks.

12...b5!?

This move was submitted to thorough practical examination during the last quarter of the 19th century. The main figure involved was Zukertort, who tested the variation with both colours.

13.♙d3!

White should not allow himself to be distracted from the main plan. 13.♞xb5 ♖b8 14.♙xe7 ♞xe7 15.♗a3 ♞c6 16.♞bd4 ♙b4 17.♗c1 ♙b7 allowed Black to obtain counterplay in Paulsen – Zukertort, Leipzig 1877.

13...♗g4

There are certain subtleties regarding the trajectory chosen by the black queen.

13...♗h5 should be met by 14.♞e2 with the threat of harassing the queen with ♞f4 rather than 14.♞d5 which has the same idea, but allows the additional 14...♞xd5!† as in a game Taylor – Zukertort. White probably missed the fact that 15.♙xf8 loses to 15...♞f4 followed by ...♗g4.

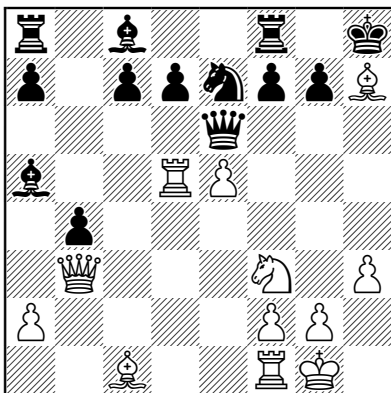
The idea behind 13...♗g4 is to provoke h3, taking away this square from the enemy queen. The importance of this detail becomes obvious

from the following line: 13...♖e6 14.♙xh7† ♘h8 15.♘d5 b4 16.♙c1 (In fact, 16.♘g5 is also playable, for instance 16...♗g4 17.♙c1 ♙a6 18.h3 ♖h4 19.♘xe7 ♘xe7 20.♙e4 ♙xf1 21.♘xf1 ♖ad8 22.g3 ♖h5 23.g4 ♖h4 24.♘xf7† ♖xf7 25.♗xf7+ Manko – Alekhine, corr. 1905. At the age of 13, the future World Champion looked less impressive than 15-20 years later.) 16...♘d5 17.♖xd5 ♘e7? [This loses instantly, because in some lines the a5-bishop is hanging. However, 17...♙b6 does not save Black either in view of 18.♙b1 (♘♘g5, ♖d3, ♘♖c4) 18...♘g8 19.♖c4 when the black king is helpless against the concentrated attack of practically all White's pieces.] 18.♘g5 ♗xd5 19.♖h3 1-0 Zukertort – Payne, corr. 1884.

14.h3 ♖e6 15.♘d5 b4 16.♙xh7† ♘h8 17.♙c1

White follows the pattern of Zukertort – Payne. In fact, now that the sphere of action of the black queen has been restricted even more by the move h3, 17.♘g5 looks very strong, too, as Zukertort had the opportunity to feel: 17...♘d5 (The variation 17...♗xe5 18.♙c1 ♘xd5 19.♖xd5 ♖c3 20.♖d1 g6 21.♖e2 ♗g7 22.♙b2 f6 23.♖e4+ ♘♙xg6 is just another illustration of White's perfect coordination.) 18.♘xe6 fxe6 19.♙b1 bxa3 20.♖c2 ♖f5 21.♖xd5 ♘b4 22.♖c5 ♘d5 23.♙xf5 1-0 Young – Zukertort, 1882 .

17...♘d5 18.♖xd5 ♘e7



This was probably the position Zukertort aimed for. ♘g5 followed by ♖h3 is impossible now, but White's position is very strong anyway.

19.♙e4 ♙b7 20.♘d4!

Better than 20.♘g5 ♙xd5! 21.♖d1? (21.♗g3 ♘f5 or 21...♖h6 are both still unclear) 21...♙xe4 22.♖h5† ♘g8 23.♘xe6 fxe6 with superb play for Black, Hirschfeld – Zukertort, London 1881. The difference induced by ♘d4 will become clear one move later.

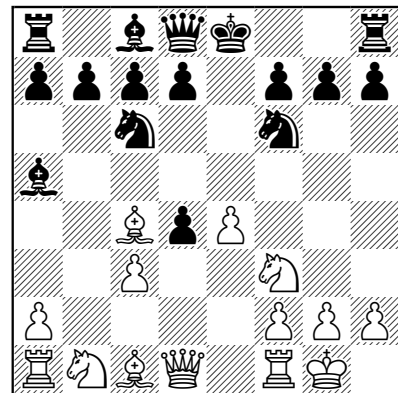
20...♙xd5

The queen has no favourable squares along the 6th rank, for instance 20...♖b6 21.♖b5; or 20...♖a6 21.♖g3 ♘g6 22.♖xa5±.

21.♗g3!±

With the knight on d4 rather than g5, neither ...♘f5 nor ...♖h6 are possible now. Black will have to give up the queen in rather unfavourable circumstances, in view of a further check on h4, winning one of the black minor pieces.

c) 7...♘f6



Generally speaking, this is the most logical move. Black develops the knight on the most active square, taking the e4- and d5-squares under control. On the other hand, we should not forget that White's whole strategy in the Evans Gambit is aimed at preventing Black from developing in a natural way. This leaves us

with an obvious conflict of principle, far from easy to solve by analytical means.

My first impulse was to embark on the difficult task of building up a coherent defensive system based on 7...♘f6, but two reasons made me change my mind during the process.

First of all, the tree of possible variations is enormously complicated. It does not seem like a practical approach to fill in a considerable amount of pages of analysis in an opening that is a rather rare guest in modern practice. Besides, the more complicated the variations one analyses, the higher is the probability of committing mistakes. I simply felt that 7...♗ge7 was simpler to analyse and explain, while being entirely sound at the same time.

The other aspect was of a psychological nature. Recently, Maarten de Zeeuw published two articles in the *New in Chess* Yearbook series, claiming that after 7...♗f6 (!) White should not even be able to equalise! Such exaggerated optimism challenged my natural taste for the initiative and an advantage in development, as well as my respect for the great classics. Therefore, quite unexpectedly for an author who was about to write a repertoire book for Black, I started looking for improvements for White!

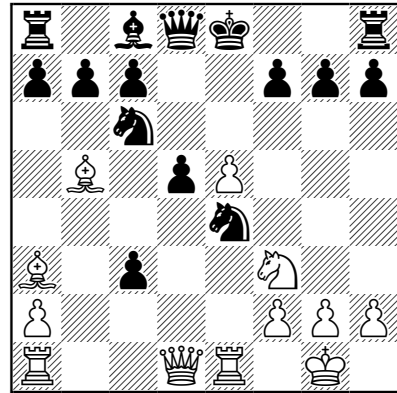
Unsurprisingly, I have managed to unearth quite a number of mistaken evaluations. The fact that I have included here some of the most relevant should not be regarded as the intended start of a polemical discussion, but as a warning about the hidden dangers that await Black if he treats the Evans Gambit in a superficial way or if he blindly follows the computer's recommendations. Nor do I claim that 7...♗f6 is unplayable. What I aim to illustrate is that it might be simply too complicated to make it playable.

8.♙a3

Quite typical for the Evans Gambit: White makes use of the diagonal made available after the pawn sacrifice in order to hinder Black's castling.

8...d6 9.e5! ♗e4 10.exd6

In fact, 10.♙e1 might be stronger. After 10...d5 11.♙b5 White gets an extra tempo over the variation 8.e5 d5 9.♙b5 ♗e4 10.♙a3. Here, several moves are possible for Black, but I have picked 11...♙xc3 which is reported to lead to a clear advantage for Black. 12.♗xc3 dxc3 (Or 12...♗xc3?! 13.♙xc6† bxc6 14.♙c2 with strong pressure on the dark squares.)



13.e6! White sacrifices a third pawn in order to clear the e5-square for his knight and open the e-file or, if Black so wishes, the h5-e8 diagonal (depending on the way he will capture on e6). 13...fxe6 (It should be mentioned that 13...♙xe6 leads to rather easy play for White. For instance 14.♙a4 threatening to win the a8-rook by means of a double capture on c6. 14...♙c8 15.♗e5 ♗d6□ 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♙xc6† ♗f8 18.♙ac1♞. The black king is out of danger, but the time Black will have to spend in order to complete his development [for instance ♔g8, h5, ♙h6] will most likely allow White to win back the c3, a7 and d5-pawns, when his position would be preferable in view of his strong bishop and the outside passed a-pawn.) 14.♗e5 ♙f6□ (14...♙h4? 15.♙xe4 dxe4 16.♙a4±; 14...♙g5? 15.♗xc6 ♙d7 16.♗d4±) 15.♙xe4! (The start of a series of tactical blows, revealing the hidden force of White's position. The elimination of the active black knight was necessary, since after the immediate 15.♗xc6? ♙d7 16.♗d4 Black would play 16...♙xf2† 17.♗h1 0-0-0 with

5 pawns for the piece and a safe position for his king.) 15...dxe4 16.♖xc6 ♕f7 (If 16...♗d7 White would not answer with 17.♗d4? because of 17...0–0–0! when he would remain pinned. Instead he would play 17.♗a5! ♗xb5 † ♗f7 19.♗xb5 † c6 20.♗a4± would lead to a promising position for White. Black can hardly defend his numerous extra pawns. Such threats as ♗c4 or ♗xe4 are quite unpleasant, while 20...0–0–0? leads to immediate trouble in view of 21.♗xc6! bxc6 22.♖b1.) 17.♗h5 † g6 18.♗e5! ♗xe5 (But not 18...bxc6? 19.♗xc7 † ♕g8 20.♗xc6±) 19.♗xe5 † ♕f6 20.♗b4± From a formal point of view, Black has a material advantage, but he has problems completing his development. White's minor pieces are very strong, dominating the whole board, which should be more important.

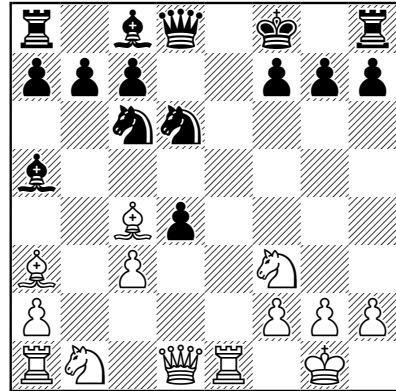
10...♗xd6

Here I should also mention that Botterill's recommendation 10...cxd6!? is quite interesting, bearing in mind the following sequence 11.♖e1 0–0 12.♖xe4 d5, when the position remains very interesting.

11.♖e1 † ♕f8?!

This looks like playing with fire. In their book *Play the Evans Gambit*, Harding and Cafferty give this move as possibly survivable for Black, which is a reasonable description of the situation. However, De Zeeuw claims that it is White who has problems maintaining the balance now.

He also states that 11...♗e6 is sufficient for equality, giving the following line: 12.♗xe6 fxe6 13.♖xe6 † ♕d7 14.♗xd4 ♗xd4 15.♖e5 ♗f6 (15...♗c6 loses to 16.♗g4†+) 16.♖xa5 (This is more restrictive than the move order given by De Zeeuw, 16.♗xd6, which allows the supplementary 16...♗b6 17.cxd4 cxd6 when Black might be doing all right.) 16...♗c6 17.♗xd6 cxd6 Now, we have transposed back to De Zeeuw's analysis, which is supposed to lead to equal play. However this is debatable. After 18.♖b5± followed by ♗d2 White's advantage is obvious, in view of the exposed position of the black king.



12.♗b3!

This simple developing move, attacking the f7-pawn and putting the b7-square under serious pressure has escaped the attention of analysts so far. I believe that it will soon become clear who is fighting for survival.

12...♗d7

Black's tragicomedy consists of the fact that he cannot parry such a simple threat as ♗xf7. After 12...♗f6?! White would get an irresistible attack with 13.♗bd2! followed by ♗e4.

13.♗xf7 dxc3 14.♗d5

14.♗e6 ♗xe6 15.♖xe6 ♗d7 16.♖e2± is a reasonable alternative. White will soon win the c3-pawn back, completing his development and retaining enormous compensation for the remaining missing pawn, in view of the unfortunate position of the black king.

The spectacular 14.♗xc3 ♗xc3 15.♗h5 ♗f6 16.♗xb7 is met by 16...♗d8! (the only move that keeps Black's queenside together) and now White might have nothing better than forcing a draw with 17.♗b3=.

14...♗f6

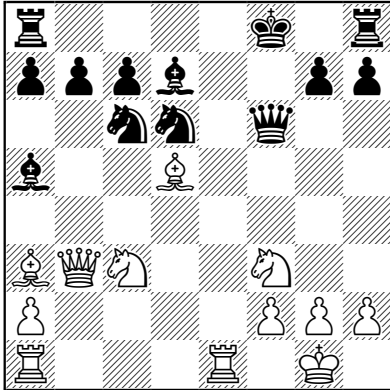
Black's last hope is to keep the c3-pawn on the board. He has no time to defend his b7-pawn with 14...♖b8 because of the simple 15.♗xc3± with an overwhelming lead in development for White.

15.♗xd6†?!

The double exchange initiated by this move looks like a slight concession, but it presents

the advantage that it allows White to bring his knight into play.

The immediate 15. ♖xc3! is interesting, but possibly not sufficient for an advantage.



After 15... ♖xc3 (15... ♗xc3 16. ♖xb7 ♖d8 17. ♖xc7 ♗b4 18. ♗g5, looks too dangerous for Black, who is completely tied up) 16. ♖xb7 ♖d8 17. ♗xd6† cxd6 18. ♖ac1 (After 18. ♖ec1 ♖b4 19. ♗xc6 ♖xb7 20. ♗xb7 ♖e7 White's position is slightly more pleasant, but the most probable result is a draw.) 18... ♖f6 (18... ♖b4? is impossible now because of 19. ♖c4! when Black has to give up his queen in order to parry the mating threats.) 19. ♗xc6 ♗xc6 20. ♖xc6 ♗xe1 21. ♖xe1. White certainly has compensation for the exchange, but hardly more than that.

15... ♖xd6

15...cxd6 loses material to 16. ♖xb7±.

16. ♗xc6 bxc6

The bishop has to guard the f5-square. If 16... ♗xc6 then 17. ♖e5! attacking the a5-bishop and threatening ♖f5†, when White gets a very strong attack.

17. ♗xc3

Black is in a very dangerous situation. He faces such threats as ♗g5 or ♖ad1. The only reasonable move is

17... ♖b4

aiming to chase away the enemy queen. After 18. ♖d1!

Black has to apply the same method:

18... ♖d6

Hoping for a draw by repetition. However, it seems that White can escape this pursuit with

19. ♖c2 ♖c5 20. ♖e3 ♖e8 21. ♖ae1

with a strong initiative.

Finally, we have only one continuation left.

d) 7... ♗ge7

This move gives up the ambitious plans about putting pressure on the e4-pawn and focuses on preparing the thematic break in the centre ...d5. The knight is much safer placed on e7 than on f6 and it covers the important a3-f8 diagonal, too.

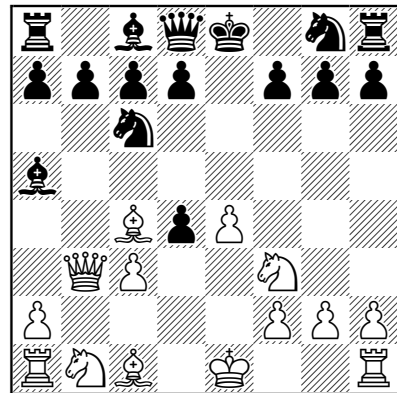
All of this represents a relatively simple solution to the problems posed by the current official main line. However, this is not yet the end of the story.

After:

6.d4 exd4

White can attack the f7-pawn immediately with:

7. ♖b3!?



This has never been considered as a main line, which partly explains why I omitted it in the previous edition of the book. In recent years it has served Nigel Short rather well, something I learned from several readers after the book's release.

By coincidence, soon after that I met Nigel in Banyoles, Spain. During breakfast on the first day we had a brief conversation about this subject. I let him know that I had not yet had time to investigate the matter, while he confessed his faith in this variation. When, later that afternoon, we met in the fifth round of the rapid event, I had the feeling that we both had learned something useful. He knew perfectly well that 3...♘c4 was the move to be played (although 3...♘b5 is his main weapon), while I understood that 3...♘c5 would be equivalent to suicide. I chickened out with 3...♘e7 4.d4 d6 and eventually drew, which was more than OK for me as a player, but made me feel very uncomfortable about the whole situation as an author.

As in other lines of the Evans Gambit, Black is forced to deviate from the normal course of development. Although 7...♞f6 does not necessarily lose, after 8.♙xf7 ♔f8 9.0-0 Black will need more time than White to regain his harmony, while his material advantage is not big enough to offer sufficient compensation for the inconveniences.

Although the early development of the white queen puts Black under immediate pressure, we should note two main drawbacks of this move. By defining the queen's position so quickly White not only weakens his control over the d4-square (in view of a later cxd4), but also exposes White's most active pieces to a double attack in the event of ...♘b6 and ...♞a5. However, these are only abstract aspects, while the position has a rather concrete character.

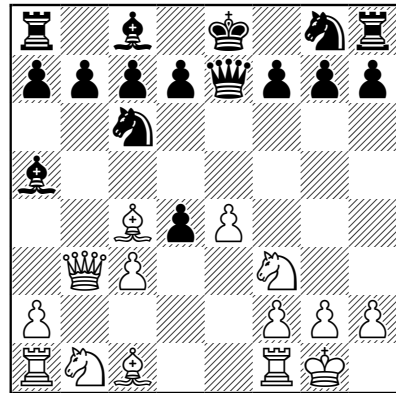
When I started looking for a reasonable continuation for Black my aim was the same as throughout the rest of the book: to avoid unclear complications where White has the initiative, and to strive for a solid position where the strategic factors tend to prevail over dangerous tactics. I also kept in mind that Black should return part of his material advantage for the sake of completing development. I must confess that I do not recall any other variation in the whole book where I felt that my task was as difficult as

here. In virtually all the 'theoretically approved' lines, I would gladly have sat on White's side.

Black has two ways to defend the f7-pawn.
7...♞e7

This has the drawback of placing the queen on a vulnerable diagonal, allowing White to develop his initiative with ♘a3 at a later stage. After

8.0-0



Black's main continuation is supposed to be:
8...♘b6

This move looks logical, because it underlines both aforementioned drawbacks of ♞b3. Black increases his control over the d4-square while creating the threat of ...♞a5. However, with the centre unstable and several of his pieces on the back rank, moving for the fourth time with the same piece is at least dangerous.

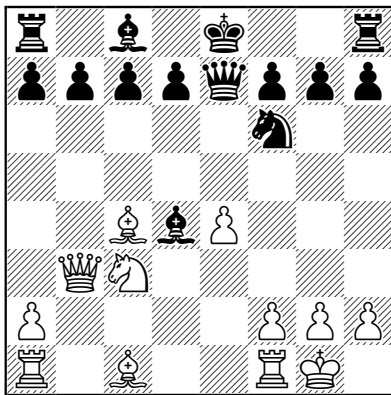
My interest in 7...♞e7 waned when I discovered that there is no way to make Black's position playable after the desirable developing move 8...♞f6. White simply strengthens his centre with 9.cxd4, threatening ♘a3 and e5, while 9...♞xe4 leaves Black dangerously underdeveloped. For instance: 10.♘a3 ♞d6 (10...♘b4 neutralizes the pressure along the a3-f8 diagonal, but makes the e1-square available for the rook. 11.♙xb4 ♞xb4 12.♞e1 f5 13.♞c3± leaves the black king exposed to a strong attack. 10...d6 drops a piece to 11.d5 when any knight move can be answered by

♖a4† or ♖b5†.) 11.♘c3 0–0 12.♗fe1 Black is two pawns up, but several tempi behind in development. Obviously, this line is no reason for White to refrain from the Evans Gambit.

9.cxd4 ♘xd4

The other attempt to question the viability of 7.♖b3 is 9...♘a5. However, after 10.♖a4 ♘xc4 11.♗xc4 Black's bishops do not compensate for his delay in development and White's strong centre. One example from grandmaster practice continued: 11...d6 12.a4 c6 13.♘c3 ♖d8 (naively hoping to stop the advance of the a-pawn) 14.a5! (with such a huge lead in development White does not care about such small material quantities) 14...♗xa5 (otherwise a6 would weaken the c6-square) 15.♗g5 (Black's bishop is hanging, which forces him to weaken his position) 15...f6 16.♗d2 ♘e7 17.♗fe1 b5 18.♖b3 ♗b6 19.e5! White had a strong attack in Sutovsky – Smagin, Essen 2001.

10.♘xd4 ♗xd4 11.♘c3 ♘f6



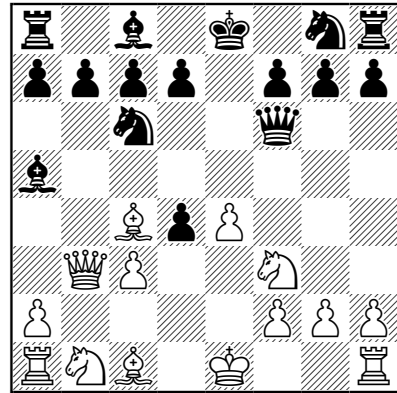
Black is one step away from castling, but his overall development remains rather poor. The strong novelty

12.♘b5!

yielded White a strong initiative in Short – Nielsen, Skanderborg 2003.

I believe that we have sufficient reasons to switch to Black's other possibility:

7...♗f6



The main merit of this move is that it permits kingside development with ...♘ge7 and ...0–0. True, the queen's relative exposure allows White to win a tempo with a later e5, but this would just give Black the possibility of a counterattack with ...d6, even though this might imply returning the material.

8.0–0

Theory holds that:

8...♗b6

is best, for similar reasons as after 7...♖e7. My personal evaluation remains the same, though.

9.e5!

A good moment to play this move. Black has to make up his mind about where to place his queen.

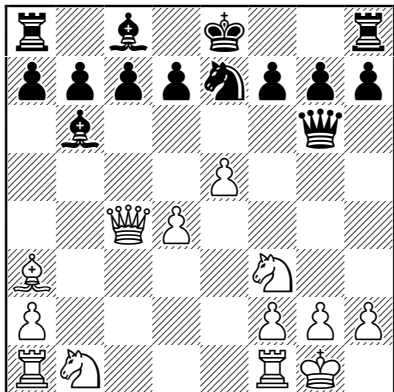
9...♖g6

I have tried to make 9...♖f5 work. The idea would be that after 10.cxd4? ♘a5 11.♖b4 ♘xc4 12.♖xc4 d6! 13.exd6 Black has the intermediate 13...♗e6!, taking advantage of the fact that the d5-square is under control, which makes 14.d5 impossible. However, White can play 10.♘xd4! exploiting the queen's vulnerable position. He will either eliminate the threat ...♘a5 by exchanging the black queen's knight or leave Black's dark squares weak in case of ...♗xd4.

10.cxd4 ♘a5

White gets a wonderful position after 10...♘xd4 11.♘xd4 ♗xd4 12.♘c3 ♘h6

13. ♖a3! ♞. Black would gladly return his two extra pawns just to get castled, but this is not easy to achieve under favourable circumstances.
 11. ♖a4 ♞xc4 12. ♖xc4 ♞e7 13. ♖a3



White has obtained the usual pressure along the a3-f8 diagonal, but Black relies on the weakness of the light squares, with d5 first in line.

13... ♖e6

For a while I was tempted by 13... ♖c6!?, but Vali Stoica made my illusions vanish with 14. ♖e2! (after 14. ♞bd2 d6! 15. exd6 ♞e6! Black's idea is fully justified) 14... d6 (14... d5 15. ♖xe7 ♞xe7 16. ♖b2 leaves Black with problems completing his development. As always, the king's presence on e7 causes a huge loss of time.) 15. ♞c1! An important intermediate move, spoiling Black's coordination. 15... ♖d7 16. ♞e1! Now, the combined pressure against the e7-knight is very annoying. We can see here that White should not hurry to capture on d6 (for instance, after 14... d5 given above), because Black could play ... ♞d8, defending his knight and enabling castling under comfortable circumstances. 16... d5 (16... 0-0 returns the material without freeing Black's position, for instance 17. exd6 ♞f5 18. dxc7 ♞d6 19. ♞c3±) 17. ♞c3 c6 (After the safer 17... 0-0 18. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 19. ♞xd5 ♖d8 20. ♞f4 Black has not quite equalized, because of White's space advantage

in the centre.) 18. e6 fxe6 19. ♞e5 with the initiative.

14. d5!?

A typical sacrifice to maintain White's initiative. I would also be worried about 14. ♞bd2!? when the exchange of queens would leave Black with the same developing problems, while increasing White's activity at the same time.

14... ♖xd5 15. ♖e2 ♞g6 16. ♞c3

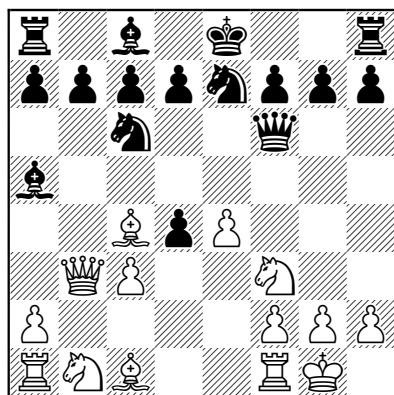
The black king was stuck in the centre in Short – Piket, Zurich 2001.

I believe that these illustrative lines more or less justify my general doubts about the viability of the bishop retreat to b6.

This leaves us with the developing move:

8... ♞ge7

Aiming to give meaning to the queen's placement on f6 (compare this with 7... ♖e7 followed by 8... ♞f6).



In several lines given in the theoretical part the bishop will prove useful on a5, keeping the b1-knight under some sort of domination and (sometimes indirectly) controlling the important e1-square.

9. cxd4 ♞b6

I believe that this is the best moment for the bishop retreat. Apart from his intentions to castle and continue his development with ... d6, Black creates two important threats (... ♞a5

and ...♘d4). However, he should not hurry to carry out either of them, because this would annihilate the other! It is well known that the threat is stronger than its execution.

The premature attempt to stabilize the position with 9...d6? weakens the a4-e8 diagonal and offers White a forcing line to a promising attacking position with 10.♙g5 ♖g6 11.d5. Black has to work miracles in order to avoid losing a piece to ♖a4† or ♗b5†. 11...♘e5 12.♘xe5 dxe5 13.♙xe7 ♔xe7 14.♗a3† ♕d8 15.d6! (The hurried 15.♗xa5? offers Black an essential tempo to launch a devastating counter-attack with 15...♙h3 16.g3 ♗xe4 17.f3 ♗xc4†. Unexpectedly, White is underdeveloped and his king is in greater danger than Black's.) 15...♙b6 16.dxc7† ♕xc7 17.♘c3± White has strong initiative, Harding – Day, corr. 1974.

The mechanical continuation of development with 9...0-0 allows White to obtain a strong initiative with 10.d5! when the hanging position of the a5-bishop will make itself felt in several moments.

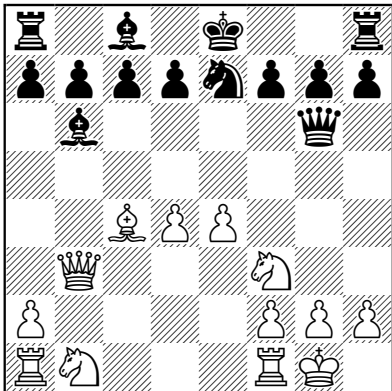
10.♙g5!

The most energetic continuation of the attack. After 10.e5 ♗f5 Black will castle and free his position with ...d6, even if this means returning the extra pawn.

10...♗g6 11.♙xe7

This early release of the tension fails to trouble Black.

11...♘xe7!

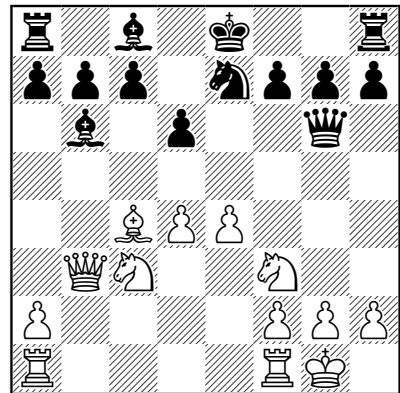


12.♘c3!

As analysis has shown, White should complete his development before embarking on such forced lines as 12.♘e5 ♗f6 13.♙xf7† ♕f8, when his position is hanging.

I believe that this is a good moment to highlight an essential aspect: as mentioned on more than one previous occasion, Black's development problems are caused by his inability to play the desirable ...♘f6 without exposing himself to major dangers. We can notice a similar problem for White. His queen's knight would be best placed on c3, but in order to clear this square White needs to spend a tempo capturing on d4, giving Black the time needed to organize his own development. It is also obvious that White has little chance of success with his knight on b1 and his queen's rook captive on a1. In the main line given below, the knight will be the last piece to be developed, something not entirely in accordance with the general rules. White's limitations in the Evans Gambit are connected precisely with this (not so easy to solve) problem.

12...d6



Black has a solid position and his lag in development is not that big. White has achieved a harmonious piece placement, and doubtlessly retains sufficient resources to maintain a slight initiative, based on the fact that Black has not castled yet. However, this does not offer more than plain equality.

Instead of capturing on e7, White can play the immediate

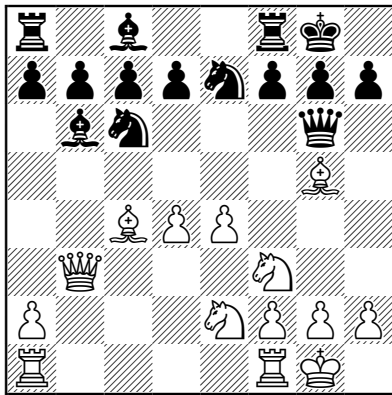
11. ♖c3!

This is a more restricting move order, entirely in accordance with my previous comment about White's development as the highest priority.

11...0-0

The attempt to transpose to the previous line with 11...d6 leaves Black with some problems after 12. ♗e2, threatening to trap the queen with 13. ♗f4 ♖xe4 14. ♙d3, and forcing Black to make significant concessions.

12. ♗e2



Apparently, Black is in some trouble. His queen is in danger and he is underdeveloped. However, the exposed placement of the enemy queen and light-squared bishop, together with Black's extra pawn, offer an elegant and principled solution.

12...d5!

By returning the pawn Black wins time to complete his development.

The immediate 12... ♗a5?! is less accurate. After 13. ♖a4 ♗xc4 14. ♙xe7 ♖e8 15. ♗xc4 ♖xe7 16. ♗f4 ♗ Black is still far from fully developed.

12... ♖xe4 is also dangerous because of 13. ♗g3 ♖g6 14. ♙xe7 ♗xe7 15. ♗e5 ♗.

13. exd5

13. ♙d5 simplifies Black's play after 13... ♗xd5 14. exd5 ♗a5 15. ♖c3 ♙g4 16. ♙d2 ♖f5 17. ♗f4 ♙xf3 18. gxf3. After having achieved certain

strategic successes, Black can bring his knight back into play starting with 18...c6 ♗.

13... ♗a5 14. ♖b4

It is important to keep the a3-f8 diagonal under control. After 14. ♖a4 ♗d6= White will face problems maintaining his space advantage.

14... ♗f5 15. ♙d3 ♖d6=

Black has the better structure and reasonable development. White's slight initiative should enable him to maintain equality, but not more than that.

Although objectively speaking **6.d4** is White's strongest move, there is also a lot to be said about

6.0-0

In the 19th century this move was mainly played to avoid the so-called 'Compromised Defence' (6.d4 exd4 7.0-0 dxc3). It is curious that Chigorin almost always castled before occupying the centre. Did such an outstanding attacking player really believe that Black's greediness could remain unpunished after the sequence of moves mentioned above?

Despite the fact that it does not seem to put immediate pressure on the enemy position, it gives the play independent character if Black is prepared to meet 6.d4 exd4 7.0-0 with 7... ♗ge7, as is our case. Indeed, after 6.0-0 ♗ge7?? 7. ♗g5! Black is in big trouble. For instance, 7...d5 8. exd5 ♗xd5 9. ♗xf7!? as played by Morphy.

The natural 6... ♗f6 is not entirely satisfactory from our point of view either, because of 7.d4. Now, 7...exd4 transposes to a variation briefly examined above, which confronts Black with serious practical problems. Black fails to consolidate with 7...d6. White can develop his initiative with either 8. ♖a4 (threatening to win one of the queenside minor pieces with 9.d5) or 8.dxe5 followed by ♖b3 and ♙a3, when Black faces serious problems defending the f7-square.

In my opinion Black's most reliable defensive plan is

6...d6 7.d4

Now 7. ♖b3 is less dangerous. With the f6-square available, Black can defend the f7-pawn with 7... ♗f6 when 8.d4 transposes below. As indicated in the theoretical section, White cannot do without releasing the tension in the centre with dx e5 at some moment anyway.

7...♗b6

This is known as the Lasker variation.

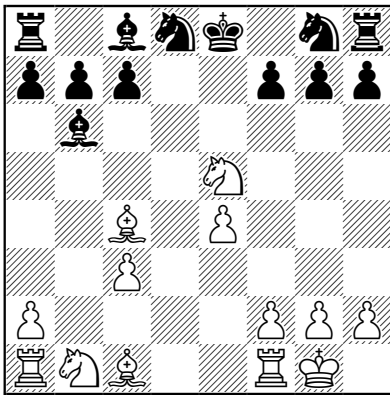
Since continuing the development of the kingside under favourable circumstances is not possible yet, improving the bishop's placement makes a lot of sense. First of all, the queen's incursion to a4 is completely inoffensive now because of the simple ... ♗d7. 8. ♖b3 is no better because after having cleared the a5-square Black has 8... ♗a5! when the capture on f7 would just lose material after 9... ♗f8.

The main continuation is:

8.dxe5 dx e5

When White can retrieve the pawn with

9. ♖xd8 † ♗xd8 10. ♗xe5



The exchange of queens has considerably reduced White's active possibilities, adding relevance to the strategic factors. Lasker considered that this position favours Black, because of the weakness of the c3-pawn and the c4-square. This seems like an over-optimistic evaluation. Black is certainly doing fine, but White's space advantage in the centre offers

him adequate compensation for the structural defects. Maybe Lasker judged the position from the narrow point of view of his own taste and style of play. Generally, he did not mind taking certain risks if he spotted a weakness in the enemy territory, offering him a clear long-term plan of action.

Traditionally,

10...♗e6

has been considered Black's best continuation. Indeed, the exchange of the light-squared bishops favours him strategically, but the tension created causes him problems completing his development. White can play natural moves such as

11. ♗d2

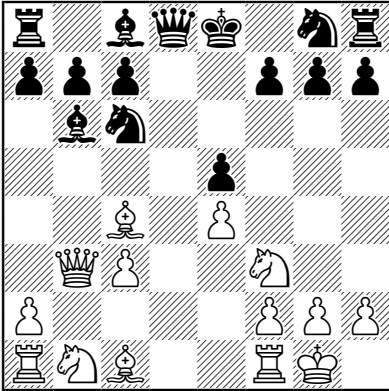
followed by ♗a3, ♖fd1 and ♖ab1. In order to re-develop his queen's knight and connect rooks, Black would most probably need to release the tension himself with ... ♗xc4, which would just help White activate his play with ♗2xc4. At a certain moment White could also consider retreating the bishop to b3, when ... ♗xb3 would annihilate Black's structural advantage. I would not rush to claim an advantage for White after 10... ♗e6, but I feel that Black is under some pressure.

Therefore, I believe that the developing move 10... ♗f6 is better. By attacking the e4-pawn Black prevents ♗a3 for just an instant, winning an essential tempo in order to get castled. Later, he would try to release the pressure against the f7-pawn by counter-attacking with ... ♗e8, then activate his d8-knight via e6-c5 and only after that play ... ♗e6. This sounds a bit complicated, but the instability of the e5-knight greatly helps Black. I find Black's position entirely playable.

In the theoretical part I have examined in detail both of Black's options, not only because of my respect for the "classics" (who preferred 10... ♗e6) but also because of the relative lack of practical material after 10... ♗f6.

White's main alternative to the relatively inoffensive exchange of queens is

9. ♖b3

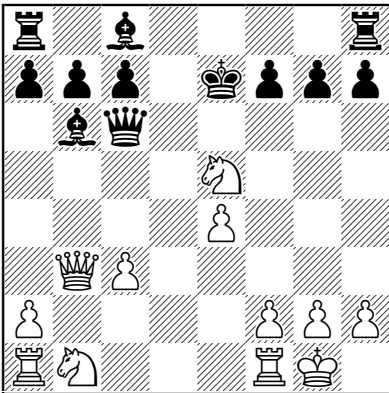


The next sequence is quite natural: White tries to maintain his initiative, while Black calmly parries the threats.

9... ♖f6

It should only be said that 9... ♘a5? does not work now because of 10. ♗xf7 ♕f8 11. ♖d5!±. With the pawns still on d6 and d4 this would leave the queen trapped after ...c6.

10. ♗g5 ♖g6 11. ♗d5 ♘ge7 12. ♗xe7 ♕xe7
13. ♗xc6 ♖xc6 14. ♘ce5



We have reached the same structure as after 9. ♖xd8†. However, there are two significant differences. The presence of queens gives play a sharper character with chances to take advantage of the central position of the black king. On the other hand, the pair of bishops can prove a telling factor in the long run.

Let us have a more concrete look at the position. Black's king is not in immediate danger, but its evacuation will be rather time consuming. At the same time White only needs a tempo to complete his development (♘d2) after which he can start building up his kingside attack.

One natural line continues:

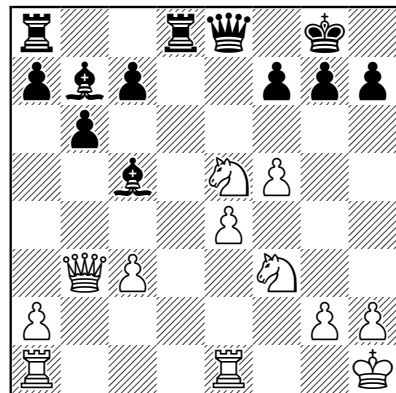
14... ♖e6 15. ♘c4

15. ♖a3† is strongly met by 15... ♖d6, forcing the exchange of queens and retaining the positive aspects of the position for Black.

15... ♗c5

Black secures the a3-f8 diagonal and preserves the bishop from exchange.

16. ♘bd2 ♗d8 17. ♕h1 ♕f8 18. f4 ♖g8 19. ♖e8
20. ♘f3 b6 21. ♖fe1 ♗b7 22. ♘ce5



From an aesthetic point of view Black has a wonderful position, but White's space advantage on the kingside can become threatening. Maybe an experienced Sicilian player would laugh at White's attack, but I must confess that I gave up the Sicilian precisely because I failed to evaluate the dangers correctly. Computers prefer Black's position all the way, but generally change their evaluation only when it is too late to save the game.

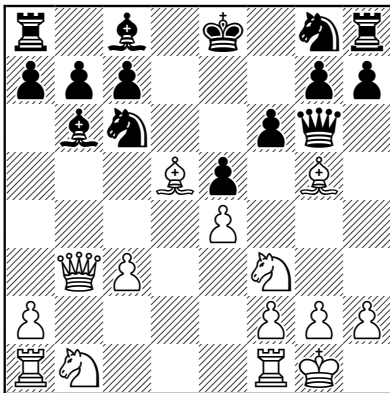
Unfortunately, the practical material available is from correspondence games only, with no relevant examples from over-the-board players. Besides, the almost automatically played

13. ♖xc6 might not be the best move. Instead, White can continue his development with 13. ♘bd2, strengthening the threat of 14. ♖xc6 followed by 15. ♗xe5, when 15... ♕e6 can be met by 16. ♗2c4 with active play. With his king in the centre, Black is under serious pressure. For instance, 13...f6 would cut the queen off from the left wing, allowing the annoying 14. ♖a3†. To my knowledge, the position after 13. ♘bd2 has never occurred in practice, but the whole line deserves attention.

Personally, I believe that Black's position is playable, but I would prefer an earlier deviation brought into the limelight in recent years by the current World Champion, Anand. After:

11. ♖d5

Black can defend his e5-pawn with
11...f6!?



If White had better development then Black's position would be just as dangerous as it looks, but with the queen's knight on its initial position it is hard to take advantage of the newly created weakness of the light squares.

In the rapid game Kogan – Anand, Venaco 2005, White went down quickly after

12. ♖xg8 fxg5 13. ♗xg5? ♔f8!!

when significant material losses are inevitable. I have searched for improvements for White on the 12th and 13th moves, but found Black's position entirely viable or maybe just better.

Concluding, Black should not be afraid of 6.0–0, although some knowledge is needed.

The Evans Gambit is an opening that should be taken seriously. The resulting positions contain sufficient possibilities for further developments and the complexity of the position should entitle the stronger (or just better prepared) player to impose his point of view. The old 'Queen of Openings' is entirely sound, but not lethal!

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5 4.b4 ♙xb4 5.c3 ♙a5

	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
1	0-0 ¹ d6	d4 ² ♙b6	a4 ³ ♘f6	♙b5 ⁴ a6 ⁵	♙xc6† bxc6	a5 ♙a7	dxe5 ⁶ ♘xe4	♙e2 ⁷ ♙f5 ⁸	exd6 ⁹ 0-0! ¹⁰	dxc7 ♙xc7 ¹¹	±
2	dxe5 dxe5	♙xd8† ¹² ♘xd8	♘xe5 ♙e6	♘d2 ¹³ ♘e7 ¹⁴	♙a3 f6	♘d3 ¹⁵ ♘g6 ¹⁶	♙ab1 ¹⁷ ♘f7 ¹⁸	♙d5 ♙e8 ¹⁹	=/±
3	♘d2 ²⁰ 0-0	♙e1 ²¹ ♙e8	♘df3 ♘g4 ²²			=
4	♙b3 ♙f6	♙g5 ♙g6	♙d5 ²³ ♘ge7	♙xe7 ♘xe7	♙xc6 ²⁴ ♙xc6	♘xe5 ♙e6	♘c4 ²⁵ ♙c5 ²⁶	∞
5	♙h4 ²⁷ f6	♘bd2 ♘ge7	♙a3 ²⁹ ♙h3	♙g3 ♙e6 ³⁰	±

6.d4 exd4 7.0-0 ♘ge7

	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
6	cxd4 ³¹ d5	exd5 ♘xd5 ³²	♙a3 ³³ ♙e6	♙b3 ³⁴ ♙b4 ³⁵	♙xb4 ♘cxb4 ³⁶	a3 ³⁷ ♘c6	♙xb7 ³⁸ ♘a5	♙a6 ³⁹ ♘xc4	♙c6† ♘e7 ⁴⁰	♙xc4 ♙e8 ⁴¹	±
7	♘g5 ⁴² d5 ⁴³	exd5 ⁴⁴ ♘e5 ⁴⁵	♙xd4 ⁴⁶ f6	♙e1! ⁴⁷ ♙b6□ ⁴⁸	♙h4 ⁴⁹ ♘xc4 ⁵⁰	♙xc4 fxg5	d6! ⁵¹ ♙xd6□	♙xg5 ♙e6□	♙xe6 ⁵² ♙xe6	♙xe6 ⁵³ ♙c5 ⁵⁴	±

6.d4 exd4 7.♙b3 ♙f6⁵⁵ 8.0-0 ♘ge7⁵⁶

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
8	cxd4 ⁵⁷ 0-0 ⁵⁸	d5! ⁵⁹ ♘e5 ⁶⁰	♘xe5 ♙xe5	♙b2 ⁶¹ ♙xc4 ⁶²	♘c3 ♙g6 ⁶³	♙ae1 ♘f5	♙d3 d6	♙a4 ♙b6	♙e8! ⁶⁴ c6! ⁶⁵	♙xc8! ♙axc8 ⁶⁵	±
9	...	e5 ⁶⁶ ♙b6	♘c3 ⁶⁷ 0-0 ⁶⁸	♙a3 ⁶⁹ d6! ⁷⁰	exd6 cxd6	♙xd6 ♘a5	♙a4 ♘xc4	♙xe7 ⁷¹ ♘b2 ⁷²	♙b3 ♙e8 ⁷³		=
10	...	♙g5! ♙g6 ⁷⁴	♙xe7 ⁷⁵ ♘xe7	♘c3 ⁷⁶ d6 ⁷⁷	a4 ♙g4 ⁷⁸	♘e2 ⁷⁹ a5!	♙b5† c6	♙c4 ⁸⁰ 0-0! ⁸¹	♙fe1! ⁸² ♙xf3 ⁸³	♙xf3 d5 ⁸⁴	=
11	♘c3 0-0 ⁸⁵	♘e2 ⁸⁶ d5! ⁸⁷	exd5 ⁸⁸ ♘a5	♙b4 ⁸⁹ ♘f5 ⁹⁰	♙d3 ♙d6				=

1 6.♙b3 ♙f6 is likely to transpose to one of the main lines below. For instance: 7.0-0 (If 7.d4 Black can transpose with 7...exd4 or try 7...♘xd4, although there is no need to complicate one's life with additional lines.) 7...d6

2 7.♙b3 still has no independent value. After 7...♙f6 8.d4 ♙b6 White should not delay the exchange on e5 for too long. 9.♙g5 ♙g6 10.♙d5! (10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♙d5) 10...♘ge7 11.♙xe7 (11.dxe5 ♘xd5 12.♙xd5 ♙e6†) 11...♘xe7! 12.dxe5 0-0± Black is well developed and has a mighty pair of bishops.

3 This was one of Chigorin's repeatedly unsuccessful attempts to inject new life into White's play.

8.♖b3?! ♖a5 9.♖a4† (9.♙xf7† ♗f8† 10.♖d5? c6-+) 9...♙d7 10.♙b5 c6 (10...♙xb5 11.♖xb5† c6) 11.♙d3 ♖c7 12.♗bd2 ♗f6 13.♙e1 h6 14.♗b3 0-0† Artner – Gregg, e-mail 1992.

8.♙g5 is completely inoffensive. 8...♗ge7 (8...f6 is slightly illogical. Why weaken the a2-g8 diagonal? 9.♙e3 ♙g4 10.♗bd2 ♗ge7 Isakov – Alekhine, corr. 1907, 11.h3 ♙h5 12.♙e1♖) 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♖xd8† ♗xd8 11.♙xe7 (11.♗xe5? f6-+) 11...♗xe7 12.♗xe5 f6 13.♗d3 ♗f7† Δ ...♙d8

8.♙e3 is too slow to be dangerous. White should not forget that he is a pawn up, while Black's position is quite solid. 8...♗f6 Since dxe5 followed by ♙a3 is impossible now, this move is entirely possible. 9.♗bd2 (9.♙e1 0-0 10.h3 d5?! 11.exd5 ♗xd5 12.♙g5† Alekhine – Sorokin, Kiev 1916. Better is 10...exd4 11.cxd4 d5 or even 10...♗xe4 11.dxe5 ♙f5.) 9...0-0 10.♖c2 exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.exd5 ♗b4 (12...♗xd5 would provoke undesired kingside weaknesses after 13.♗g5 g6 14.♗de4♖) 13.♖b3 ♗bxd5 14.♙g5 Now, 14...c6 15.♗e4 allowed White spoil the enemy's kingside structure and get adequate compensation for the pawn in Chigorin – Akohangas, St Petersburg 1907. The knight jump to e4 could have been prevented with 14...♙f5. For instance: 15.♙xd5 (15.♙xf6 ♗xf6 16.♗e5 ♙g6 17.♗df3 c6† Δ...♗d5) 15...♖xd5 16.♙xf6 ♖xb3 17.axb3 gxf6† Once the queens have been exchanged Black's pair of bishops and his extra pawn are more important factors than his structural defects.

8.♙a3 fails to create dangerous pressure along the a3-f8 diagonal. 8...♖f6 9.♙b5 (9.dxe5 ♗xe5†) 9...♙d7 10.♗bd2 ♗ge7 11.♗c4 exd4 (11...♗g6 Harding, Cafferty; 11...0-0-0 Harding, Cafferty) 12.♙xc6 (12.cxd4 ♙xd4† Levitsky & Falk – Lasker, Moscow 1896) 12...♗xc6 13.e5 ♗xe5 14.♗cxe5 dxe5 15.cxd4 exd4 16.♙e1† ♙e6 17.♖a4† c6 18.♗e5 (18.♙d6!? ♖d8 19.♖a3 c5 Harding, Cafferty, 20.♙xc5 ♙xc5 21.♖xc5 ♖e7 22.♖b5† ♖d7

23.♖c5 b6 24.♖a3♖ ♖e7 25.♖a4† ♖d7 26.♖a3♖) 18...0-0-0 19.♗xc6 ♙d7 20.♗xa7† ♗b8 21.♗b5 d3-+ Nicholson – Harding, London 1973.

8.♗g5 is easily parried by 8...♗h6 9.♖h5 (9.d5 ♗e7 10.♖h5 Now instead of 10...♗g6, which allows White to muddy the waters with 11.♗e6 as in Nielsen – House, email 1995, Black should play 10...0-0! with virtually no compensation for White.) 9...0-0 10.f4 ♗xd4 (This looks a bit exaggerated, but is hard to refute. I would prefer the more restrained 10...exd4 11.♗h1 ♗a5 12.♙d3 f6†.) 11.f5 (11.cxd4? ♙xd4† 12.♗h1 ♙xa1 13.f5 might offer some chances) 11...♗c2† 12.♗h1 ♗xa1 13.♗xh7 ♗xh7 White's attack proved insufficient in Correia – De Pedroso, corr. 1996-97.

8.h3 This is another half-waiting move, preventing the pin created by ...♙g4. Although it does not put Black under pressure in any way, it is worth studying as it can cast some light on Black's main 'threat' after 7...♙b6. 8...♗f6! (As mentioned in the introductory part, with the bishop on a5 and the pawn on h2, this would have been quite dangerous for Black. We shall see that things are different here, mainly because of the availability of the a5-square for the knight and the pressure against the f2-square. In practice Black has refrained from this natural move, which is likely to lead to trouble. The most relevant example: 8...♖e7? 9.a4 ♗a5 10.♗bd2 ♗f6 11.♙a3 c5 12.♙b5† ♗f8 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.♗c4† Djurhuus – Stefansson, Gausdal 1990.) 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♖b3 White continues in the same way as after 7...♗f6. (10.♖xd8† ♗xd8 11.♗xe5 is unsatisfactory because of 11...♗xe4 with an extra pawn for Black) 10...0-0 11.♙a3 (11.♗g5 ♖e8 12.♙a3 drops a piece to 12...♗a5 13.♖b4 c5 14.♖b5 ♙d7-+) 11...♗a5 Again this is the move, reducing White's attacking potential and leaving him in strategic ruins and underdeveloped. 12.♖a4 ♗xc4 13.♙xf8 (13.♖xc4 ♙e8 14.♗g5 ♙e6†) 13...♙e6† Black has fantastic compensation for the exchange. White's queenside is underdeveloped, his e4-pawn is as good as lost and the bishop is hanging.

For instance, after 14.♖g5 ♖d3 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.♙e7 ♗xe4 White's king is in great danger.

4 White threatens to win a piece with d5, a5 or, in the case of castling, ♙xc6 followed by a5. This allows White to win some space on the queenside, but not to get really strong threats to compensate for the pawn.

9.a5 The sacrificial operation initiated by this move is unsound. 9...♗xa5 10.dxe5 dxe5 (10...♗xc4?! 11.exf6 0-0 12.fxg7) 11.♖xa5 ♙xa5 (11...♖xd1? 12.♖xe5†+-) 12.♖a4† c6 13.♙a3 ♗d7 (Black needs to be careful for a while: 13...b5? 14.♗xe5!) 14.♖d1 ♙c7! (It is essential to cover the d6-square: 14...b5? 15.♙xf7† ♗xf7 16.♖b3† ♗g6 17.♖d6†±) 15.♙a2 ♖f6 16.♗bd2 ♗b6† Black will soon complete his development with ...♙g4 (or ...♙d7) and ...♖d8. It can be felt that White misses the other rook to keep the king cut off from the queenside.

9.♙d5 ♗xd5! Black returns the pawn, but keeps the better structure and development. 10.exd5 ♗a5 11.dxe5 0-0 12.♙g5 ♖d7 13.♖e1 dxe5 14.♗xe5 ♖f5 15.♙h4 f6 16.♗f3 ♙d7 17.♗a3 ♖ae8† Chigorin – Lipke, Vienna 1898.

9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♖b3 is slightly more logical than after 8.h3, because of the additional possibility of questioning Black's stability with a5, but fails to offer adequate compensation anyway. 10...0-0 11.♙a3 ♗a5 12.♖a2 ♗xc4 (In fact, 12...c5 is entirely possible, too, because White's incomplete development prevents him from taking full advantage of the d5-square.) 13.♙xf8 ♗e3 14.fxe3 ♖xf8 Black has a great position, despite the minimal material deficit.

5 More or less forced, but quite sufficient.

6 12.♖a4 0-0! (12...exd4 offers White the 'undeserved' chance to complicate matters with 13.e5, as in Dus Chotimirsky – Salwe, St Petersburg 1905) 13.dxe5 (13.♖xc6 ♙d7 14.♖xa6 ♙xd4 15.♖d3 ♙b6 16.a6 ♙c6 17.♗bd2 ♖d7†) 13...dxe5 14.♗xe5 (14.♖d1 ♖e8 15.♙a3 c5 16.♖c2 ♙b7 Harding, Cafferty) 14...♖e8! 15.♙f4 (15.♖xc6? leads to disaster

after 15...♖xe5! 16.♖xa8 ♗g4 17.g3 ♗xh2! Now 18.♗xh2 loses to 18...♖h5† 19.♗g1 ♙h3, attacking the queen and threatening ...♖f3 at the same time. 18.♖xa7 is not much better either: 18...♗f3† 19.♗g2 ♖xe4 and in view of the threat ...♗e1† followed by ...♖g2# White resigned in Urusov – Hardin, corr. 1897.) 15...♗h5 16.♗d3 ♙g4 White has serious problems of coordination. 17.♖e1 (17.♖c2 ♖xe4†; 17.♖a2 ♖d8 leaves White's minor pieces hanging) 17...♖d8 18.♙e3 ♙xe3 19.♖xe3 ♗f4 20.h3 ♗xd3 21.hxg4 ♖e6 with a strong initiative for Black.

7 A logical attempt to maintain a viable position. Otherwise, Black would get castled and retain an advantage because of his pair of bishops and better development.

13.exd6 0-0 14.dxc7 ♖xc7 15.♖e2 was recommended by Zak as an attempt to maintain equality, but 15...♖e8 16.♖e1 ♙g4† leaves White underdeveloped anyway.

13.♖a4 ♗c5 14.♖xc6† ♗d7 15.♖d5 0-0 16.exd6 (Zak) 16...♙e6†

8 I believe that this is stronger than Lasker's 13...d5, which weakens the a3-f8 diagonal prematurely. 14.♙a3 (This move, suggested by Zaitsev, is certainly better than 14.♗d4? ♗xc3 15.♗xc3 ♙xd4 16.♖d3 c5† Chigorin – Lasker, St Petersburg 1895.) 14...c5 Strategically, Black has a fantastic position, but his dark-squared bishop is awkwardly placed, which leaves the situation unclear (compare this with the position with the bishop on e7, where White could simply resign.) 15.c4! ♙b7 16.♖d1 d4 17.♗e1 0-0 18.f3 ♗g5 19.♗d3 ♖e7 20.♗d2 f5 21.♗b3 ♗e6 The position has been stabilized, but Black risks being left with an awfully passive bishop in case of eventual simplification. A recent top level game where such a bishop was the telling factor is Topalov – Nisipeanu, Madrid 2007. Black's extra pawn hardly made itself felt.

9 14.♗d4 ♙xd4! (with the centre still under tension 14...♗xc3 15.♗xc3 ♙xd4 does not work

out so well because of 16.exd6† ♙e6 17.♖e4 ♖xd6 18.♙a3± with a strong initiative) 15.cxd4 0–0 Black is better developed and has chances to dominate the light squares. The attempt to question his stability with 16.g4 ♙g6 17.f3 fails to 17...dxe5! 18.♖d1 ♖f6 19.dxe5 ♖d5±.

10 Returning the pawn for the sake of rapid development.

11 16.♖h4? This attempt to obtain counterplay by attacking Black's apparently vulnerable pieces fails tactically. 16...♖xf2! 17.♖xf2 ♖fe8 18.♖f1 There is no other way to keep the back rank defended. (18.♖d2 ♙xb1 19.♖xb1 ♖ad8; 18.♖d1 ♙c2!) 18...♙d3! 19.♖xd3 (19.♖d1 ♖e2→) 19...♖e1† 20.♖f1 ♙xf2† 21.♖xf2 ♖xf1† 22.♖xf1 ♖d8!→ Attacking the h4-knight and threatening ...♖d1†.

12 9.♙xf7†? is interesting but unsound. 9...♖xf7 10.♖xe5† ♖e8! 11.♖h5† g6 12.♖xg6 (12.♖xc6 gxf5 13.♖xd8 ♖xd8→) 12...♖f6 13.♖h6 ♖g8 14.♖h4 (14.♖f4 ♖e5 15.♖d5 ♖g6 16.♖xf6† ♖xf6 17.♖xh7 ♖g4 18.♙a3 ♖xf2→ Lane – Black, corr. 1950) 14...♖e5→ + 15.g3 (15.♙g5 ♖eg4 16.♙xf6 ♖xf6 17.♖xh7 ♙xf2† 18.♖h1 ♖h8 19.♖g6† ♖xg6 20.♖xg6 ♖xh2; 15.♖f4 ♖eg4 16.e5 ♖xf2 17.♙e3 ♖h3† 15.♖f5 ♖eg4 16.♖f4 ♖xf2 17.♖e5† ♖f8 18.♙a3† ♖f7 19.♖h6† ♖g6 20.♖g3† ♖xh6 21.♙c1† ♖h5 22.♖e5† ♖h4 23.g3† ♖h3 24.♖b5 ♖2xe4† 25.♖h1 all lines here by Mlotkowski , except 25...♖xg3!.) 15...♖eg4 16.♖f4 ♖h5 17.♖f3 ♖xh4 0–1 Kopel – Grocescu, corr. 1989.

13 11.♙a3 f6 12.♙xe6 ♖xe6 13.♖c4 ♙c5± Johner – Zauer, corr. 1912.

11.♙xe6 is an obvious concession, allowing Black to activate his play. 11...♖xe6 12.♖c4 ♖f6 13.♖xb6 axb6 14.f3 ♖d7 15.♖a3 f6 16.♖b5 ♖dc5± Grob – Eliskases, Bad Nauheim 1935.

11.♙e2 preserves the bishops, but loses an important tempo and frees the d8-knight from its defensive task. 11...♖e7 12.♖c4 ♖dc6 13.♙f4 0–0–0 14.♖xb6† axb6 15.♖a3

(15.♖d2 ♖g6 16.♙e3 ♖ge5 17.h3 White covers the g4-square, creating the threat f4, but Black maintains his stability with 17...♖a5! followed by the invasion of the c4-square.) 15...♖g6 16.♙g3 ♖d2 17.♖fe1 h5 18.h4 ♖ge5 19.♖b5 f6 20.a4! (A strong move, over-defending the b5-knight in order to create the threat f4. 20.f4 is premature because of 20...♙c4! 21.fxe5 ♙xe2 22.♖d4 ♙g4±) 20...♙f7 (20...g6?! 21.f4! [Δf5] 21...♖d3 22.♖ad1 ♖xe2 23.♖xe2 ♙g4 24.♖xd3 ♙xe2 25.♖e3±; 20...g5 21.hxg5 fxg5 Annageldyev – Ivanov, Ashkhabad 1996 22.a5!±) 21.♙f4 (21.f4 ♖g4!) 21...♖d7 22.♖ad1 ♖hd8=

11.♙b3 is strategically consistent, but premature in this concrete situation. 11...♖f6! 12.♙c2 (12.♖d2 0–0 13.♙a3 ♖e8 with pressure along the e-file) 12...♖d7 13.♖d3 f6 14.♙a3 ♖c6 15.♖d2 ♖ce5 16.♖f4 ♙f7 17.♙b3 ♙c5= Olenin – Ovod, St Petersburg 2000.

14 11...♖f6 also deserves attention. For instance: 12.♙a3 ♙xc4 13.♖dxc4 (13.♖exc4 is not dangerous because of 13...♖e6 followed by castling long and eventually ...♙c5) 13...♖c6?! (An unnecessary structural concession. Black's position seems to be survivable after 13...♖xe4 14.♖ae1 f5 15.g4 g6 16.♖d2 ♖xd2 17.♖xg6† ♖d7 18.♖e7† ♖c6 19.♖xh8 ♖xf1 20.♖xf1 fxg4 21.♖e8 ♖d7.) 14.♖xb6? (It is hard to understand this move. 14.♖xc6! was correct. 14...bxc6 15.♖fe1 0–0–0 16.♖f1± White has unpinned his f-pawn without improving Black's structure with ♖xb6 and is ready to consolidate his advantage with f3 and ♖ad1.) 14...axb6± Reinhard – Nebel, corr. 1982.

15 13.♖ef3 ♖g6 14.♖d4 (14.♖ab1 ♖f7 15.♖fd1 ♖e8 puts the e4-pawn under indirect pressure, forcing White to release the tension somehow) 14...♙xc4 15.♖xc4 ♖f7 16.♖fd1 ♖e6 17.♖f5 ♖hd8 18.♖f1 (18.♖ab1 ♖g5!) 18...♙c5=

16 Remarkably, Black's position remains playable after the slight concession 13...♙xc4 14.♖xc4 ♖e6 15.♖fd1 ♖d8 16.♖f1 ♖f7

17.♖d2 (17.♗xb6 axb6 18.e5 was suggested by Harding and Cafferty. Black should probably keep the centre closed with 18...f5 19.♗xe7 as otherwise this bishop could remain passive. 19...♗xe7 20.g3 g5 21.♗b4 c6 22.♗c2 f4=) 17...♗c6 18.♖ad1 ♖he8= Karakljajic – Longer, Sarajevo 1951.

17 It is not easy for White to find the best way to increase his pressure.

14.♗d5 c6 15.♗b3!? (15.♗xe6 ♗xe6 [Δ...0–0–0] 16.♗c4 0–0–0 17.♖fd1 ♖d7) 15...♗xb3 16.axb3 ♗e6 Optically, White has improved his queenside structure, but his pieces are far from optimally placed. At the same time, the pawns still need some re-arrangement in order to avoid becoming weak. 17.♗c4 0–0–0 18.♖fd1 (18.♗d6†? ♖xd6 19.♗xd6 ♖d8→) 18...♖d7 19.♗d6 (19.♗xb6† axb6 20.f3 ♖hd8) 19...♗c7 20.♗xc7 ♗xc7= 21.♖xa7? ♖hd8→

14.♖fd1 ♗xc4 15.♗xc4 ♗e6 16.♗b4 ♖d8=

18 14...♗xc4 15.♗xc4 ♗e6 (Chigorin) 16.♖bd1 0–0–0 17.♗xb6† axb6= 18.f4? (± Harding, Cafferty) 18...♗exf4!→

19 **16.♗c4** (Chigorin, Romanovsky) 16...♗c6 17.♖fd1 ♖ad8 18.♗c5 ♗xd5 19.exd5 ♗ce5 20.♗xe5† ♖xe5 21.c4 ♗xc5 22.♗xc5 b6 23.♗e3 ♖e7=± White's space advantage is compensated by Black's perfect regrouping and the simplified character of the position.

16.c4? c6 17.♗xe6† ♗xe6 18.♗b3 (18.c5 ♖ed8!) 18...♖ad8 19.♗bc1 ♖d7 20.c5 ♗c7 21.g3 (21.♖xb7? ♗xh2†!→) 21...♗e5 22.♗xe5† ♗xe5 23 Chigorin – Pillsbury, London 1899.

20 **11.♗g5** ♗e6 (11...♗d7 12.♗xd7 ♗xd7 13.♗d2 ♗e6 14.♗h4 0–0 15.♖fb1 ♖ae8= Meyer – De Baere, email 1997) 12.♗d3 (12.♗d2 ♗xc4 13.♗exc4 ♗d7 14.♗b3 ♗e6 15.♖d2 ♗e6 16.♗c2 ♗e6= Deambrosi – Canova, corr. 1987.

11.♗a3 ♗xe4 Harding, Cafferty

21 12.♗d3?! offers Black additional time for regrouping. 12...♗e6 13.♗c2 ♗c5 14.♖e1 ♖e8 15.♗dc4 ♗e6 16.♗xb6 axb6 17.c4 ♖ed8 18.♗g5 h6 19.♗f4 g5 20.♗g3 ♗h5 15 Malmstroem – Rodriguez, email 2000.

22 After the exchange of one pair of knights White's space advantage will lose its relevance.

23 11.♗bd2!? f6 (11...♗ge7 12.♗xe7 ♗xe7 13.♗d5 transposes below to the comment to 13.♗xc6, which is not without dangers for Black. 11...♗a5? 12.♖b5† ♗d7 13.♖xe5†±; 11...♗f6 led to Black's advantage after a neutral answer in Edinburgh C.C. – Turin C.C., corr. 1911, but 12.♖a3 practically forces Black to castle long, which is not 100% safe.) 12.♗e3 ♗ge7 Black threatens to castle short after ...♗a5 followed by ...♗xc4 and ...♖f7. At the same time, White has to count with other moves such as ...♗h3 or ...♗d7.

24 13.♗bd2!? has never been played, but offers rich territory for investigation. Black's best chance to refute this line is 13...♗a5 (13...f6? 14.♖a3† ♗e8 15.c4†; 13...♗h3 14.♗h4 ♖f6 15.♗df3 leaves Black's pieces uncoordinated. 15...g5 would just make things worse because of 16.♗f5† ♗xf5 17.exf5 ♖xf5 18.♗xc6 bxc6 19.♗xe5 with an initiative for White. 13...♖d8 14.♗xc6 ♖xc6 15.♗xe5 ♖e6 16.♗dc4 offers White a more active position than in the main line.) 14.♖b2 (14.♖b4† ♖d6) 14...♖f6 Again, the only move that questions the viability of White's plan. (14...f6 15.♖a3†; 14...♖d6 15.♗g5) 15.c4!? This implies further sacrifices, but it is not easy to find other ways of increasing the pressure. 15...c6 16.♗xe5 ♗c7! (16...cxd5 17.exd5 ♖d8 18.♗e4 ♖f5 19.♖b4† ♗e8 20.♖ae1±) 17.♗df3 cxd5 18.♖a3†! (18.exd5 ♖d8 19.♖a3† ♖d6 20.♖d3 ♗c6! 21.♖fe1 ♗xe5 22.♗xe5 ♗f8 23.♖xh7 ♖h6) 18...♗d6 19.♖xa5 ♗xe5 (19...dxe4 20.♖fe1 ♗f5 21.♖ad1†) 20.♖b4† ♗d8 (20...♖d6 21.c5 ♖f6 22.♗xe5 ♖xe5 23.c6† ♖d6 24.cxb7!±) 21.♗xe5 ♖xe5 22.exd5 White has only one pawn for

the sacrificed piece, but Black has no obvious way to complete his development. If he fails to do so, the centralization of the white rooks followed by the advance of the central pawns might simply crush him.

25 15.♖a3† ♗d6 16.♗xd6† (16.♗d1 ♖xa3 17.♗xa3 ♙e6 18.♗b5 ♗hd8 19.♗d4) 16... cxd6 17.♗d3 ♙e6+ Ebeling – Rantanen, Jyvaskyla 1987.

26 15...♗d8 16.♗bd2 ♗f8 17.♗h1 ♖e8 (17... f5?! 18.f4 ♖f7 19.♗ae1 h6 20.♗f3 ♙e6 21.♗fe5 ♖f6 22.exf5 ♖xf5 23.♗g6† ♗f7 24.♗xe6 1–0 Krantz – Schroeder, corr. 1989) 18.f4 ♙e6? (too provocative) 19.f5 ♙d7 20.♗ae1 ♙c6 21.♗f3 ♙c5 22.e5 ♙d5 23.f6 g6 (23...gxf6 24.exf6 ♖c6 25.♗ce5 ♖xf6 26.c4± Harding, Cafferty) 24.e6 fxe6 (24...♙xe6 25.♗g5±) 25.♗fe5 (Δ♗b1-c1-h6) 25...g5 26.f7 ♖e7 27.♖c2 ♗g7 28.♗g6!! hxg6? 29.♗e5 ♗h8 30.f8♙!+– Schroeder-Oren, corr. 1988.

15...♙c5 16.♗bd2 ♗d8 17.♗h1 ♗f8 18.f4 ♗g8 (18...♖e8 19.♗f3 b6 20.f5 h6 21.♖fe1 a5 22.♖c2 ♙a6 23.♗ce5 ♗g8 24.♗g4 ♙f8 25.♖f2 ♖d7 [25...h5 26.♖h4 hxg4 27.♗g5→] 26.♖g3 ♗h7 27.f6 ♙c8 28.h3 c5 29.♖h4 ♖c7 30.♗g5† ♗g6 31.♗xf7 ♗xf7 32.fxg7 ♙xg4 [32...♙xg7!?] 33.gxf8 ♖† ♗xf8 34.♖xg4± Skotorenko – Ahman, corr. 1976; 18...♖h6 19.♗ae1 b6 20.♗f3 a5 21.a4 ♙a6 22.♗g5 ♖h5 23.♗e5!+– Schroeder – Van der Kooij, email 1998.) 19.f5 ♖e8 20.♗f3 b6 21.♖fe1 ♙b7 22.♗ce5 ♙d6 In this position the game Skotorenko – Heap, corr. 1988, was interrupted without being adjudicated. Harding and Cafferty suggest: 23.♗g4∞

27 The aim of this move is to prevent castling short and to invite the enemy king to castle long, which would be risky. The bishop risks remaining out of play, but at least White does not have to worry about ...♙h3 anymore, in view of the possibility of ♙g3.

12.♙e3 ♗ge7 (12...♙h3 is premature because of 13.♗h4 ♖g4 14.♙xg8±) 13.♗bd2

(13.♗h1 is too slow and allows Black to carry out a refined regrouping plan: 13...♗d8 14.♗bd2 ♗xd5 15.exd5 0–0 16.c4 ♙xe3 17.fxe3 b6 and White's compensation for the pawn is questionable.) 13...♙h3 (13...♗d8 still deserves attention) 14.g3 (14.♗h4 ♖g4) 14...♙xf1 15.♗xf1 ♗xd5 (15...♗d8? 16.♖a4†! c6? 17.♙xb6±) 16.exd5 ♗e7+ White has insufficient compensation for the sacrificed material.

12.♙xg8?! fxg5 13.♗xg5? (13.♙d5 ♖f6 14.♗bd2 g4 15.♗e1 ♗a5 16.♖b4 c6 17.♙c4 ♙e6 18.♗d3 0–0–0+ White lacks the necessary stability to think about a direct attack against the enemy king, 13.♗bd2 g4 14.♗e1 ♙d7 15.♗d3 0–0–0 16.♙d5 ♗a5 17.♖b4 c6 Now, 18.♗xe5 loses a piece to 18...♖f6 19.♗xd7 ♗xd7, while 18.♙b3 ♗he8+ leaves Black with excellent centralization, good control on dark squares and an extra pawn.) 13...♗f8!! (13...♖xg5 14.♖f7† ♗d8 15.♗d1† ♗d4 16.cxd4†) 14.♗e6† (14.♗xh7† ♗xh7 15.♙xh7 ♖xh7+) 14...♗xg8 15.♗xc7† ♗f8 16.♗xa8 ♙h3 17.g3 ♖xe4 18.♖a3† ♗e7 0–1 Kogan – Anand, Venaco 2005.

28 The same plan as after 12.♙e3.

13...♙g4 is met with 14.c4 0–0–0 15.♖fc1 ♙c5 16.♗ab1∞

29 14.♗c4 ♗xd5 15.exd5 0–0

14.a4 ♗xd5 15.exd5 0–0 16.a5 ♙c5 17.♖a4 ♙f5+

30 Black is not far from castling, while his position remains solid strategically.

31 This is a solid move, allowing Black to carry out a thematic counter-blow in the centre.

32 Black has achieved some stability in the centre and is just one move away from castling and maintaining a sound extra pawn. However, it is White's turn to move, which makes things less clear than that.

33 Since the knight has abandoned the e7-square, this move is quite logical. 10. ♖b3 ♕e6! 11. ♗xb7?! (better is 11. ♕a3 transposing to the main line) 11... ♖db4 12. ♕b5 ♕d5 13. ♖e5 ♖b8 14. ♕xc6† (14. ♖xc6 ♖xb7 15. ♖xd8† ♖xb5 16. ♖c3 ♖c2 17. ♖xb5 ♖xa1 18. ♕f4 ♖xd8 19. ♖xa1 a6† Botterill) 14... ♖xc6 15. ♗a6 (15. ♖xc6 ♖xb7 16. ♖xd8 ♖xd8† Botterill) 15... ♖b6 16. ♗d3 0–0† Botterill 17. ♕f4 ♖b4 18. ♖xc6 ♕xc6 19. ♗g3 ♗xd4 20. ♕e5 ♗g4 21. ♖d2 ♗xg3 22. ♕xg3 ♕d5 23. ♖fc1 Schroeder – Harding, Evans Gambit theme corr. 1988 23...c6 24. ♕d6 ♖g4 25. f3 ♖g6 26. ♕xf8 ♕xd2–+.

34 White increases his pressure. 11. ♕b5 is less consistent. Since White has moved for the second time with an already developed piece, Black can also spend a tempo on covering the a3-f8 diagonal with 11... ♕b4. For instance 12. ♕xc6† bxc6 13. ♕xb4 ♖xb4 14. ♗a4 ♖b8!? (14... ♗d6 15. ♖c3 0–0 16. ♖e4 ♗f4= Sokolsky 17. ♖c5± Chandler) 15. ♖c3 Δ♖fb1, Harding, Cafferty (15.a3 ♖d5 16. ♗xa7 0–0 17. ♗c5 ♖f4 18. ♗c2 ♕d5 19. ♖bd2 ♖xg2!† Freidank – Fritsch, corr. 1988 20. ♖xg2?! ♗g5† 21. ♖h1 ♗g4 22. ♗d3 ♖b3–+) 15...0–0 16. ♗xa7 (16. ♖fb1?! c5 17. dxc5 ♗d3†; 16. ♖ab1 ♖d5=) 16... ♗d6 17. ♗c5 ♖d3! Since White is not interested in improving Black's structure by an exchange on d6, this move drives the enemy queen away from its apparently stable outpost. 18. ♗g5 (18. ♗h5 ♖f4) 18... ♗a3± Black's piece activity compensates for the minor defect of structure.

35 This move is barely mentioned by theory books. 11... ♗d7?! is given as the main line, but after 12. ♖e5 ♖xe5 13. ♗xb7 ♗c8 (The intended tricky 13... ♖f3† 14. gxf3 ♖c8 [forced, in view of the threat ♕b5] loses some material to 15. ♕a6± without getting sufficient compensation, mainly because his own king hinders the activation of the h8-rook.) and now, in Kolenbrander – Sogaard, corr.

1989-94, White could have maintained some initiative with 14. ♕xd5 ♗xb7 15. ♕xb7 ♖b8 16. ♕e4 (16. ♕a6 ♖c6 17. ♕c5 ♖b4†) 16... ♖c4 17. ♕c5 (17. ♕c6†?! ♕d7=; 17. d5?! ♕d7 18. ♖c1 ♖d6=) 17... ♕b6 18. ♕c6†±.

36 Black should not abandon the blockade of the d5-square. After 12... ♖dxb4? as played in Bromberger – Siklosi, Kecskemet 2000, with the hope of simplifying the position at the cost of returning the pawn, White could have obtained an advantage with 13. ♖c3!± when the b4-knight is terribly misplaced.

37 Since Black has only one stable square at his disposal (d5) one of his knights is superfluous. Therefore, the exchange offered by 13. ♖c3 suits him perfectly, for instance 13...0–0 14. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 15. ♗xb7 ♗d6= Trapl – Sosna, Czech Republic 2001.

38 White gets absolutely nothing if he delays this capture, for instance 14. ♖e1 0–0 15. ♗xb7 (15. ♖c3? is quite hard to understand, since it allows Black to maintain his extra pawn with 15... ♖a5 16. ♗a4 ♖xc4 17. ♗xc4 c6† Griffiths – Dale, e-mail 2002) 15... ♖a5 16. ♗a6 ♖xc4 17. ♗xc4 ♖f4 18. ♗c2 ♕d5=†. Black's active minor pieces compensate for the weakness of the c5-square.

39 White should not rush in to deprive the enemy king from castling with 15. ♕b5† since he will achieve this anyway one move later. After 15... ♖f8 16. ♗a6 the weakness of the b3-square, not defended by the bishop any more, is exploited by 16... ♖b3 17. ♖a2 ♖b6 18. ♕e2 (the careless 18. ♖c2?? led to immediate disaster after 18... ♕c8–+ in Ilczuk – Ostrowski, Suwalki 1999) 18... ♖xd4 19. ♖d2 ♖xe2† 20. ♗xe2 ♗f6= Black has an active placement for his pieces and will soon connect his rooks after ...g6 and ...♖g7. White will most probably win his pawn back, but his active possibilities are restricted by the passivity of his queen's knight.

40 16...♔d7? 17.♖xd5± Odnorozhenko – Gorbatenko, Kharkov 2004.

41 18.♖c2 ♀f6 19.♗c3 ♀f8= Black has completed his development and has a solid position. The mutual pawn weaknesses tend to cancel each other out.

42 This is a more active continuation than 8.cxd4 and leads to more interesting play.

43 White's main idea is to take advantage of the fact that the h5-square is not controlled by the knight. This can be felt in the case of the generally desirable 8...♗e5 which can be answered now by 9.♗xf7! ♗xf7 10.♔xf7† ♗xf7 11.♖h5† with initiative for White.

44 The only consistent answer. Other moves are bad:

9.♖h5? g6 10.♖h6 dxc4 11.♖g7 ♗d7-+

9.♗xf7?! ♗xf7 10.exd5 ♗e5 11.♔b3 ♗f5 12.cxd4 ♗g6 13.d6† ♗f8†

9.♔xd5? ♗xd5 10.♖h5 g6 11.♖h6 ♔e6! 12.♗xe6 fxe6 13.exd5 ♖xd5 White is two pawns down and far behind in the development. 14.♔g5 ♖f8 15.cxd4 ♗xd4 16.♗d2 ♖f5!-+ 17.♔e3 ♗e2† 18.♗h1 ♖h5 0-1 Estrin – Kondali, corr. 1971. 19.♖g7 ♖xh2† 20.♗xh2 ♖h5 mate.

45 Black should content himself with the fact that he temporarily provoked the obstruction of the dangerous a2-g8 diagonal. Opening it again with 9...♗xd5? would allow White to obtain a strong attack with 10.♗xf7 ♗xf7 11.♖f3† ♖f6 12.♔xd5† ♗f8 13.♔a3†→.

46 White has no time to step back if he wants to maintain the initiative.

In the case of 10.♔b3 0-0 White's play would reach a sort of dead end. 11.cxd4 (11.♗xh7?! ♗xh7 12.♖h5† ♗g8 13.♖xe5 ♗f5∞ hardly bothers Black, who has good centralisation and a considerable lead in development, Short – Adams, Sarajevo 2000) 11...♗g4 (11...♗5g6!? Adams) Black has the

better pawn structure and a solid position. This is the last moment when White could try to achieve anything concrete. 12.♔a3 (The pressure of the pair of bishops along parallel diagonals is slightly unpleasant. After the less resolute 12.♖f3?! ♗f6!? 13.♔a3 h6 14.♗e4 ♗xe4 15.♖xe4 ♖e8† Black managed to unpin himself and retained a clear strategic advantage in Morozevich – Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2001.) 12...♗xd5! (By sacrificing the exchange, Black solves all his remaining problems. 12...♖e8? is out of question now because of 13.♗xf7 ♗xf7 14.d6†→. 12...♗g6?! can be met by the spectacular 13.♗e6! ♖h4 14.h3 ♖e8 15.♔a4±. 12...♗h6 is a slightly extravagant way of covering the f7-square in order to prepare ...♖e8. Certain sources indicate this as Black's best defence, but I do not trust it. After 13.♗d2 b5, in Johnson – Webb, e-mail 1996, White should have played 14.♔c5! maintaining the pressure. For instance 14...♖e8 15.♗de4 ♗xd5 16.♖d3 ♔f5 17.♖xb5±) 13.♔xf8 ♖xg5 14.♔xd5 (A necessary concession. 14.♔a3? is a careless recommendation by Adams. After 14...♗f4!-+ Black's attack is irresistible.) 14...♖xd5 15.♔a3 ♗d7∞ Anderssen – Mieses, Breslau 1867. Black has a pawn for the exchange, the pair of bishops and an active position. In order to complete his development, White will most likely have to give up his central pawn as well.

47 Again, stepping back would allow Black an important tempo to regroup. For instance 11.♔b3 ♔b6 12.♖a4† ♖d7 13.♗e6 ♖xa4 14.♔xa4† ♗f7† Bilguer.

48 Finding himself under serious pressure, Black has to make use of every opportunity of activating his pieces with gain of tempo. In certain cases, the sacrifice on f2 can save the day for him, by decoying the enemy king into a vulnerable position.

49 The best square for the queen. 12.♖e4 would allow further activation of the black pieces with 12...♔f5 when after 13.♖e2 ♗xc4

14.♖xc4 fxg5 15.♙xg5 the above mentioned tactical resource 15...♙xf2†! allows him to escape with his own king from the centre after 16.♔xf2 0–0, since the intended 17.d6? is bad now in view of 17...♙e6†.

50 Black has to remove this dangerous attacking piece at any cost.

12...♖5g6 13.♖h5 fxg5 14.♙xg5 ♙c5 (14...♙xf2† 15.♔xf2 0–0† 16.♔g1 ♖d6 17.♙xe7 ♖e7 18.♖d2± Morin – Corbat, e-mail 2002) 15.d6 (15.♖d2±) 15...♙xd6 16.♖d2 ♖d7□ 17.♖e4 ♙a3 18.h3! a6 19.♙ad1 ♖c6 20.♙xe7 ♙xe7 21.♙d5 ♖b6 22.♖g5, Morin – Nagley, e-mail 2003.

12...♖7g6 13.♖h5 ♙f5 (13...♙c5 14.♙xe5† fxe5 15.♖xh7 ♖d6 16.♙d3+) 14.♙xe5† fxe5 15.♙b5†; 12...fxg5 13.♙xg5 ♖5g6□ 14.♖h5 transposes to 12...♖5g6.

51 The only way to proceed with the attack.

14.♙xg5 ♙xf2† 15.♔xf2 0–0† 16.♔g1 ♖xd5†.

14.♙a3 0–0!? 15.d6† (15.♙xe7 ♙xf2† 16.♔h1 ♖d7†) 15...♖d5 16.♖xd5† ♔h8†

52 16.♙xe6? once again allows the b6-bishop to turn the balance in Black's favour after 16...♖d1† 17.♖f1 ♙xf2†!+.

53 White has maintained the initiative until far into the endgame. Black's chance lies in the fact that the white queenside is still undeveloped.

54 17...0–0–0? 18.♖a3 ♖d5 19.♙xd8 ♙xd8 20.♖c4 left Black without compensation for the exchange in Christiansen – Marin, World Chess Network (rapid) 2002.

17...♙c5 18.♖d2 ♔f7 19.♙ae1 ♙he8= Although White's position looks more active, the fact that Black is fighting with an extra piece (his king) keeps the balance.

55 7...♖e7 8.0–0 ♙b6 (8...♖f6 9.cxd4 ♖xe4 10.♙a3±) 9.cxd4 ♖a5 (9...♖xd4 10.♖xd4 ♙xd4 11.♖c3 ♖f6 12.♖b5± Short –

Nielsen, Skanderborg 2003) 10.♖a4 ♖xc4 11.♖xc4 d6 12.a4 c6 13.♖c3 ♖d8 14.a5 ♙xa5 15.♙g5 f6 16.♙d2 ♖e7 17.♙fe1 b5 18.♖b3 ♙b6 19.e5± Sutovsky – Smagin, Essen 2001.

56 8...♙b6 9.e5 ♖g6 (9...♖f5 10.♖xd4!) 10.cxd4 (10.♙a3!? ♖ge7 11.cxd4 transposes) 10...♖a5 (10...♖xd4?! 11.♖xd4 ♙xd4 12.♖c3 ♖h6 13.♙a3!±) 11.♖a4 ♖xc4 12.♖xc4 ♖e7 13.♙a3 ♖c6!? (13...♖e6 14.d5! ♖xd5 15.♖e2 ♖g6 16.♖c3 Short – Piket, Zurich 2001) 14.♖e2 (14.♖bd2 d6! 15.exd6 ♙e6 16.♖d3 cxd6) 14...d6 (14...d5 15.♙xe7 ♔xe7 16.♖b2) 15.♙c1 ♖d7 16.♙e1 d5 (16...0–0 17.exd6 ♖f5 18.dxc7 ♖d6 19.♖c3±) 17.♖c3 c6 (17...0–0 18.♙xe7 ♖xe7 19.♖xd5 ♖d8 20.♖f4±) 18.e6 fxe6 19.♖e5±

57 9.e5 ♖f5 10.♖xd4 ♖xd4 11.cxd4 is less dangerous now, because Black has not lost a tempo with the bishop retreat. 11...0–0 12.♙a3 (White cannot take advantage of the slight lack of coordination of Black's minor pieces with 12.♖a3!? ♖c6 13.d5!? because after 13...♖xe5† he is hanging, too, as well as being underdeveloped.) 12...d6! (but not 12...♙e8? which finally allows White carry out his aforementioned idea with 13.♙xe7 ♙xe7 14.♖a3+) 13.exd6 cxd6 14.♙xd6 ♙e8 15.♖c3 ♙xc3 16.♖xc3 ♙e6=

58 9...d6? 10.♙g5 ♖g6 11.d5 ♖e5 12.♖xe5 dxe5 13.♙xe7 ♔xe7 14.♖a3† ♔d8 15.d6! (15.♖xa5? ♙h3 16.g3 ♖xe4 17.f3 ♖xc4†) 15...♙b6 16.dxc7† ♔xc7 17.♖c3± Harding – Day, corr. 1974.

59 10.♙b2 d6 11.d5!? (If 11.♖c3 Black should refrain from 11...♖xd4? because of 12.♖xd4 ♖xd4 13.♖d5 ♖xe4 14.♖d3!±, so better is 11...♙g4†. 11.♙d1 ♙g4 12.♙d3 ♙b6 13.♖bd2 ♖a5 14.♖c2 was recommended by Lukacs, but 14...d5! destroys White's centre.) 11...♖e5 12.♖xe5 dxe5 13.f4 ♖b6†! (13...♙b6† 14.♔h1 ♖g6 Anderssen – Kolisch, Paris 1886, 15.fxe5 ♖xe4 16.e6†) 14.♔h1 exf4 15.♙xf4 (15.e5

♖g6, planning ...♙f5 and ♖ae8. 16. ♖c3? ♖xe5) 15... ♖g6 16. ♖f1 ♙d7 Δ... ♖a(f)e8 and ... ♖e5. 17. e5?! (17. ♖c3 ♖e5⚡) 17... ♖fe8 (17... ♖ae8!?) 18. ♙a3 ♖xe5⚡) 18. d6 ♙e6⚡

10. ♖c3 d6 11. ♖e2 (11. ♙g5 ♖g6) 11... h6 12. ♙b2 ♖g6 13. d5 ♖ce5 14. ♖xe5 dxe5⚡

10. e5!? ♖f5! (10... ♖g6 11. d5⚡ Kipping – Anderssen, Manchester 1857) 11. ♙a3 (11. ♙d3 fails to question the queen's stability because of the simple 11... ♖h5; 11. d5 drops another pawn without too much compensation to 11... ♖xe5; 11. ♖c3 ♙xc3 12. ♖xc3 d6⚡ allows Black to complete his development soon.) 11... d6 12. exd6 (12. ♖c3 dxe5 13. dxe5 ♙b6⚡) 12... cxd6 13. d5!? (13. ♙xd6 ♖d8 14. ♙xe7 ♖xe7 15. ♖a3 ♖g6=; 13. ♖c3 ♙xc3 14. ♖xc3 ♖d5 15. ♖d2 ♙e6⚡) 13... ♖e5 14. ♙xd6 ♖xf3⚡ 15. ♖xf3 ♖xf3 16. gxf3 ♖e8 17. ♙b5 ♙h3 18. ♖d1 ♖xd5 19. ♙xe8 ♖xe8⚡ Black is better developed and has a mighty pair of bishops. Besides, White's structure is in bad shape. This offers Black adequate compensation for the exchange.

60 10... ♖d4?! 11. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 would leave the queen somewhat isolated from the kingside.

61 12. ♖d2 d6 13. ♙b2 ♖h5 14. ♙c3 ♙xc3 15. ♖xc3 Black's simplest path is 15... c5 16. dxc6 bxc6 when White's activity should be sufficient only for equality.

62 This certainly looks dangerous, but Black has many worries anyway. First, there is the permanent threat of ♖a3, then he must find a relatively safe square for the queen and, last but not least, complete his queenside development.

12... ♖h5? 13. ♖a3!+–

63 Possibly not the best square, but I have given this variation for illustrative purposes.

64 The rook's intrusion is quite irritating, as is the fact that Black cannot immediately fight against it with, say:

65 19. ♖f4±

66 10. d5 ♖d4 11. ♙b2 ♖xb3 12. ♙xf6 gxf6 13. axb3 d6⚡ is at least OK for Black.

10. ♙b2 ♖a5 11. ♖c2 ♖xc4 12. ♖xc4 d5 13. exd5 0–0⚡ Black has normal development, the pair of bishops and the better pawn structure.

10. ♖c3 0–0 is also perfectly fine for Black, who retains all his threats (... ♖a5, ... d6 or even ... ♖xd4).

67 11. ♙a3 d6 (if 11... ♖a5 12. ♖a4 ♖xc4 White can complicate matters with 13. ♙xe7!) 12. exd6 cxd6 13. ♙xd6 (13. d5 ♖a5 14. ♙b5⚡ ♙d7! and the presence of the queen on f5 obviously favours Black) 13... 0–0=. **11. ♙d3** forces the queen to abandon the optimal f5-square, but releases the pressure along the a2-g8 diagonal. 11... ♖h5 12. ♙a3 d6! 13. exd6 ♙e6! =

68 Black should not define the knight's intentions too soon with 11... ♖a5?! 12. ♖a4 ♖xc4 13. ♖xc4 0–0 (13... d6?! is premature because of 14. exd6 cxd6 15. ♖e1 ♙c6?! 16. d5! and Black's king will be forced to stay in the centre for a while) 14. ♖e1 ♖g6 (14... d6? 15. exd6 ♙e6 16. ♖xe6!) 15. ♖d5⚡ Black is far from completing his development.

69 White tries to inhibit both ... ♖a5 and ... ♖xd4. After 12. ♖e1 Black is not forced to play ... ♖a5, which would transpose above. Instead, he can take advantage of the fact that ... ♙b6 had created two main threats and switch to the materialistic one with 12... ♖xd4 (in fact 12... d6 looks entirely OK, too) 13. ♖xd4 ♙xd4 14. ♙e3 ♙xe5. Black will return one or two of his extra pawns starting with ... d5, thus completing his development and maintaining at least equal chances.

70 By returning his small material advantage, Black completes his development in a satisfactory way.

71 16. ♖xc4 ♙e6 17. ♖e2 (17. ♖b4 ♖c6!⚡) 17... ♖fc8!⚡

72 Making the e8-square available for the rook.

73 Black has comfortable play.

74 Black should refrain from forced play such as 10...♖xd4 11.♗xd4 ♜xc5 12.♙xf7† ♕f8 13.♗f3 ♜f6 14.♙c4 d6 15.♗c3. White is better developed and Black still has not secured his king. For instance, 15...g6 would be met by 16.e5! followed by ♗e4 with a strong initiative.

75 11.d5 obstructs an important diagonal, allowing 11...♗d4 under favourable circumstances.

76 This is the most consistent continuation. White needs to complete his development before starting concrete attacking operations.

It appears that White's early capture on e7 does not bring an immediate advantage because 12.♗e5 leaves White's pieces hanging after 12...♜f6. For instance: 13.♙xf7† (13.♗xf7? ♜f8† 14.♗e5? ♙xd4+) 13...♕f8 The strong threat ...♙xd4, winning tonnes of material, forces White to delay for one more move the generally desirable development of the queen's knight. 14.♙d1 d6 15.♙d3 (15.♗c3?! dxe5 16.dxe5 ♜xf2† 17.♕h1 ♙h3! 18.♙g1 ♙xc2† 19.♙xc2 ♜xf7 20.e6 ♜f6 21.♙c4 ♕e8 followed by ...♜f8 and ...♙d8. White's king is not safer than Black's, while he is simply a piece down. 15.♗a3 is not the best way of developing the knight, of course. 15...g6 16.♙d3 dxe5 17.♙f3 ♙f5 18.♙e6 ♕g7 19.exf5 e4. Black has completed his development satisfactorily. His king's position is slightly exposed, but from a structural point of view he is fine, as well as being a pawn up.) 15...♙xd4! (15...dxe5 16.♙f3 is unclear) 16.♙xd4 (16.♙f3 ♗f5 leaves most of White's pieces hanging) 16...♜xe5 Again, we can see that White's lack of development forces him to step back. The generally desirable ♙d1 is not legal. 17.♙d1 ♜xa1! 18.♗c3 ♜xc3 19.♜xc3 ♕xf7 Black has a considerable material advantage. White will most likely win one or two pawns before

Black gets completely coordinated, but this will hardly offer him more than chances for equality. 20.♜f3† (20.♜xc7 ♙e6 transposes) 20...♕e8 21.♜c3 ♙e6 22.♜xc7 ♕f7 23.♜xd6 ♙he8 24.a4 ♗c6.

77 Black has an extra pawn, a strong pair of bishops and no obvious weaknesses. White should hurry to create some threats before Black gets castled.

12...0-0 would transpose to the next line, but I have preserved this independent line in order to offer a wider perspective of the position.

78 Black undermines the d4-pawn and simply threatens to win a piece with ...♙xf3.

The premature 13...a5? 14.♙b5† deprives Black of the right to castle because 14...c6 15.♙xc6† wins the pawn back for White.

79 The knight would be unstable after 14.♗b5. Black's simplest answer is 14...♙xf3 (the attempt to immediately question the knight's stability with 14...a6 allows White complicate matters with 15.a5!) 15.♜xf3 ♗c6. There is nothing that can prevent Black from castling soon.

80 The point is that 16.♙xc6? loses material to 16...bxc6 17.♜xb6 ♙xf3 18.♗f4 ♜xe4+.

81 Black has completed his development, but has to solve the problem of his unstable dark-squared bishop. The pressure against White's centre and the hanging position of several white pieces will help him do so.

82 **17.h3** ♙xf3 18.♜xf3 d5 19.exd5 cxd5 20.♙xd5 ♗xd5 21.♜xd5 ♙fd8 22.♜xb7 ♙ab8 23.♜a6 ♙xd4 24.♜xc6 hxc6 25.♗xd4 ♙xd4 26.♙fe1 ♙bb4 27.♙e5 ♙xa4 28.♙xa5= **17.♙fd1** d5 18.♗e5 dxc4 19.♜xb6 ♜xe4 **17.♕h1** d5 (17...♙xf3 18.gxf3 would only consolidate White's centre) 18.♜xb6 dxc4! **17.♗f4** ♜f6!

83 17...d5 18.♗e5 dxc4 19.♜xb6 ♜xe4 20.♗g3±

84 19.exd5 ♖ad8! The simplest way to equality. Black brings the last reserves into play. (19...cxd5 20.♙xd5 ♗xd5 21.♖xd5 ♜fd8 22.♖xb7 ♜ab8 23.♖e7 The point behind White's mysterious rook move is revealed after 23...♙xd4? 24.♗xd4 ♜xd4? 25.♖e8†!+–, but Black can improve with, say, 23...♜e8 or simply 23...h6, when the knight does not stand too well on e2.) 20.dxc6 ♗xc6= The position has simplified and the most probable result is a draw.

85 11...d6 12.♗e2, threatening 13.♗f4 ♖xe4 14.♙d3.

86 12.♙xe7 ♗xe7 13.a4 a5 14.e5 d6 15.♗b5 (15.♜ae1 ♙g4) 15...♙g4 (15...dxe5 16.♗xe5 ♖f6 17.♜ae1 ♗g6 18.♗xf7 ♜xf7 19.♜e8† ♗f8 20.♗c3) 16.exd6 cxd6 17.h3 ♙xf3 18.♖xf3 ♗c6=

12.a4 This tempting move, threatening to trap the bishop, does little for the development in general, allowing a typical central break. 12...d5! (12...a5 13.♗b5 d6 14.d5!↑) 13.exd5 ♗xd4 14.♗xd4 ♙xd4 15.♙xe7 ♙h3 16.g3 ♙xc3 17.♖xc3 ♖e4 18.f3 ♖xe7+

12.♜ad1 is probably too slow. 12...d6 13.♗e2 White lacks just a tempo to complete his development while keeping the e5-square under control: Black can already dare to play 13...♖xe4. Compare this to 12...♖xe4 after 12.♗e2.

87 12...♖xe4 13.♗g3 ♖g6 14.♙xe7 ♗xe7 15.♗e5=

12...♗a5?! 13.♖a4 ♗xc4 14.♙xe7 ♜e8 15.♖xc4 ♜xe7 16.♗f4! =

88 13.♙xd5 ♗xd5 14.exd5 ♗a5 15.♖c3 ♙g4 16.♙d2 ♖f5 17.♗f4 ♙xf3 18.gxf3 c6=

89 14.♖a4 ♖d6=

90 The simplest solution.

14...♖d6?! is bad because of 15.♙xe7!±.

14...♗xc4 15.♗f4 (15.♖xc4 ♗f5 [Δ...♗d6, ...♙g4] 16.♗f4 ♖d6 Δ...c6=) 15...♖d6 16.♙xe7 ♖xb4 17.♙xb4 ♜d8 18.♜fc1 ♗d6 19.a4 a5 20.♙c5±

14...♙g4 15.♙xe7 ♙xf3 16.♗g3 ♗xc4=