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# 1 3... ♔d6 with 4 d4 ♘f6 5 ♘f3 c6 6 ♘e5

## 1 e4 d5 2 exd5

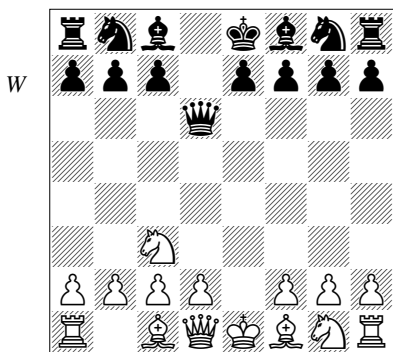
This is the most natural reply and clearly the best move. Rare lines like 2 e5?! and 2 ♘c3 will be covered in Chapter 7.

## 2... ♙xd5 3 ♘c3

This is another move that naturally comes to mind. From our chess 'childhood', we have been taught that it is a bad idea to bring out the queen in the opening because it will come under attack from the enemy minor pieces and will have to spend further time retreating. However, chess is a more nuanced game than this simple, if well-intentioned, advice would have us believe.

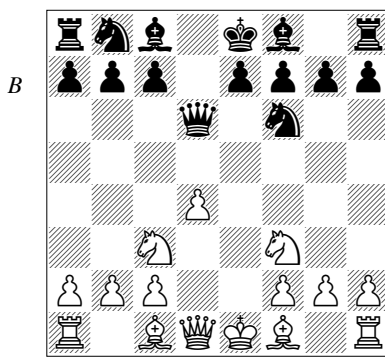
The first question is where to put the queen. 3... ♙d6 (Chapters 1 and 2) and 3... ♙a5 (Chapter 3) look reasonable, while 3... ♙d8 (Chapter 4) is a bit passive.

## 3... ♙d6 (D)



This retreat is my main recommendation. It is a multi-functional move. Here the queen prevents ♗f4, prepares queenside castling (since d8 is left vacant), and binds together the central foundations (the squares e7, e6, c6, d5, etc.). While the queen can be attacked again by ♘e4 or ♘b5, these moves may not necessarily prove useful for White.

Let's move a little further along the main line:  
4 d4 ♘f6 5 ♘f3 (D)



My main recommendation in this position is the 'central' strategy with 5...c6 (Chapter 1 and parts of Chapter 2); it is marked by Caro-Kann motifs, and has proved highly reliable.

Kovalenko's active idea 5... ♗g4 is considered in Chapter 2. The older and somewhat dubious 5...a6 also has its own section in Chapter 2. An option that is quite popular nowadays – the fianchetto with 5...g6 – is discussed in the final section of Chapter 2. In Chapter 2 we also deal with a variety of rarer options for White on moves 4, 5 and 6 in the lines after 3... ♙d6.

Frequently the plans overlap in these lines (e.g. ...c6 can be played after ...g6, and vice versa), so even if you decide to specialize in a particular line, you may be able to pick up useful ideas by examining material in other variations. I shall try to explain all the possible nuances of near-identical positions in the clearest way that I can.

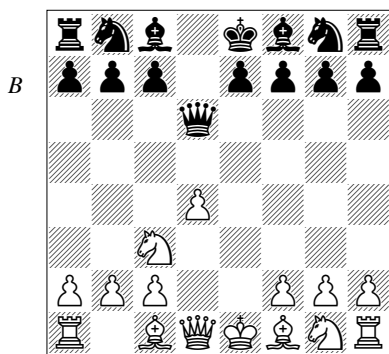
In the current chapter we shall examine White's most popular reply to 5...c6, namely 6 ♘e5.

**Game 1**  
**Swiercz – Tiviakov**  
 Wroclaw 2010

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♖xd5 3 ♘c3 ♗d6

Other continuations (apart from 3...♖a5 and 3...♗d8, which we discuss in later chapters) do not deserve detailed discussion: 3...♖c6?? 4 ♙b5 +-; 3...♗e5?! 4 ♙e2 and ♘f3 is on the agenda; 3...♗f5?! and 3...♗d7?! block the c8-bishop, and the queen will come under attack from White's minor pieces.

4 d4 (D)



4...♘f6

A little note on move-order: 4...c6?! gives White the interesting additional possibility of 5 ♘e4!?, when the game is starting to look like a Caro-Kann where Black lacks time to develop his bishop to f5: 5...♖e6 6 ♗e2 ♘f6 7 f3 (this is the point of White's strategy: White doesn't remove the knight but instead consolidates it in the centre) 7...g6 8 g3 ♘xe4 9 fxe4 ♙g7 10 ♙h3 f5 11 ♘f3 0-0 (11...c5!?) 12 ♘g5 ♗d6 13 c3 (13 ♙f4!?) 13...h6 14 ♙f4 ± Bologan-Tiviakov, Šibenik 2009. Not many people have been willing to play this line as Black.

5 ♘f3 c6

Here we see the first similarities with the Caro-Kann Defence. Some points of this modest pawn move:

- Black places d5 and b5 under control.
- He vacates the c7-square, which will later be used as a more permanent home for the black queen.
- As we shall see further on, in case of a fianchetto with g3 and ♙g2 (which is rather

popular) the 'breakwater' b7-c6 will serve as a good restraint for the g2-bishop.

6 ♘e5

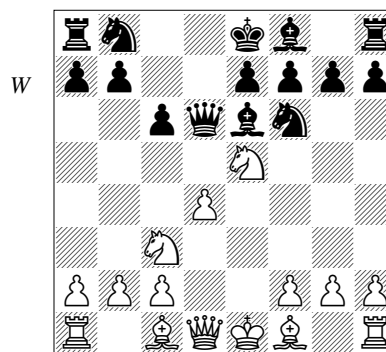
This idea is employed quite often nowadays. Under cover of the powerful outpost White can:

- Bring the bishop to f4.
- Consolidate the knight by playing f4.
- Attack f7 with ♙c4.

It makes little sense to tolerate the powerful centralized knight, so Black usually tries to exchange it or kick it away. I would like to draw your attention to the importance of exchanges in general. *The player who lacks space, as a rule, benefits from simplifications.* This natural principle should always be borne in mind. Naturally though, there are exceptions to any rule.

6...♘bd7

Sometimes, possibly trying to avoid opening preparation, Black has used 6...♙e6!? (D).



At first sight this move may seem fanciful. However, this is not the last time we shall meet this bishop move, placing it in front of the e7-pawn, and I shall discuss its nuances in more detail at a later point. For now, we shall note that Black places d5 and c4 under control. 7 ♙f4 (or 7 f4 g6 8 ♙e2 ♙g7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♙e3 ♘bd7 11 g4 ♘d5 12 ♘xd5 ♙xd5 13 c4 ♙e4 = Bodnaruk-Tiviakov, St Petersburg 2012) 7...♗d8 and then:

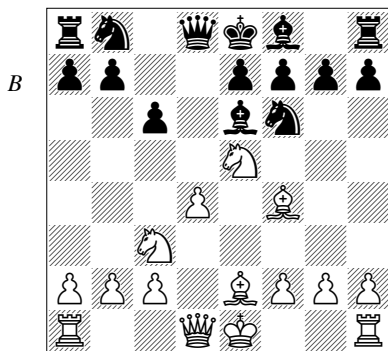
a) 8 ♗d2 ♘bd7 9 0-0-0 g6 and here:

a1) In Z.Almasi-Tologontegin, St Petersburg 2012 a leading Hungarian player tried to blast open the centre with 10 d5. However, his low-rated Russian opponent responded in very solid fashion: 10...♙xd5 11 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 (11...cxd5?? 12 ♙b5 ♙g7 13 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 14 ♗xd5 +-) 12

c4 ♖c7! 13 cxd5 (13 ♘g6 ♘f4 14 ♘h8 ♘c5 is unclear) 13... ♗xe5 14 ♙xe5 ♖xe5 15 dxc6 ♖c7! 16 ♖d7+ ♖xd7 17 cxd7+ ♔d8 =.

a2) 10 ♙c4 ♙xc4 11 ♘xc4 ♙g7 12 d5 (hurrying to open the d-file before the black king leaves the centre) 12...0-0 (12... ♗b6 is even more accurate: 13 dxc6 ♖xd2+ 14 ♖xd2 bxc6 15 ♘a5 ♗fd5 16 ♘d5 cxd5 = with a perfect position for Black) 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 ♖he1 e6 15 ♙d6 ♖e8 = Kanovsky-S.Kasparov, Teplice 2013. Black has solved his opening problems. His total control over d5 allows him to view the future with confidence.

b) 8 ♙e2 (D) and now:



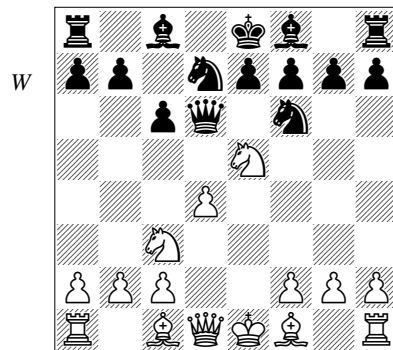
b1) 8... ♗bd7 9 0-0 g6 10 ♖d2 ♗xe5 11 ♙xe5 ♙g7 12 ♖ad1 0-0 13 ♙f3 was about equal in Eichner-S.Kasparov, Erfurt 2012.

b2) 8...g6 and here:

b21) White enjoyed a certain initiative after 9 ♖d2 ♗bd7 10 ♘f3 ♙g7 11 ♙h6 ♙xh6 12 ♖xh6 ♗b6 13 0-0 ♖d6 14 h3 0-0-0 15 ♖ad1 ♗bd5 16 ♘d5 ♗xd5 17 ♙c4 in S.Haslinger-Tiviakov, Roosendaal 2012, though Black's game remains viable.

b22) 9 0-0 ♙g7 10 ♖d2 ♗bd7 11 ♖ad1 0-0 12 h3 ♖e8 13 ♖fe1 ♗b6 14 a3 ♖c8 15 ♙f3 a5 16 a4 ♗bd5 is a type of situation we shall see a great many times in this book. The knight moves to the strong point d5 with the intention of *simplifying* the position. It attacks *two* enemy pieces simultaneously, so White can't avoid an exchange. After 17 ♗xd5 ♙xd5 18 c4 ♙xf3 19 ♗xf3 b6 20 b3 ♖a7 White's space advantage is not that significant any more since the knight and bishop have left the board, A.Nguyen-Tiviakov, Kuala Lumpur 2012.

We now return to 6... ♗bd7 (D):



7 ♘c4 ♖c7 8 ♖f3

8 d5?! is very seldom played, which is not surprising as it doesn't promise any benefits:

a) Black can attack the audacious pawn immediately by 8... ♗b6 9 dxc6 bxc6 10 ♖f3 ♗bd5 11 ♙d2 g6 12 h3 ♙g7 13 0-0-0?! 0-0 14 g4 ♙e6 15 ♖g1 ♖ab8 16 b3 ♖fd8 ♢ Ristić-Milanović, Kragujevac 2013. White has only gained a headache, as Black exerts pressure on the d- and b-files. The dark squares around the white king have been weakened by b3.

b) With 8...g6 9 ♖d4 ♙g7 10 ♙f4 ♖d8 Black simply ignores the pawn on d5, challenging White to find some way to justify his play. After 11 dxc6 bxc6 12 0-0-0 0-0 13 ♖d2 ♙b7 14 ♙h6 ♖c7 15 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 16 ♖e3 ♗b6 White has not the slightest advantage, while Black can fight for the initiative thanks to his strong central bastion on d5, L.Dominguez-Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

8... ♗b6

The knight repeats the offer to exchange – a *common thread* in the whole opening. Indeed, in *many openings*, the player who *lacks space*, as a rule, *benefits from simplifications*.

9 ♙f4 ♖d7!?

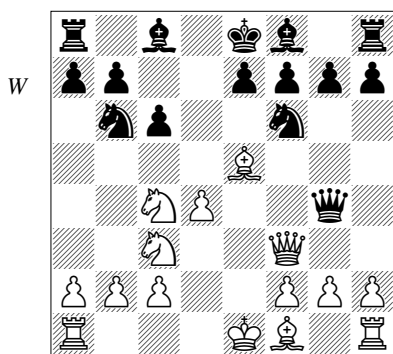
A most surprising move. It seemed the queen had to retreat to d8, since why would it make sense to put it on d7, blocking the bishop? But the queen attacks the d4-pawn, while keeping an eye on g4, and this forces White to make a major decision. He can protect the d-pawn, letting the queen move to g4; we consider this option in the current game. 10 ♗xb6 is covered in Game 2. White can also ignore the threat to the

pawn and take control of g4 by playing 10 h3 – see Game 3.

### 10 ♙e5

Making no attempt to interfere with Black's plan. 10 ♘e5!? poses an interesting challenge, since (unlike the analogous line with 9...♗d8 – see the notes to Game 6) Black has little choice but to accept the pawn with 10...♗xd4. In this offbeat position, White has enough compensation, but Black can defend; e.g., 11 ♖d1 (11 ♙d3 g6 12 0-0-0 ♗c5) 11...♗b4 12 ♙e3 (12 ♙d2 ♙g4) 12...♗xb2 (12...♙g4?! 13 ♘xg4 ♗xg4 14 ♘b5!) 13 ♙d4 ♗b4! 14 ♙e2 (14 a3 ♗a5 15 ♙e2 ♙e6) 14...h5!? with a dynamic balance.

### 10...♗g4 (D)



It is rare to see such a strange thrust by the queen in the opening. Furthermore, it is not part of an attack, but an offer to exchange!

### 11 ♗e3

What if White acquiesces to his opponent's desire? 11 ♗xg4 ♙xg4 and then:

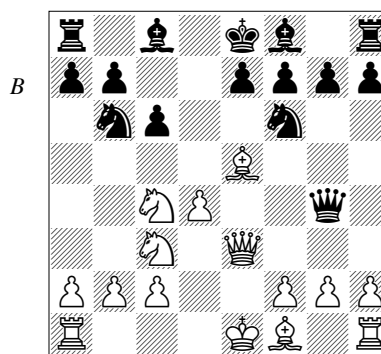
a) In C.Bauer-R.Ekström, Swiss Team Ch 2009 the French grandmaster directed his knight to the queenside: 12 f3 ♙e6 13 ♘a5 (this looks attractive; the knight bothers the pawns on b7 and c6, and Black can't protect them with his rook since the bishop controls b8) 13...0-0-0 (however, the black king can perform this defensive duty) 14 ♖d1 (if there were a knight on d7, then 14 ♘xc6 bxc6 15 ♙a6+ would mate, but as it is, the king would just run away) 14...♙f5 15 g4 ♙g6 16 h4 h5 17 g5 ♘fd5 18 ♘e4 ♘e3 and Black already stood better.

b) 12 ♘e3 ♙e6 gives Black total control over the d5-square, something I will repeat hundreds of times in this book. Now:

b1) "Is it possible for Black to win after the exchange of queens?" I hear you ask. My answer: "Why not? There are other pieces on the board." 13 ♙e2 0-0-0 14 0-0-0 h5 (intending ...♘g4) 15 h3 ♘fd5 16 ♘cxd5 ♘xd5 17 c4 ♘xe3 18 fxe3 f6 19 ♙f4 g5 20 ♙h2 g4 and here you can observe active counterplay. I can foresee some sceptical smiles, but let me ask then, can Black win in any other opening if White doesn't commit serious mistakes?! 21 ♙f4 ♙g7 22 hxg4 ♙xg4 23 ♙xg4+ hxg4 24 ♙c2 e6 25 ♖xh8 ♖xh8 26 e4 f5 27 exf5 exf5 with counterplay, Penson-S.Kasparov, Brasschaat 2014.

b2) 13 a4 ♘bd7 14 f4?! ♘g4! (add this manoeuvre to your chess arsenal – the double attack on e3 and e5; on occasion ...f6 may also follow, to disturb the aggressive white bishop) 15 ♘xg4 ♙xg4 16 d5 (I have another remark: chess is not draughts, and capturing is *not* a necessity! That's why Black often ignores White's d5 break) 16...♘xe5 17 fxe5 0-0-0 18 dxc6 bxc6 19 a5 ♖d4 (19...♙e6!?) 20 ♙e2?! (20 ♙d3!?) 20...♙f5 21 ♙f3 ♙c7 ♣ Ganguly-Tiviakov, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007. I guess one doesn't need a grandmaster title to see that Black has two bishops, while White has a pawn weakness on e5 (and later on, maybe on a5 as well). In a long ending Black managed to realize this slight advantage.

We now return to 11 ♗e3 (D):



### 11...♘fd5

Or:

a) The exotic 11...♗e6 has also been tried: 12 ♘xb6 axb6 13 ♙e2 ♘d7 (13...b5!?) 14 0-0 f6 15 ♙c7 ♗xe3 16 fxe3 g6 17 a4 (a typical way to restrain the b7- and b6-pawns) 17...♙h6

18 ♖f2 0-0 19 ♙c4+ ♗g7 20 ♜ae1 ♝e8 and now White, by means of 21 g4, paralysed the kingside as well, increasing his advantage, in Iordachescu-Boguslavsky, Bad Wiessee 2009.

b) Another method was used by the author in a rapidplay game against a Lithuanian grandmaster: 11...♗xc4 12 ♙xc4 ♙e6 13 ♙xe6 ♜xe6 14 0-0 (14 0-0-0!?) 14...♗g4 (seeking beneficial exchanges) 15 ♜h3 ♜d7 (15...♗xe5 16 ♜xe6 ♗f3+ 17 gxf3 fxe6 ±) 16 ♜g3 h5 17 h3 ♗xe5 18 dxe5 ♜f5 19 ♜ad1 (19 e6!? ♜xe6 20 ♜fe1 ± is an interesting file-opening pawn sacrifice) 19...e6 20 ♜d3 ♜d8 (or 20...h4 21 ♜e3 ♙e7 ±) 21 ♜xd8+ ♗xd8 22 ♜e1?! (better is the 'computer move' 22 ♗b5!, though it would be hard to find when short of time; since 22...cxb5? loses to 23 ♜c3, Black has nothing better than 22...♗c8 ±) 22...♗c7 23 ♜e3 ♙b4 = Rozentalis-S.Kasparov, Palanga rapid 2012.

#### 12 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 13 ♜d2 h5

13...♙f5 is also quite acceptable: 14 ♙e2 (or 14 f3 ♜g6 15 0-0-0 f6 16 ♙g3 h5 with normal play) 14...♜g6 (14...♜xg2!?) 15 0-0 h5 (this is actually a standard move in positions like this; Black hinders any ideas of a g4 advance, while making it unappealing for the e5-bishop to retreat to g3, and in the future it may even be possible for Black to make a general advance of his kingside pawns; 15...♙xc2 seemed risky because of White's lead in development) 16 ♗e3 ♗xe3 17 fxe3 f6 18 ♙f4 (18 ♙c7 e6 is about equal) 18...♙e4 (18...♙xc2!?) 19 ♙f3 ♙xf3 20 ♜xf3 ♜e4 (an important move: the queen occupies a commanding height in the centre, while opening the way for the g-pawn; otherwise White might some day smash open the e-file and the third rank for a rook-lift by an e4 pawn sacrifice) 21 ♙c7 ♜c8 22 ♙a5 g5 (this move is good in all respects; Black prevents ♜f4 and e4, while intending ...♙h6 and ...g4) 23 c4 ♙h6 24 ♜e1 g4 25 ♜f2 0-0 26 ♜c2 ♜xc2 with a good game for Black, Boguslavsky-S.Kasparov, Bad Liebenzell 2007.

#### 14 ♙e2?!

14 h3 and 14 ♙d3 are better; in the latter case 14...♜xg2?! 15 0-0-0 f6?! 16 h4! fxe5? 17 ♗xe5 gives White decisive threats, while 14...f6 15 0-0! ♙f5 (only move) 16 h3 ♜g6 leads to quieter play.

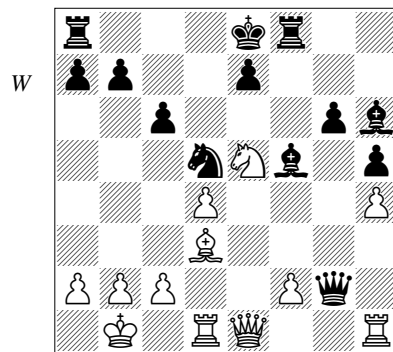
#### 14...♜xg2

Principled and right!

#### 15 0-0-0 f6 16 h4??

A bluff like this is most unlikely to succeed against Sergei Tiviakov, who simply accepts the sacrificed offering and beats off the attack. The fact that he chose 14...♜xg2 showed that he was confident about the defensive capacity of his position.

#### 16...fxe5 17 ♗xe5 g6 18 ♖b1 ♙h6 19 ♜e1 ♜f8 20 ♙d3 ♙f5 (D)



Almost all the black pieces are activated, while he has a healthy extra bishop.

#### 21 ♜g1 ♜h2 22 ♙xf5 ♜xf5 23 ♜xg6 ♙f8

Solidly consolidating the black king's residence.

#### 24 ♗c4 ♜d8

Just not 24...0-0-0??, which loses to 25 ♜e6+. I leave the rest without comments.

#### 25 ♜e6 ♜xf2 26 a3 ♗c7 27 ♜e4 ♜f4 28 ♜e2 ♗b5 29 c3 ♗d6 30 ♗d2 ♜xh4 31 ♜d1 ♜f2 32 ♜d1 ♜f4 33 ♗b3 ♗c4 34 ♜g2 ♜f5+ 35 ♖a1 ♜xg2 36 ♜xg2 ♗e3 0-1

### Conclusions

You were probably surprised by the original placement of the queen in front of the bishop (9...♜d7), with the exotic idea of chasing the enemy queen! I have about 30 years of chess experience and I must say that it is rare for an idea like this in the opening to be effective.

In the notes you can see how Black can fight for victory in the positions resulting after an exchange of queens (Ganguly-Tiviakov). At least, the position is very far from a dead draw, and besides, in any opening if White doesn't take