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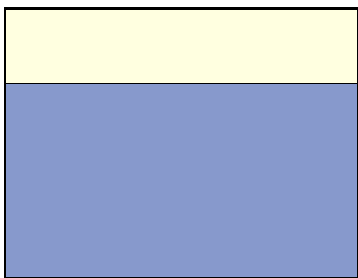
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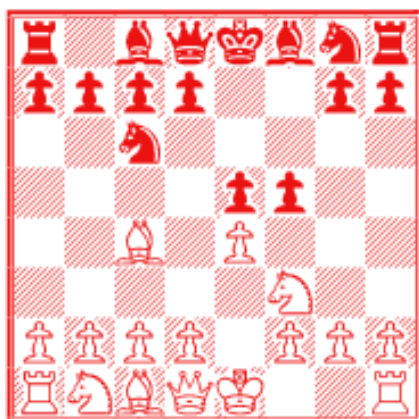


Giuoco Fortissimo: The Rousseau Gambit

Part 2

by Tim McGrew

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 f5!?



The lines we covered in part 1 of this article account for nearly half of all of the games played with the Rousseau. In over-the-board play, they account for a good deal more than that; but in correspondence chess, where players are permitted to go digging around for theory, the critical move 4.d4 is played about two-thirds of the time.

I hope you are convinced by the survey in part 1 that White's alternatives are not a serious threat to Black's opening idea. Here, however

White really does have the opportunity to prove that he has an opening advantage. By analogy with the Vienna, this must be the proper way for White to counter Black's plans. On the other hand, if you thought White had chances to go wrong in the earlier lines, you ain't seen nuthin' yet!

However, two pieces of reader feedback deserve mention before we dive in. First, eagle-eyed Gary Zintgraff writes to point out that there were a few moves missing in Andre-Fiebig, corr 1986. The complete game runs: 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 f5 4.exf5 e4 5.Qe2 Qe7 6.Ng1 Nf6 7.Nc3 Nd4 8.Qd1 c6 9.Nge2 Nxe2 10.Qxe2 d5 11.Bb3 Bxf5 12.a4 0-0-0 13.h3 d4 14.Nd1 Nd5 15.Bxd5 Rxd5 16.d3 exd3 17.Qxe7 Bxe7 18.c3 Re5+ 19.Kf1 Re8 20.cxd4 Re1+ 21.Kxe1 Bb4+ 22.Kf1 Re1#. Thanks to Gary for this correction!

The second item comes from my friend Dennis Monokroussos, who raises some doubts about the viability of Black's position in the 4.d3 variation. Dennis is a smart guy and a very strong player, so his questions are worth addressing.

"Viability" is a flexible term, and our apparent disagreement might reflect the fact that I have a higher tolerance for risk than he does. Most of my opponents are rated below 2400, and at that level I'm willing to play, even repeatedly, a line that

I think my opponent could only refute with some assistance from Pocket Fritz.

But I'm not convinced that Dennis has made the case for a serious problem for Black in the Rousseau after 4.d3 Nf6 5.0-0 fxe4 6.dxe4 Bc5 and now 7.Nc3, a move that I did not consider in Part 1 of this article. Dennis compares this to a variation of the Schliemann Defense to the Ruy Lopez where White has an extra tempo, namely, 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 f5 4.d3 fxe4 5.dxe4 Nf6 6.0-0 Bc5 7.Nc3 d6 8.Bc4. Dennis and I may just have a difference of opinion about this variation. As a long-time Schliemann addict, I love Black's position here, with the open f-file and a very solid pawn formation, and I would be delighted if every Schliemann turned out so well for Black. Dennis thinks that Black has to be quite careful to equalize here, but I do not see the specific problems White is posing to Black. My database contains exactly one game from this position with Black to move (and remembering that tempo, we'll have to come back to this point): Drobka (2342) - Goessling (2194), 6th Werther Schloss op 2002, where Black stood very well after 8...Bg4 9.h3 (necessary, to prevent ... Nd4 shattering the Kingside pawns) Bh5 10.Bg5 Qd7 11.Bxf6 gxf6 12.Nd5 Qg7 and Black's attacking chances are already looking quite promising. In fact, Goessling outplayed his higher-rated opponent from this position: 13.Qd3 0-0-0 14.Kh1 Rhg8 15.Ne1 Nd4 16.f3 (16.g4 Bxg4!? looks tempting) 16...c6 17.Nc3 Bf7 18.Bxf7 Qxf7 19.Na4 Rg3 20.b4 Bb6 21.Nxb6+ axb6 22.Rf2 Qh5 23.Qf1 Rdg8 24.a4 Ne6 25.Nd3 R8g6 26.a5 Ng5 27.axb6? Nxh3! and White collapsed: 28.Rd2 Ng5+ 29.Kg1 Nxf3+ 30.Kf2 Nxd2 31.Ra8+ Kd7 32.Nc5+ dxc5 0-1

We can ask some questions about White's play (27.Kh2! looks more to the point), but Black's play can also be improved earlier (e.g. 19...Ne6). My point is not to argue that White was lost from early on, which would be a gross exaggeration; instead it is the practical point that Black's position was, for most of the game, easier to play: he had the initiative at least from move 12 onward and managed to score an attractive upset with the Black pieces against someone who ought, by rating, to have crushed him.

In fact, I think that this is one of the worst of White's ordinary lines against the Schliemann. Dennis may have some analysis to overturn this judgment, but it certainly has been pleasant for Black in my experience and this seems to be backed up by wider practice: in over 130 games in my database after 6...Bc5, White scores a miserable 42%. Since the position is structurally stable, there isn't a lot of room for tactical shots that can overturn an evaluation. Dennis indicates that the d5-square attracts him, but by itself this does not seem sufficient to give White a commanding edge. If White has something special here, I would really like to know.

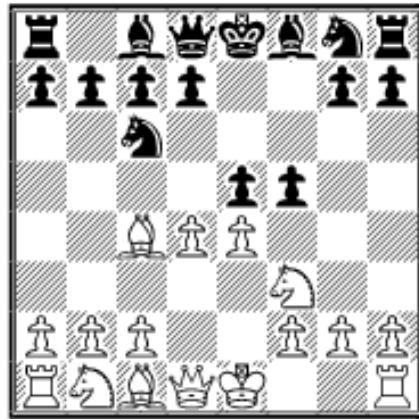
Let's leave the Schliemann line for the moment pending specific ideas from Dennis and turn our attention back to the Rousseau. I'm sure that this doesn't come up at the levels where Dennis plays, but the position after 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 f5 4.d3 Nf6 5.0-0 fxe4 6.dxe4 Bc5 7.Nc3 also arises from a totally different opening: 1.d4 e5 (No, I'm not recommending this, though I confess to having played it occasionally in 1 minute games when my mouse grabbed the wrong pawn!) 2.dxe5 Nc6 3.Nf3 f6 4.e4 (I do not believe this is the critical line; if it were forced, I might take up this defense on a more regular basis!) 4...fxe5 5.Nc3

Nf6 6.Bc4 Bc5 7.0-0. Here again, it seems to me that apart from the immediate stab at f7 White is not in a position to make serious problems for Black. The central formation is stable, and Black can profit from opened lines on the Kingside. One example, not definitive but at least interesting from a practical standpoint, is the 1988 correspondence game Potter - Sawyer, which continued 7...Rf8 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 d6 10.Nd5 (Well, there's the Knight on the juicy square -- but what happens next?) 10...Bg4 11.Nxf6+ gxf6 12.h3 Bh5 13.Qd2 Bxf3 14.gxf3 Qd7 15.Qxh6 Qxh3 16.Qg6+ Kd7 17.Bxf6? Nd4! 18.Qg7+ Kc6 0-1

Again, I could suggest some improvements for both sides, but I do not see Black suffering under a severe handicap here. And at mortal levels of chess, I think Black's Kingside chances make this an attractive line for him to try.

I think White has much more serious chances to cause Black trouble after 4.d4. And that brings us to the topic of Part 2...

E) 4.d4



Black has no fewer than six tries here. Most of them are not very promising, but we should survey them as some of our readers may occasionally play the White pieces, and even inferior sidelines can be tricky.

E1) 4...Nf6?! The problem with this move, from a practical standpoint, is that Black sets no pitfalls and creates no serious threats. White plays natural moves and ends up with a positionally superior game. 5.dxe5 Nxe4 6.0-0 Bc5 7.Nc3 Nxc3 8.bxc3 h6 9.Nd4 g6 10.Nb3

+/- Bilguer and Unzicker ... and McGrew as well. Black's position is just too loose and White has ideas like Qd5 and Ba3. Perhaps 9...Qh4!? is a little less ugly for Black, but frankly I do not believe in this line for Black.

E2) 4...d6 This very old move is the only one considered by Freeborough & Ranken, who devote three columns of Chess Openings Ancient and Modern to it under a transposition from the Greco (Latvian) Gambit. It leads to positions similar to those that arise from the Philidor Defense. Black's position is just a little too loose to inspire confidence.

E2a) 5.Ng5 Nh6 6.d5

E2a1) 6...Ne7 7.Nc3 f4 8.g3 Ng6 9.Bb5+! Ke7 (9...Bd7 10.Ne6! is painful) 10.gxf4 exf4 11.Ne2 Bg4 (11...a6 is urgently needed to give the Black King some air, but this is not a position Black will want to revisit in any event.) 12.f3 Bd7 13.Ne6 Bxe6 14.Nxf4 Nxf4 15.Bxf4 Nf7 16.dxe6 c6 17.exf7 Qa5+ 18.c3 Qxb5 19.Bxd6+ (19.Qxd6+ Kxf7 20.Qc7+ is a bit more incisive, but at this point who cares?) 19...Kxf7 20.Bxf8 White heads for a foolproof technical win 20...Rhxf8 21.Qb3+ Qxb3 22.axb3 Ke6 23.Ke2 Rf7 24.Ke3 and Black decided he didn't want to test his opponent's technique. Charousek-Kanyurszky, corr 1893.

E2a2) 6...Nb8 7.Nc3 fxe4 8.Ncxe4 Bf5 Freeborough & Ranken give this as equal, attributing the evaluation to Steinitz. This looks wildly optimistic to me. Black is in trouble, e.g. 9.Qf3 threatening 10.Ne6 and White's advantage is nearing decisive proportions.;

E2a3) 6...f4! looks better in hindsight, urging White's Knight to go home. 7.Nxh7!? Bg4!? (7...Rhx7? 8.Qh5+ Ke7 9.dxc6+- is a disaster for Black) 8.f3 Qh4+ 9.Kf1 Rxh7 10.dxc6 bxc6 with a very obscure position. The only thing that is clear here is that White probably shouldn't take the Bishop: 11.fxg4 Nxg4 12.Qf3 Nxh2+ 13.Rhx2 Qxh2 and White's exposed King is cause for some concern.

E2b) 5.dxe5 Morphy's choice, which looks good here too.

E2b1) 5...fxe4 6.Qd5 In his notes to the game Morphy-Worrall in *Morphy's Games of Chess*, Sergeant calls this "very embarrassing." He is right; although Black can grovel it out with 6...Qd7 7.Qxe4 Qf5 8.Qxf5 Bxf5 9.Bb5 Bxc2 10.Nc3 he will find White's threat of 11.Nd4 very annoying to meet.

E2b2) 5...Nxe5 6.Nxe5 dxe5 Here nobody seems to have tried the most forcing line: 7.Bf7+ Ke7 8.Bg5+ Nf6 9.Qh5 fxe4 10.Nc3 c6 11.Rd1 Qa5 and now 12.0-0 looks exceedingly unpleasant for Black, e.g. 12...Qb4 13.Rd5!+-

E2b3) 5...dxe5 6.Qxd8+ Kxd8 7.Bg5+ Nf6 8.Nc3 with a pleasant position for White, whose lead in development makes itself felt even after the exchange of Queens. Morphy-Worrall, London blindfold simul (8 games), 1859.

E3) 4...Qf6!? Gunderam has experimented with this move. It may appeal to *Latvian Gambit* lovers.

E3a) 5.Ng5?! This does not look very dangerous, and White makes it even less so with the following play. 5...Nh6 6.0-0?! Why give up this pawn? (6.d5!? f4!?) 6...Nxd4 7.Nc3 c6! This keeps White's minor pieces out of d5. 8.Be3? (8.f4!? would still mix things up a bit, though with an extra pawn in hand Black has no reason to complain.) 8...f4! The parking meter at g5 has just run out of time. 9.Bxd4 exd4 10.Ne2 Qxg5 11.Nxd4 Bc5 12.Nf3 Qh5 We could draw the curtain here, but the finish is entertaining. 13.c3 b5 14.Be2 0-0 15.Nd4 Qg6 16.Bd3 Bxd4 17.cxd4 f3 18.g3 d5 19.Re1 (19.exd5 Bf5 20.Bxf5 Qxf5 and the Queen heads for h3 and g2.) 19...Qh5 20.Rc1 Bh3 21.Rxc6 Bg2 22.e5 Qh3 and White gave up in Benner-Barrera, Betins mem corr 1970.

E3b) 5.Bg5 Qg6 6.exf5 Qxf5 Does Black threaten ...e4 here or not?

E3b1) 7.0-0 e4 8.Re1 Kosten stops here, citing Atars-Gunderam, Betins mem corr 1970 and evaluating the position as clearly favorable to White. I cannot help but wonder whether he is being influenced in part by the course of the game, which continued 8...h6?! 9.Bh4 Be7 10.Nc3!? exf3 11.Nd5 with interesting attacking chances for White, though the further course of the game is not wholly convincing. But this is hardly forced.

There are two better tries for Black. First, he might just try 8...Nge7 9.Nc3 exf3 10.Bxe7 Bxe7 11.Nd5 Kd8 and Black seems to be surviving. Second, 8...d5 looks sensible, ignoring the Knight and concentrating on development. Now we might have:

E3b11) 9.Nc3!? Nge7! 10.Bxe7 Nxe7 11.Bb5+ c6 12.Ne5 Be6! (12...cxb5? fails to 13.Nxb5! Kd8 14.Nd6") 13.Be2 Ng6 14.Bg4 Qf6 15.Bxe6 Qxe6 16.f3 Nxe5 17.fxe4 dxe4 18.Rxe4 Bd6 19.dxe5 Bc5+ 20.Kh1 0-0 and despite White's strong pawn Black is still kicking with his active pieces. Perhaps White should aim to shift the Bishop from its post, but after 21.Na4 Rad8 22.Qe2 Be7 White does not own a single open file. We'll call this += to unclear until it is tested.

E3b12) 9.Bb5 9...Nge7 10.Bxe7 Bxe7 Black is already better here. He need not worry about 11.Ne5? because of his attacking chances on the f-file, e.g. 11...0-0! 12.Nxc6 bxc6 13.Bxc6 Qxf2+ 14.Kh1 Bg4! 15.Qc1 Bg5! and White loses massive material trying to stop mate.

E3b2) 7.dxe5 To forestall ...e4. The result of the following game notwithstanding, I feel compelled to point out that White is a pawn up here and has an awful lot of pieces developed. 7...h6 (7...Nxe5 8.Qe2 d6 9.Nc3 looks like a lot more fun for White than for Black.) 8.Bd3 Qe6 9.Be3 Nge7 10.0-0 g5 Good grief! 11.Re1 Bg7 12.Nd4 Qf7 13.e6 I am sympathetic with White's impression that Black's outrageous play should be punished, but it isn't clear that giving him a pawn is the right way to do it. 13...dxe6 14.Be4 0-0 15.Re2 Ne5 It's official: Black has escaped and has far more piece activity than he had any right to get. The game goes downhill for White from this point on. 16.c3 c6 17.f3 Nd5 18.Bf2 Nf4 19.Rc2 Neg6 20.Ne2 e5 21.Rd2 Be6 22.b3 Nxe2+ 23.Qxe2 Nf4 24.Qe1 g4 25.Bg3 h5 26.Na3 gxf3 27.gxf3 Nh3+ 28.Kg2 Ng5 Uglier and uglier 29.Rf2 Nxe4 30.fxe4 Qg6 and White resigned. Dravnieks-Gunderam, Betins mem corr 1970. A game that tells us more about Gunderam than about the merits of this line for Black.

E4) 4...exd4 In his book *The Latvian Gambit*, one of the few sources that carries any analysis on the Rousseau, Kosten implicitly recommends this by criticizing all other moves. But despite his endorsement, I do not trust the move. Black seems to be living on the edge.

E4a) 5.0-0 fxe4 6.Nxd4 Nf6 7.Bg5

E4a1) 7...d5?! Do not try this! 8.Bxf6 Qxf6 (8...gxf6 9.Qh5+ Ke7 10.Nc3! dxc4 11.Nxc6+ bxc6 12.Rfe1 looks very unpleasant for Black) 9.Nb5! "might be good for White" -- Kosten. I think so too.

E4a2) 7...Ne5!? 8.Bb3 c6 9.c4! h6 (9...Bc5 10.Nc3 Nd3? 11.Nxe4 As given by Kosten. White is clearly winning.) 10.Bxf6 Qxf6 11.Nc3 Nd3 Now one of Kosten's games continued 12.Nxe4 Qxd4 13.Re1 Kd8 and just when it was getting intense, White forgot that Queens have a finite value and played 14.Bc2?? allowing 14...Nxe1! 15.Qxd4 Nxc2 and 16...Nxa1 when Black had much more than enough for the Queen, Forte-Kosten, Clermont-Ferrand, 1994. He should

have tried 14.Re3 instead, as Kosten suggests, when the position looks rather dicey for Black.

E4b) 5.Nxd4 Fritz Borrmann won a crushing game with this. 5...Nxd4 6.Qxd4 Ne7 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bh4 fxe4 9.Nc3 c6 10.Qd6! e3? 11.0-0 b5 12.Bb3 g5 13.fxe3! Bg7 14.Bf7+ Agony! 14...Kf8 15.Ne4 Bxb2 16.Bb3+ (16.Bd5+ actually mates: 16...Ke8 17.Nf6+ Bxf6 18.Qxf6 d6 19.Bxc6+! Nxc6 20.Qf7#) 16...Ke8 17.Nf6+ Bxf6 18.Qxf6 1-0, Borrmann-Holwell, corr 1988.

E4c) 5.e5!? Kosten doesn't mention this, but it looks like a good Falkbeer reversed to me. 5...d6 (5...Bb4+ 6.c3! dxc3 7.bxc3 Bf8 8.Bg5 Nge7 9.Qb3 d5 10.exd6 Qxd6 11.Bf7+ Kd8 12.0-0 Black could resign here. 12...Bd7 13.Rd1 Na5 14.Qc2 Qc5 15.Be6 b6 16.Rxd7+ Ke8 17.Bxe7 Bxe7 18.Rd5 1-0, Burk-Holwell, corr 1990.) 6.Bf4 dxe5 7.Nxe5 Bb4+ 8.c3!? and only White can be happy with the position.

E5) 4...Qe7?! This move of Gunderam's is amazingly popular. Black takes on high risks without, in my view, enough chances for White to go wrong. 5.0-0 fxe4 6.Nxe5 Nxe5 7.dxe5 Qxe5 8.Bxg8 Rxg8 9.Nc3 Bd6 10.g3 Qf5 11.Re1 and Fritz is already beginning to suggest 11...Kd8, which is a bad sign. (Not all Latvian lovers will agree!) Black may not be dead here, but it is not a position I can recommend to those who are reading this article because they would rather be attacking.

E6) 4...fxe4!? This is the move that gives White the greatest chance to go wrong. 5.Nxe5 (5.Ng5? gives White a simply awful position after 5...d5 6.Bb5 exd4 7.Qxd4 Nf6) 5...d5!?

Having advised readers of *The Complete Book of Gambits* to go into this line as White, Keene omits all mention of this move. (He gives only 5...Nxe5? 6.dxe5, which has no redeeming merits from Black's point of view.) Yet it is Black's most common choice in this position and the one that scores best. Before you read further, I would invite you to look at the position from White's point of view and select the move you would play.



E6a) 6.Nxc6 This leads to some fascinating complications. Black's King has to step forward, but thanks to the strong wall of pawns he is actually fairly safe. 6...bxc6 7.Qh5+

E6a1) The attempt to trap the Queen with 7...g6?! 8.Qe5+ Kf7 9.Qxh8 Nf6 fails against accurate play -- but it might be worth a try in a quick game, since White's best move is quite counterintuitive.

E6a11) 10.0-0?! Qd7 11.Bg5!? (11.Be2? Bg7 12.Bg4 Nxc4! 13.Qxh7 Ba6 14.Qh3 Bxf1;; 11.Ba6!? Bg7 12.Bxc8 Rxc8 13.Qxc8 Qxc8 is unclear) 11...Bg7 12.Bxf6 Bxh8 13.Bxh8 dxc4 is also unclear;

E6a12) 10.Be2?? Bb4+! 11.c3 Bxc3+ 12.Nxc3 Qxh8 -/+

E6a13) 10.c3?! Qd7 11.Ba6 Bg7 12.Qxc8 Rxc8 13.Bxc8 Qxc8 is unclear

E6a14) 10.Bh6?? Bb4+! 11.c3 Qxh8-+;

E6a15) 10.Nc3! Exploiting the pin on the d-pawn and blocking the diagonal from b4 to e1 to prevent Black's ...Bb4+ trick. Now all of the tactics work in White's favor: 10...Qd7 (10...dxc4 11.Bh6! Bf5 12.Bxf8 Qxf8 13.Qxf8+ Rxf8 14.0-0-0+-; 10...Qe7 11.Bg5 Bg7 12.Bxf6 Qxf6 13.Nxd5! Bxh8 14.Nxf6+ Kxf6 15.0-0-0+-) 11.Nxe4! Nxe4 12.Qxh7++- and Black can call it a day.

E6a2) 7...Ke7!



This is really the soundest move and White has a very hard time proving anything against it. 8.Bg5+ Nf6 9.Be2 Qd6 (9...Bf5!? 10.Bxf6+ Kxf6 and Black's audacious King is again quite safe, e.g. 11.Qh4+ g5 12.Qg3 Qd6 13.Qc3 Qb4 with quite a nice semi-ending coming up for Black.) 10.a3 Bf5 11.Nd2 Kd7 (Black can also try castling by hand: 11...Bg6 12.Qh4 Kf7 13.0-0 Be7 14.c4 Rhf8 15.f3 Kg8 16.Rae1 Rae8 and Black's position, though moderately cramped on the Queenside, looks playable.) 12.Qh4 Qe6 (12...Rb8!? may provoke 13.0-0-0? when Black has the zinger 13...Qxa3! =+) 13.c4 h6 14.Bf4 Bd6 15.Qg3 g5 16.Bxd6 cxd6 17.0-0 h5 and although Fritz thinks the position is roughly equal, I think White should begin to get worried about what is coming down on the Kingside.

E6b) 6.Qh5+?

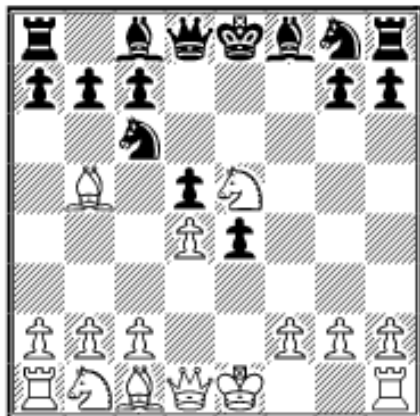


Well, yes, it's obvious isn't it? Imagine how hard your opponents will find this to resist! But if you selected this as White's best move, you have fallen into the main trap in the Rousseau -- a lovely trap because it involves several "quiet" moves and yet is quite impossible to escape. Black now wins material by force. 6...g6 7.Nxg6 (7.Nxc6 gxh5 8.Nxd8 dxc4! and White's Knight is trapped.) 7...Nf6! Step one: Black forces White's Queen to h4. 8.Qh4 (There is nothing else to be done. 8.Qg5 runs into 8...Rg8-+) 8...Nxd4! Now White's Bishop is hanging and he is faced with a fork at c2. 9.Bb3 White defends against both threats at once, but now Black reveals the point of his Knight's tour. (9.Nxh8 Nxc2+ 10.Kd1?? dxc4+ 11.Kxc2 Qd3# brings matters to an abrupt conclusion.) 9...Nf5! Between them, Black's Knights take away all of

the squares on the h-file save one. 10.Qh3 (10.Qg5 is once again met by 10...Rg8 when White loses a full piece or a Queen for a Rook, e.g. 11.Nxf8 Rxf5 12.Bxf5 Kxf8 -+) 10...Ne7! The discovered attack is the final point. White cannot stop 11...Nxf6 except by losing his Queen.

Is this trap too good to be true? Not at all. Just a few weeks ago an online opponent of mine rated over 2300 walked straight into it and promptly resigned. It has claimed at least four victims in games in my database, two in correspondence play.

E6c) 6.Bb5!



This is White's only serious try for an advantage. Because the position is critical, it is worth taking a close look at a wide variety of Black responses.

E6c1) 6...Nge7 This is the only reply considered in ECO volume C, where Unzicker repeats Bilguer's analysis from 1843. The move looks passive to me; it packs no counterpunch, and I do not think that it is a good choice for chess heroes. But we can't ignore ECO, since this is one of the only

reference works with any serious coverage of our gambit.

E6c11) 7.Bxc6+ bxc6 (7...Nxc6 is out because without a Knight to guard g6 or come to f6, 8.Qh5+ g6 9.Nxf6+- really does win for White.) 8.c4 This looks strong. White doesn't try anything fancy but steps up the pressure in the center. Black cannot contemplate 8...dxc4? unless he is (positionally) suicidal. 8...Ng6!? Nothing else works either, and at least this has the merit of getting rid of White's monster Knight at e5. 9.Nxf6! This is the move that takes all the fun out of things. (9.Nxc6 Qh4!? A crazy try in a difficult position. At least Black gets his pieces out. 10.cxd5 Bd6 11.Nc3 0-0 12.Be3 Ba6 Black hasn't got enough for his two pawns, but at least his pieces are active and he can sink a Bishop on d3. Objectively this is +/- but practically it is almost playable for Black at club level.) 9...hxf6 10.Nc3 Qd6 11.Qa4 Bd7 White must be better here, but Black does have a pair of Bishops and more space to offset his weak pawns. White should probably close things down with 12.c5 and castle Queenside with a comfortable position, e.g. 12...Qf6 13.Be3 Be7 14.0-0-0 and Black cannot afford 14...0-0? because of 15.Nxd5!+-

E6c12) 7.0-0 7...a6 8.Bxc6+ bxc6 9.f3 Bf5 10.Nc3 Bilguer's line. Unzicker says that White has a clear advantage here; indeed, White is just winning after 10...exf3 11.Qxf3 Qd6 12.Bg5 g6 13.Rae1+- Not what we were looking for in playing a gambit!

E6c2) 6...Qf6? Black got away with this in several postal games, but it is not really playable because White has a quick shot: 7.Nxc6! bxc6 8.Qh5+! Black cannot put the King on a dark square because of Bg5, and 8...g6 allows 9.Qxd5

when White dominates.

E6c3) 6...Nf6?! A spunky but unsound exchange sacrifice. 7.Nxc6 There is no point in allowing 7...Bd7, when Black has more fun than White. 7...bxc6 (7...Qd7? fails to 8.Nxa7 c6 9.Nxc8 Rxc8 10.Be2+-) 8.Bxc6+ Bd7 Here there is a serious option for White.

E6c31) 9.Bxa8 Qxa8 The amount of material being sacrificed is just too great for this to be sound. But the idea has two advantages: White can't harrass the Black King, and when the dust settles White will have no pieces developed while Black's spatial edge remains intact. If you intend to use the Rousseau in fast online games against non-masters, this might be a good one-time solution in case White finds 6.Bb5. Unfortunately, line E6c32 below spoils the fun.

E6c32) 9.Bxd5!? If White is feeling mean, this is the move to play. His material advantage is smaller (a mere two pawns!), but he retains his active Bishop, which makes it difficult for Black to castle and whip up an attack along the f-file. 9...c6 (9...Nxd5? 10.Qh5+-) 10.Bc4 +- and Black's position is really miserable since he cannot castle.

E6c4) 6...Bd7? It would be nice if Black could solve his problems with a simple unpin. There are some traps here, but if White plays accurately he gets in Qh5+ under favorable circumstances.

E6c41) 7.Qh5+?! As usual, this gives White very little: 7...g6 8.Nxc6 (8.Nxg6?! Nf6 9.Qh4 Nxd4 10.Bxd7+ Kxd7! is unclear) 8...gxh5 9.Nxd8 Kxd8 and White has only a small edge based on Black's damaged pawns.

E6c42) 7.Bxc6! Now there is no threat of ...Nxd4, and everything works nicely for White. 7...Bxc6 8.Qh5+ g6 9.Nxg6 Nf6 10.Qe5+ Kf7 11.Nxh8+ Kg8 12.Bf4 and White has a decisive advantage. The disappointing thing about this variation is that Black has none of the counterplay characteristic of the other Rousseau lines.

E6c5) 6...Qd6



This is the trickiest move. I have the feeling that White ought to be able to keep an advantage with accurate play, but in practice he usually has not and I have found it more difficult to prove that advantage than I would have thought.

E6c51) 7.Qh5+? Still bad! 7...g6!

E6c511) 8.Nxg6? Chasing a Rook, fatally. 8...Qxg6 9.Qe5+ (9.Qxd5 Nge7 10.Qg5 a6-+ also leaves Black way out ahead.) 9...Kf7

10.Bxc6 (10.Qxh8? Bg7 really does trap the Queen this time.) 10...bxc6 11.Qxc7+ Be7-+ and White hasn't got nearly enough for the piece.

E6c512) 8.Qe2! Relatively best 8...Bd7 9.Nxd7 Qxd7 10.Bf4 Bg7 and Black's position is quite comfortable

E6c52) 7.c4



This is the right sort of idea, but it has only been tried once so far as I can tell, and White actually lost the game. 7...a6!? 8.cxd5 axb5 9.dxc6 bxc6 10.Qc2 Counting on the fork to win a pawn. 10...Ne7 (10...Nf6 11.Qxc6+ Qxc6 12.Nxc6 Be6 13.a3 Nd5 and Black's active pieces and greater space give him some compensation for the pawn. This is a position that probably deserves a += / unclear evaluation and deserves some testing in hand-to-hand combat.) 11.Be3 g6 12.Nc3 Bg7 13.Nxe4 Qd5 14.Nc3? Too bold. There is no

need for White to give back the pawn. (14.f3 looks more solid, though Black's position has surprising resiliency, e.g. 14...0-0 15.Nc3 Qd6 16.0-0 Nf5 17.Qf2 Nxe3 18.Qxe3 c5!? and the situation becomes quite unclear.) 14...Qxg2 15.0-0-0 Be6 16.Rhg1 Qh3 17.Ne4 Bd5 (17...Rxa2!: gives White real problems.) 18.Bg5 Qf5 (18...Rxa2 still looks good.) 19.Rde1 (19.Qc5!? Nc8 is unclear) 19...Rxa2 Finally! 20.Bxe7 Bxe5 21.Nf6+ Kf7 22.Qxf5 gxf5 23.Nxd5? (23.dxe5 Kxe7 24.Rg7+ is very messy and unclear.) 23...Bxh2 24.Nc3 Bxg1 25.Nxa2 Bxf2 26.Re2 Bxd4 27.Bh4 Re8 28.Rc2 Re4 29.Bd8 f4 30.Bxc7 f3 31.Bg3 b4 0-1 Wittmann-Gunderam, corr 1968 .

E6c53) 7.Bf4 Played by James Mason in the sixth US Chess Congress. In view of Black's options against 7.0-0, this might turn out to be a critical line.

E6c531) 7...Qf6 This is tempting because the Bishop is exposed, but the move has two drawbacks: it blocks the natural development of Black's Knight, and it exposes the Queen later if White castles and breaks with f3.

E6c5311) 8.Nc3!? This is attractive at first glance but might backfire: 8...Bb4! (8...Qxf4? loses horribly to 9.Nxd5+-) 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.Be5 Qg6 11.Bxg7!? Qxg7 12.Bxc6+ Kd8 13.Bxa8 Qxg2 14.Kd2 (14.Rf1? Ba6 15.Kd2 Qg5+ 16.Ke1 Nf6-+) 14...Qg5+ 15.Ke1 Qg2= A curious draw by perpetual motion.

E6c5312) 8.Bg3 Now Mason-Taubenhaus, New York 1889 continued 8...Bb4+?! 9.c3 Ba5?? 10.Qa4 Bb6 11.Nxc6 and Black was already busted. Clearly the pin on the Knight at c6 is Black's primary concern at this point. With that in view, 8...a6 must be an improvement. The trouble for Black is that his Queen is on a bad square if White decides to castle and open the f-file, e.g. 9.Bxc6+ bxc6 10.0-0 Bd6 11.f3! Catching Black at an awkward moment since his Queen is exposed on the f-file. Black should probably reconcile himself to the loss of a pawn here with 11...e3 12.Re1 Ne7 13.Rxe3 0-0 but it seems doubtful that Black can claim full compensation here (+=).

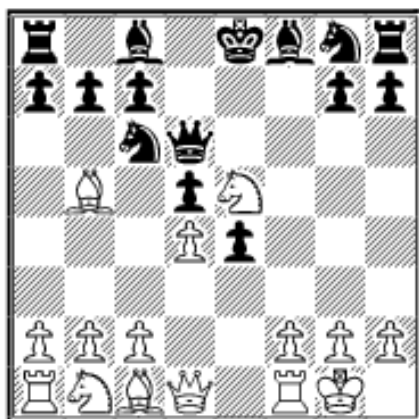
E6c532) 7...a6 This is playable right away since White has momentarily pinned his own Knight to the undefended Bishop on f4.

E6c5321) 8.Qh5+?! The check is bad here too. 8...g6 9.Nxg6 Qxg6 (9...hxg6 is actually playable too thanks to the hanging Bishop on f4: 10.Qxh8 Qxf4 11.Bxc6+ bxc6 12.Nd2 Be6 -/+) 10.Qe5+ Be6 11.Bxc6+ bxc6 and now 12.Qxh8?? is impossible because of 12...Bg7-+

E6c5322) 8.Bxc6+ 8...bxc6 9.0-0! (9.Qh5+?! g6 10.Nxg6 Qxg6 11.Qe5+ Be6 12.Qxh8 Bg7-+) 9...Qf6 (9...Nf6? 10.Ng6! Now that White is castled, there is no check on b4. 10...Qe6 11.Nxh8+-) 10.Bg3 transposes into 7.Bf4 Qf6 8.Bg3 a6 above (+=).

E6c533) 7...Nf6 This may be best and will probably transpose into the 7.0-0 Nf6 8.Bf4 lines considered below. 8.0-0 (8.Ng6? fails here to 8...Qb4+! 9.c3 Qxb5 10.Nxh8 Qxb2 11.Nd2 Qxc3-+ and White's center disappears while his Knight languishes in the corner.) 8...Qe6! etc.

E6c54) 7.0-0



The most common move in correspondence games in this line.

E6c541) 7...Bd7!? I cannot find any games with this move. But in light of Black's suffering in other variations, breaking the pin right away seems to be a very sensible idea. Here, White should probably give up his standard middlegame plans and play for an endgame (or at any rate a late queenless middlegame) in which Black's pawns are more of a liability than an asset. The key to

White's play is that Qh5+ is good in some of these lines, provided it is well-timed.

E6c5411) 8.Qh5+?! Not on this turn! 8...g6 9.Qg5 Other moves allow ...Nxe5 to Black's advantage. 9...Nxe5 10.dxe5 Qe7 11.Bxd7+ Kxd7 12.Qg3 Bg7 13.Rd1 Qxe5 14.Qxe5 Bxe5 15.Rxd5+ Ke6 16.Rd1 Nf6 Black's piece activity actually gives him the advantage here.

E6c5412) 8.Nxd7 Qxd7 Black would like to play 9...Nf6 here, after which few problems loom.

E6c54121) 9.c4 dxc4 10.d5 0-0-0 11.Nc3 Qf5 Black seems to have good counterplay here, with ...a6 coming up and possibilities of a dangerous Knight sacrifice on f3.

E6c541211) 12.Qa4 Nd4 13.Bxc4 Nf3+! 14.Kh1 (14.gxf3 exf3 15.Rd1 Qg4+ looks strong, though I do not see an immediate knockout) 14...Bd6 15.Qxa7 Qe5 16.g3 Qh5 17.h4 and now 17...Nxh4 wins easily.

E6c541212) 12.Be3 Ne5 Here also Black's attacking chances seem good, e.g. 13.Qa4 a6! 14.Bxc4 Nf6 and with ...Bd6 coming Black has substantial attacking prospects on the Kingside.

E6c54122) 9.Qh5+ Perhaps just this once this is playable.

E6c541221) 9...Qf7!? 10.Qe5+ Kd8 11.Bxc6 bxc6 12.f3 Bd6 13.Qg5+ Ne7 14.Qh4 (14.fxe4? Bxh2+ -/+) 14...exf3 15.Rxf3 Qg6 16.c4 and White has some advantage (+=), though it would be interesting to see whether the position can be held.

E6c541222) 9...g6 10.Bxc6 gxh5 11.Bxd7+ Kxd7 with a modest advantage to White in the endgame as Black's pawns are somewhat vulnerable to f3 or c4.

E6c5413) 8.Bg5 This allows a typical tactic thanks to the unpinning function of 7...Bd7. 8...Nxe5 9.dxe5 Qxe5 10.Bxd7+ Kxd7 11.Be3 Bd6 12.g3 Nf6 -/+

E6c5414) 8.c4 One of the charming things about the Bd7 line is that this move, which is crucial in many of the other variations, doesn't seem to give White anything here. 8...Nxe5 9.dxe5 Qxe5 10.Bxd7+ Kxd7 11.Qxd5+ Qxd5 12.cxd5 Nf6 13.Nc3 Bb4 I cannot see any serious danger in this position for Black. White needs to prove that he has equality here.

E6c5415) 8.Bf4 Threatening to 9.Bxc6 followed by 10.Qh5+, when for once the Queen check would actually work. 8...0-0-0!? This is a much more promising exchange sacrifice than some we have seen in this line. Black's King is out of danger and he has realistic Kingside chances. 9.Nxc6 The best of White's options. (9.Bxc6 Bxc6 10.Bg5 Nf6 11.Nf7 Qe6 12.Nxh8 Bd6; 9.Nxd7 Qxd7 is equal and pleasant for Black, who has no structural problems and can rapidly take advantage of his extra Kingside space. It's worth noting that 9.Nf7? Qxf4 10.Nxh8 Bd6 +- is dreadful for White since Black will soon win the cornered Knight.) 9...Qxf4 10.Nxa7+ Kb8 11.Bxd7 Rxd7 12.Nb5 c6 13.N5c3 Bd6 and Black's Kingside initiative seems to be worth the pawn.

E6c542) 7...Bf5 This is the only move mentioned in Kosten. 8.Bxc6+ bxc6 9.f3 Nf6 10.fxe4 Bxe4 11.Nc3 gives White a pleasant edge. Elburg-Raijmaekers, corr 1982, continued 11...Qe6 12.Nxe4 dxe4 13.Bg5 0-0-0 14.Qe2 c5 15.Qb5 a6 16.Qb3 Rd5 (16...Qxb3 17.axb3 Re8 18.Rxa6 Kb7 19.Rfa1+-) 17.Bxf6 cxd4 18.Nf7 Qxf7 19.Bxg7 1-0

E6c543) 7...Nf6 A sensible developing move that cuts out all checks at h5. White has tried a variety of moves in this position.

E6c5431) 8.Nc3 Bd7 9.Nxd7 Qxd7 10.f3 0-0-0 11.a3 (11.fxe4 dxe4 12.d5 Bc5+ 13.Kh1 Nxd5 14.Nxe4 Be7 gives Black full equality.) 11...exf3 12.Rxf3 Bd6 13.b4 Ng4!? 14.Bf4 (14.h3 might provoke Black into playing 14...h5!? 15.hxg4 hxg4 when Black's attacking chances are quite serious.) 14...g5 15.Bxd6 Qxd6 16.Rh3 Qf4 Now the threats on d4 and f2 are too strong. 17.Ne2 Qf2+ 18.Kh1 Rde8 19.Ng3 Qf4 0-1 Robins-Strelis, Betins mem corr 1971.

E6c5432) 8.Bf4 It is always nice to develop with a threat. Here, White intends a discovery with Ng6. 8...Qe6 9.c4 Bd6 (9...a6!? 10.cxd5 Nxd5 11.Bxc6+ bxc6 12.Bg3 and here I can imagine Gunderam trying something insane like 12...h5!? 13.h4 g5 14.hxg5 h4 15.Bh2 h3 with, believe it or not, some actual attacking chances.)

E6c54321) 10.Nc3 The most obvious move and probably the clearest path to an advantage. But Bormann may have been dissatisfied with it since he tried an alternative in another game at about the same time. 10...a6 (10...0-0 11.cxd5 Nxd5 12.Nxd5! Na5 13.Qd2 Qxd5 14.Qxa5 Bxe5 15.Rac1! Bxf4 16.Bc4+-; 10...Bd7 11.cxd5 Nxd5 12.Bc4 Nce7 13.Qb3+-)

E6c543211) 11.Qa4?! looks good but may backfire: 11...axb5! 12.Qxa8 Nxd4 13.Rad1 bxc4! 14.Rxd4 0-0 with dangerous counterplay for Black.

E6c543212) 11.Bxc6+ bxc6 12.Qa4 Bd7 does not give White a great deal. Fritz tries 13.c5 but after 13...Bxe5 14.Bxe5 0-0 15.Bxc7 Nh5 16.Bd6 Nf4!? Black has some troubling piece activity, e.g. 17.Bxf4 (17.Bxf8?? Qg4 18.g3 Nh3+ 19.Kg2 Qf3#) 17...Rxf4 18.Rae1 Raf8 19.Ne2 and now among other options Black can try 19...Rf3!? which I leave for readers to explore.

E6c543213) 11.cxd5 11...Nxd5 A critical position.

E6c5432131) 12.Bxc6+ bxc6 13.Qh5+ Fatal attraction. White cannot follow this up effectively, so the check wastes time. (13.Bg3 looks sounder, e.g. 13...Nxc3 14.bxc3 0-0 15.Re1 c5!? 16.Rxe4 Bb7 17.Re2 and Black's active Bishops don't seem to be worth the pawn, though the line could use a few tests (+/-).) 13...g6 14.Qh4 0-0 15.Bh6 Re8 16.Nxe4 Bxe5 17.dxe5 Qxe5 White should still be better here given the exposure of Black's King. Black's salvation lies in his active pieces. And with a little careless play by White, the game turns around on a dime. 18.Rae1 Bf5 19.f3? Unjustified generosity. 19...Qxb2 20.Rf2 Qd4 21.Bg5 c5 22.Ref1 Bd7 (22...Bxe4! 23.fxe4 Rxe4+- wins on the spot.) 23.g3 Rf8 24.Kg2 Bc6 25.Rd2 Qb4 26.Rfd1 Qa3 27.Qg4 Rae8 28.Bh6 Rf5 (28...Ne3+!) 29.Rd3 Qxa2+ 30.R1d2 Qa1 31.Nxc5 Bb5 32.Qd4 Qxd4 33.Rxd4 Ne3+ 0-1 Borrmann-Muller, Betins mem corr 1979.

E6c5432132) 12.Nxd5! This looks like an improvement for White, e.g. 12...axb5 (12...Qxd5?? 13.Bc4 Qa5 14.Qh5+ g6 15.Bf7+ Kd8 16.Nxc6+ picks up the Queen.) 13.Qh5+ g6 14.Nxg6 Qxg6 15.Qxg6+ hxg6 16.Bxd6 cxd6 17.Nc7+-

E6c54322) 10.Bxc6+ bxc6 11.c5 This doesn't look like much of a threat to Black's setup. Despite his extra space, Black is a little cramped -- or to put it more precisely, his pieces are stumbling over each other a bit. Allowing, even forcing, exchanges can only help Black here. 11...Bxe5 12.Bxe5 0-0!? The point of White's play was supposed to be to tie Black down to the defense of c7. Black ignores it and concentrates on completing his development. 13.Bxc7 e3! 14.Qe2 Ng4 Now the threats against f2 are awkward for White to meet. 15.f3 Ba6! 16.Qxa6 e2 17.Nc3 (17.Re1 would make Black very happy.) 17...Qe3+ 18.Kh1 exf1Q+ 19.Rxf1 Nf2+ 20.Kg1 It happens anyway! 20...Nh3+ 0-1 Borrmann-Muller, corr 1982.

Let's try to summarize our results.

Most of Black's options against 4.d4 are at least dubious, but E6 (4...fxe4 5.Nxe5 d5!?) is, for those with a high coefficient of risk, playable and gives White some extraordinary chances to go wrong. E6a2 looks like a full-blooded game with chances for both sides and E6b loses spectacularly for White.

The most dangerous variation is E6c (6.Bb5), which gives Black a number of inferior options. E6c5 (6...Qd6) is Black's best shot, and move order becomes quite important here. Perhaps the most significant point is that 7.0-0 gives White little in E6c541, so transpositions into E6c54 via Mason's move 7.Bf4 as in E6c533 may be the best way for White to try for an advantage. All of these lines are sufficiently complex that a well-prepared player is almost certain to score heavily against his unsuspecting opponents.



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