

Module 2: Slaying the b7-Monster

The last module was devoted to move order *quandaries*. In this module we will treat the special case of an early ...b6, the venom of which eclipses any label as tame as *quandary* for the Colle-Koltanowski player. Think how you would describe running your Dad's new pickup (or "pickup truck" as people outside Texas insist on calling them) into a telephone pole. That's roughly what an early ...b6 is for the Colle-Koltanowski.

C-Z players can benefit from some of the analysis of this chapter (see notes in the subsection under the heading Line A), but it is a lower priority. If they do not want to mess with another variation, they should be fine after: **1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Bd3 b6 5.Nbd2 Bb7 6.0-0**, when Black is not able to make any use out of the e4-square and White can continue with b3, etc. It isn't the most thrilling position for White, but it's blueberry cobbler compared to what a C-K player can come up against.

The Problem

The problems that plague C-K players after an early ...b6 are many, organic, and discouraging on both a theoretical and practical level. For starters, the move is a harbinger of ...Bb7, threatening ...Ne4. Koltanowski players do not often have to worry about such a play in the early game, for they generally play Bd3 and Nbd2 very early. However, should Black actually get ...Ne4 in, C-K players are less equipped to handle it than C-Z players. For one thing, the standard response (c4) would represent a lost tempo. For another, C-K players are unable to target g7 with a Bishop on b2, a tactic their C-Z playing brothers can do easily.

Furthermore, C-K players' standard methods of engaging opening deviations have a hard time getting a foothold against an early ...b6. As mentioned in the last module, a quick e4 or Stonewall formation are the bread and butter for C-K players going up against a non-standard move order. Unfortunately, e4 is obviously going to be hard to get in, and

playing a Stonewall when your opponent can do the same generally gets you only equality. For example, after **1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Bd3 b6! 5.0-0 Bb7 6.Ne5?! Be7 7.Nd2 0-0 8.f4**, Black can simply plop his Knight into e4, as Zarnicki did against Yusupov in 2005. As Palliser mentions in his annotations to that game, there is not much White can do to punish this.

Worse, Black does not even have to trade Stonewall formations. All he really has to do is play ...Be7 after White plays Ne5, and White has equality at best. After **1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Bd3 b6! 5.0-0 Bb7 6.Ne5?! Be7**, the game will likely drift into **7.Nd2 0-0 8.f4 c5 9.c3 Nbd7 10.Qf3 Qc7**, a position where White has had great practical success with **11.g4?!**, but in reality he is not threatening anything (as we will find in module 6), and Black is already significantly better after 11...Rad8!, 11...Rac8!, or 11...a5!

I've given **6.Ne5** a "?!" in the lines above, but it is not as though other plays give White much either. Both Palliser and I have suggested this move in the past. 6.c4 takes White into a lackluster line of the QID and leads to a type of game most Colle players are unlikely to either enjoy or be prepared for. 6.Nbd2 can be met by simply 6...Be7 now or on

the next move, and then Black can play ...Ne4 safely.

I've been using the move order **1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Bd3 b6! 5.0-0 Bb7** to display these problems, but White has similar trouble even when Black delays a move or two. Black can play **4...c5 5.c3 b6** as well as other, more exotic orders.

The Idea

To determine a solution to this problem, we have to go back to the root of it. Let's ask ourselves What gives Black the right to make such an ugly, arrogant move so early? Playing a Knight to such an advanced post (as Black no less!) so early seems somehow unjust, and we think White should have some way of punishing Black's brashness.

To understand why Black can make these moves safely, we must look at what weaknesses his play introduces and ask ourselves why White is unable to target those weaknesses. Then the answer becomes rather clear. The weaknesses arising in Black's camp are concentrated on the a4-e8 diagonal (you know, the one Black's King is on...since Black has not taken time to castle). In particular, playing ...b6 has weakened c6 and the Knight that jumped to e5 used to cover d7.

Unfortunately, normal Colle play is

particularly ill-suited to taking advantage of this weakness. White would like to play Ne5, Bb5(+), and perhaps Qa4 to cause problems along this diagonal, but such plays cut against the grain of the Koltanowski variation. Obviously, White has already played his Bishop to d3, so now Bb5+ would represent a wasted tempo in some sense. Secondly, the Colle is quiet enough that Black may delay ...c5, meaning he has the ...c6 “biff” in his pocket as a response to Bb5+. Lastly, the cruel, tragic truth is that White generally needs to play Qe2 to push e4 (to prevent ...Ne4), but it is this exact move that often leaves him unable to meet ...Ne4 because once the Queen moves to e2, she cannot go to a4 (or even c2 to at least pressure the Knight after it lands on e4).

Fashioning a satisfactory involves making use of a few key observations:

- White’s opportunity for play along the a4-e8 diagonal increases significantly once Black plays ...c5.
- Black is unlikely to play ...Nc6 if he is trying to make use of an early fianchetto, this means there is less pressure on d4 and no chance of ...Nb4, hitting White’s Bishop.
- If Black plays ...b6 and later needs to play ...b5, it represents a loss of tempo.

The Plan

Now, what kind of stew can we make from the three observations above?

Good Question! My pot is empty.

Don’t feel bad. You have to knock down a few walls and rip up some flooring to find the solution, which involves two major principles:

1. When possible, we will disrupt Black’s Q-side by playing Bb5+ immediately after ...b6. To get the most from this play, we switch up the Colle move order and play Nbd2 before Bd3.

2. If Black plays ...b6 before playing ...c5, we do not play c3 in response. We welcome ...c4 because we will now be a tempo up on those lines where Black had not played ...b6.

Explain that second one.

After ...c4, Black will have to play ...b5 soon to defend the pawn. However, he has already played ...b6. The tempo lost in moving the b-pawn twice turns out to be rather critical.

Doesn’t playing Nbd2 so soon have some other problems?

I don’t think so, not for the C-K

player at least. Indeed, it allows them greater flexibility in meeting deviations because the extra defense given to the Knight on f3 can be useful against ...Bg4 deviations and the option of playing c4 and retaking with the Knight (rather than retaking with the Bishop that has already moved) should be quite useful.

You said “not for the C-K player at least,” does that mean C-Z players should stick with their normal move order?

Yes. Playing an early Nbd2 is significantly more delicate a matter for the C-Z player. The biggest issue is that if he plays main-line moves he will find himself in the jaws of Prie’s trap after, say, 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Nbd2 c5 5.b3 Nc6 6.Bd3 Bd6 7.Bb2 0-0 8.0-0 Qe7 9.Ne5 Qc7!, when 10.f4?! cxd4 11.exd4 Nb4 forces White to part with his Bishop. In a *Chessville* article, I gave the improvement on this line, but it gets ruined if White plays an early Nbd2.

On the other hand, as I mentioned earlier, C-Z players are not in nearly as much of a pickle when it comes to meeting ...b6. Even better, C-Z players can transpose into one of the lines I give here without changing their move order with 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Bd3 b6 5.Nbd2! Bb7 6.0-0 c5 7.Ne5.

Oh, you have some lines? Show me.

I’m about to, but first let’s discuss how the general plan unfolds and why it works.

Keep in mind that the goal here is not necessarily to get a great position. The goal in these lines is to dodge a bullet and make Black think and sweat a bit for equality. Even when Black gets an equal position, it will be the kind of position that C-K players are used to. Hopefully, he will also have a good deal more time on his clock too!

White’s strategy is based on a few points:

- After Black has played ...b6, White does not need to castle before playing e4 if either of the two conditions below are true:

- o Black has also played ...Bb7.

- o White has not played c3.

- With a proper move order, White can provoke ...c5 after ...b6 by Bb5+. Afterward, White need not worry about ...c4.

- Black must either play ...Nbd7, ...c5 or ...Be7/d6 before he can safely play ...Ne4 due to the threat of Ne5 & Bb5.

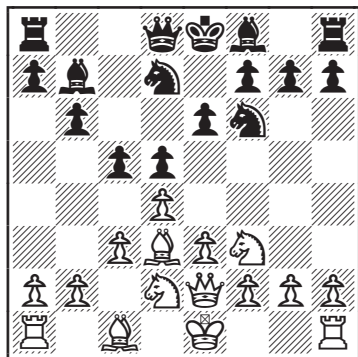
The above, when taken together, mean that White can always safely play e4 before Black can play ...Ne4.

I see how developing his Bishop helps him get away with ...Ne4 (he can castle quickly), and how ...Nbd7 helps (he can lop off the Knight that comes to e5), but how does ...c5 help?

Qc7 lets Black hit the Knight that just came to e5 while putting an extra defender on the c6-square, allowing Black to block the check White's Bishop will give on b5.

And how does ...Bb7 help White to castle safely?

It weakens the d7-square. This only comes up if Black is focusing on getting ...Ne4 in as quickly as possible. An example would be 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Nbd2 e6 4.e3 c5 5.c3 Nbd7 6.Bd3 b6 7.Qe2 Bb7, planning ...Ne4 afterward. White can beat him to the punch by playing 8.e4! even though he hasn't castled because 8...cxd4 9.Nxd4! Nc5?! (which would typically be a problem here) can be answered by 10.Bb5+!



And how does c3 make it harder for White to play e4 safely?

If White is in a position where he has to rely on e5! as an answer to ...cxd4, he ends up losing the pawn marauding war because Black's pawn has a clear path to White's King via c3 and d2. If there is no pawn on c3, Black's pawn becomes stranded on d4 in this continuation.

Thus, White will end up doing one of three things:

1. Play Ne5 with advantage, either because Black played ...Ne4 at a bad time or because Black has been coaxed into playing ...Bd7.
2. Play e4 after preparing it with Nbd2, Bd3, and perhaps Qe2. (Note that in this case White will delay castling to make sure he can get e4 in.)
3. Obtain a very good position after Black plays a misconceived ...c4.

Okay, enough generalities. Show me those lines!

Fine. We really only need to look at how the Bb5+ finesse unfolds. White should play this any time Black plays ...b6 before developing his Queen's Knight. If Black plays his Queen's Knight out before ...b6, the moves for White are pretty easy to find up until at least e4.

Thus, we will look at two lines:

A. **1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Nbd2**

b6

B. **1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Nbd2**

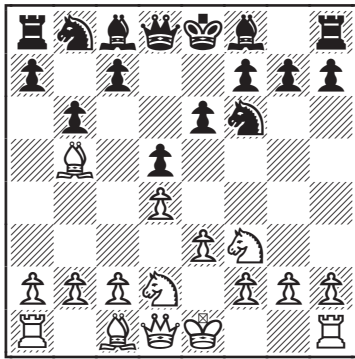
c5 5.c3 b6

The first is the only line that is relevant for C-Z players, who can transpose to it without changing their move order. That transpositional line is 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Bd3 b6 5.Nbd2! Bb7 6.0-0 c5 7.Ne5. See notes to move 7 of the Line A commentary.

Line A

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Nbd2 b6

5.Bb5!?



5...c6

Anything else is fine for White. 5... Nbd7 allows the annoying 6.Bc6 Rb8 7.Qe2!, when Black should know better than to rid himself of his “thorn in the flesh” with 7...Bb7?!, for after 8.Bxb7 Rxb7 9.e4, the undefended Rook on

b7 adds extra color to exchanges on e4. More circumspect lines are also pleasant for White — Not a huge surprise given that both pawn breaks (c4 and e4) are available to him.

5...Bd7?! 6.Bd3! might look odd, but is actually quite intelligent. After 6...c5, White can either advance his e-pawn immediately or revert to a typical C-K setup. To see why White would want to do the latter, see Line B.

6.Bd3 c5

Of course, other plays are possible, but they are unlikely to pose White any difficulties. White’s plan is to ignore this move, which means he has fewer options (for example, Qe2 is more or less impossible now). If White finds himself “out of moves” in this line, he should play Ne5. He will likely find himself up one move on a more normal variation by not having played c3.

7.0-0 c4

The other way of holding back e4 (7...Bb7 8.Ne5 c4) should lead to something similar to what we will see here. Note that this is where Zukertort players will find themselves after 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Bd3 b6 5.Nbd2! Bb7 6.0-0 c5 7.Ne5. White’s plan is to threaten Black’s Q-side pawns and then either lock them up or grab an advantage there. Either way he is will likely

trade off Bishops with Ba3. He should try to get in Ne5 before Black covers that square with a Knight. If Black develops with ...Nc6 or ...Nbd7 before playing ...c4, White should immediately play Ne5 (not waiting for ...c4), and he'll be fine.

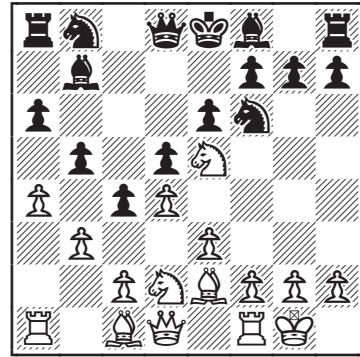
8. Be2 Bb7

We will soon see that Black runs into difficulty because he is still two moves away from castling, so it might seem like ...Be7 or ...Bd6 is the smarter play; however, Black can get into big trouble because his a-Rook lacks protection (e.g. 8...Bd6?! 9.b3 b5?! 10.a4 a6? 11.axb5).

8...Qc7 is really Black's only other option here, as it requires White to play 9.c3 before playing b3. However, Black would still have to play 9...Bb7 to give his Rook protection, and play would be similar to the line given here (and likely will transpose) because 8...Qc7 has not stopped White from playing Ne5.

8...Nbd7 would also require 9.c3 and would put the brakes on Ne5, but it doesn't matter because Black needs to have a piece supporting a possible ...Bc6 to prevent a future Qa4+ should White take on c4. Black would really prefer to retake with his b-pawn, but would not be able to after 8...Nbd7 9.c3 Bb7 10.b3 b5 11.bxc4. White's position after 11...

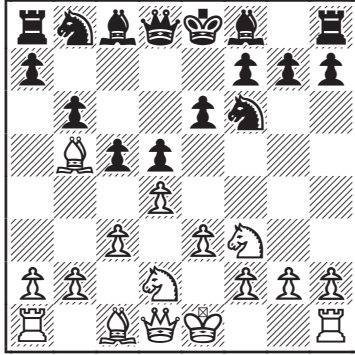
bxc4?! 12.Qa4 is excellent for White.
9.b3 b5 10.a4 a6 11.Ne5!



This last move might seem a bit optimistic, but Black does not have time to play ...c3 due to his under-defended King. (11...c3?! 12.Ndf3 b4? 13.Ng5!). Black is not in a position to take those pawns on the Q-side because White can put significant pressure down the a- and b-files. The diagram position is quite rich in possibilities due to threats on both sides of the board. If nothing else, White can lock up the Q-side, play f4, and use his space advantage on the K-side to mount an assault on Black's King.

Line B

**1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Nbd2 c5
5.c3 b6 6.Bb5**



6...Nbd7

Should Black play 6...Bd7 instead, White has already won a small victory. The Bishop there not only gets in the way of Black's forces but also gives White an easy plan of retreating the Bishop to d3, stonewalling with Ne5 & f4, and looking for a g4! break.

7.e4! dxe4

7...cxd4 8.Nxd4 will allow White to play e5 with advantage.

8.Nxe4! Nxe4 9.Bc6 Rb8 10.Bxe4 Qc7!

The only move. Otherwise Bf4 makes Black's Rook cry.

11.Qe2

White threatens d5. The problem for Black from this position is that he would like to play both ...Bd6 and ...Nf6 soon. The Knight move helps unwind his position. In addition to putting his Knight on a natural square, it shoos White's Bishop from e4, allowing Bb7. A Bishop on d6 allows Black to continue contesting the

e5-square and stops his position from being generally passive. However, trying to get both of those moves in the near future allows White to sacrifice the minor exchange for excellent control of the center and play against Black's K-side. Black players going for a win might start down that road, but it is unlikely to take them where they want to go.

The rest of this line is devoted to an example of how such play might unfold.

11...Bd6

This makes d5 less of a concern. Note that Black cannot get around what is coming by playing 11...h6?! since White can play 12.d5!

12.Bg5 0-0 13.0-0 Nf6?!

There is nothing that says Black has to play this, but otherwise White has a pretty free hand.

14.Bxf6! gxf6 15.d5! f5

Clearly, this is the way to refute White's play if such a refutation is to be found.

16.Bc2 exd5 17.Rfe1 Qd8

Covering g5 to allow his next move.

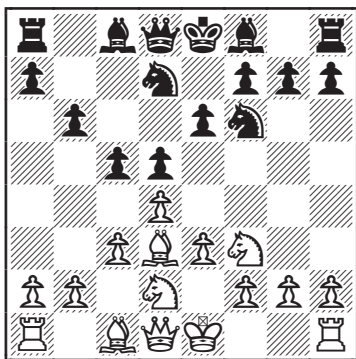
18.Rad1 Be6 19.g3!

Black cannot enjoy the prospect of seeing Nh4 come down.

Sample Exercise

One line I have not mentioned is shown below.

**1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Nbd2 c5
5.c3 Nbd7 6.Bd3 b6**



What should White play here? Analyze the various options and defend your choice.

(Solution begins at the top of the next column.)

There are 3 chief candidates: e4, Qe2, and 0-0. Let's look at each one. Note that Qc2 is generally not a good play in the C-K. White will be pressured down the c-file and often has to make concessions to keep his Queen safe on c2.

White Advances

The obvious candidate is **7.e4**. C-K players should be quite at home with the sort of game one expects after this central pawn break. The problem is that White's uncastled position gives Black serious tactical options. Remember the two criteria indicating when White can play e4 without having castled. Note that neither applies: White has played c3, and Black has not played ...Bb7.

After **7...cxd4**, White would rather not take back with a pawn, leading to what looks like either a lifeless IQP or one with a bit too much life to it (e.g., 8.cxd4 dxe4 9.Nxe4 Bb7 10.Nxf6+ Qxf6 11.Bg5 Bxf6!?) . Unfortunately 8.Nxd4?! Nc5! cannot be adequately answered with 9.Bb5+ (which is often a resource in such lines). Black can simply meet this with 9...Bd7, after which White has little better than 10.Bxd7+ Qxd7 11.exd5, when Black can play the annoying 11...Nd3+ or try for more with 11...e5!? (Note that Nd3+ would not be an option if White had castled, and this

is also the move that stops 11.e5 from working as well.)

Thus, White may be tempted to play **8.e5!** But this does not work out well for him either because his King is in the way of Black's marauding pawn as it threatens to zig-zag to c3 and then d2.

White Continues Preparations

The best move is **7.Qe2**, virtually assuring White can play e4 at some point.

If Black ignores this and plays 7...Bb7 anyway, we have 8.e4 cxd4 9.Nxd4, and now 9...Nc5 can be met with 10.Bb5! because Black's Bishop is no longer on its home square. Of course, Black has far better 9th moves, such as 9...Qc7. However, White will be able to grab the central files, and that should count for something.

If Black instead plays 7...Be7, planning to castle and avoid any nastiness on the e-file, White should follow suit. After 8.0-0 0-0 9.e4, Black still has to do something about that e-pawn, and after 9...dxe4 10.dxe4 Bb7 11.Nxf6+ Nxf6 12.dxc4 Bxc4 13.Bg5, I think White can still claim some slim pull. 9...cxd4 is far less common in practical play from this position, but might be better. On the other hand, it gives White the choice between the calm 10.cxd4 dxe4 11.Nxe4

Bb7 12.Nc3 and the considerably less calm 12.Neg5!?! h3 13.Nxe6!?

White Castles

While it is generally smart to castle before opening up the center, it is hard to see how White can get anything better than a transposition of an earlier line by castling now. Castling is also discouraged as it allows Black to make up for being a bit lazy in his moves earlier. After **7.0-0 Bb7 8.Qe2** Black has the option of playing **8...Ne4!?** since the c7-square is available for his Queen, and he appears to be fine after **9.Ne5 Nxe5 10.dxe5 Qc7!**

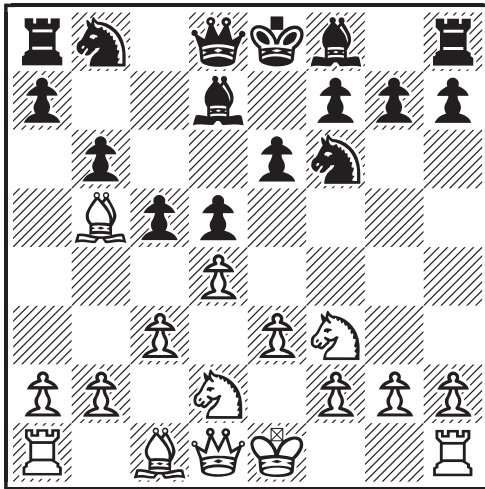
Exercises

On the following three pages are 12 diagrams testing your tactics and strategic understanding in positions where Black plays an early ...b6. The first four only have general commentary in their solutions (as in the solutions to exercises in module 1). I have provided additional notes and variations to the last 8. The exercises in the rest of the modules all have these additional analyses.

Exercises

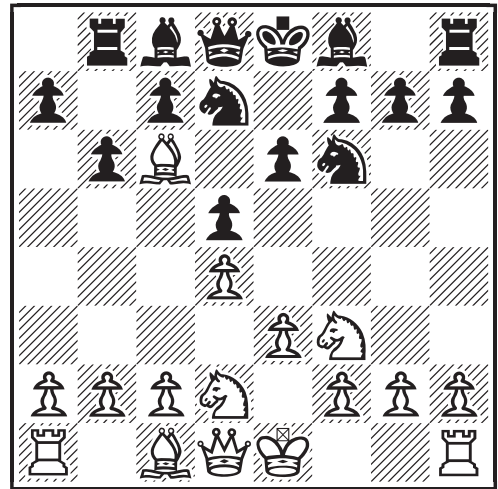
Exercise 1

Last Moves: 5.c3 b6 6.Bb5+ Bd7



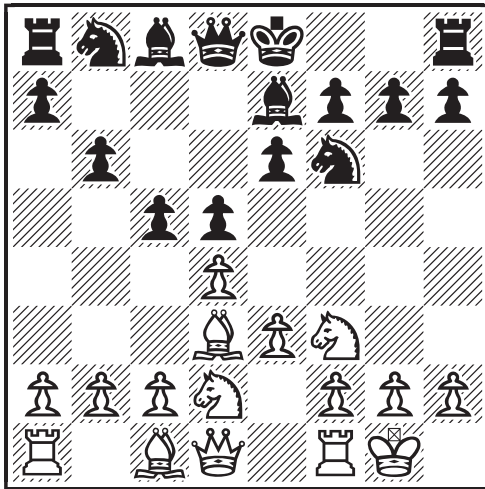
Exercise 9

Last Moves: 5.Bb5+ Nbd7 6.Bc6 Rb8



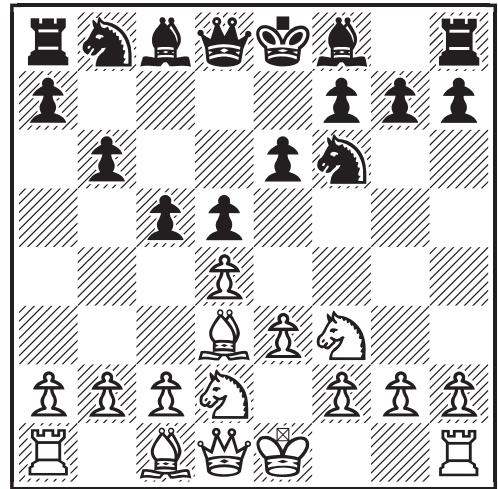
Exercise 2

Last Moves: 6.Bd3 c5 7.0-0 Be7



Exercise 4

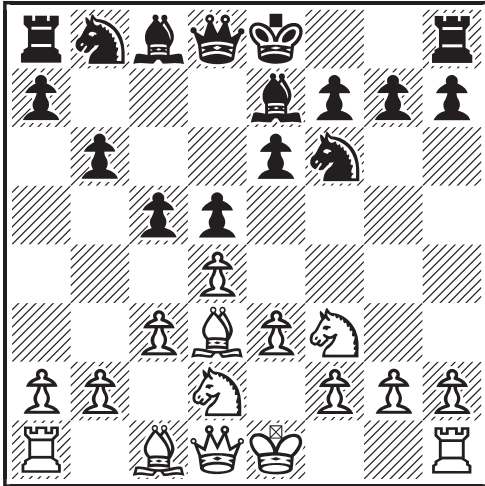
Last Moves: 5.Bb5+ c6 6.Bd3 c5



Module 2: Slaying the b7-Monster

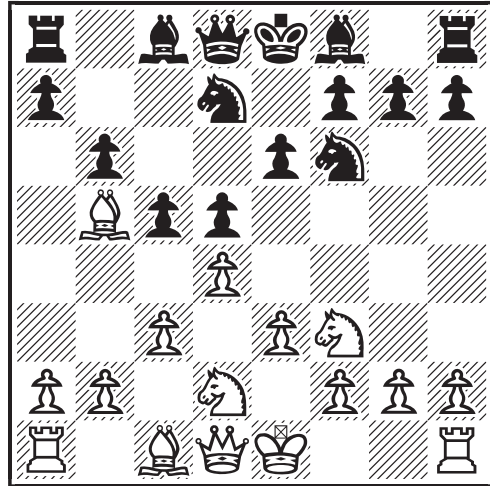
Exercise 5

Last Moves: 5.c3 Be7 6.Bd3 b6



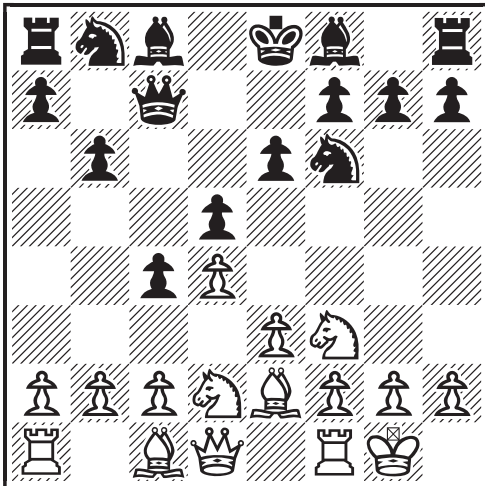
Exercise 7

Last Moves: 5.c3 b6 6.Bb5+ Nbd7



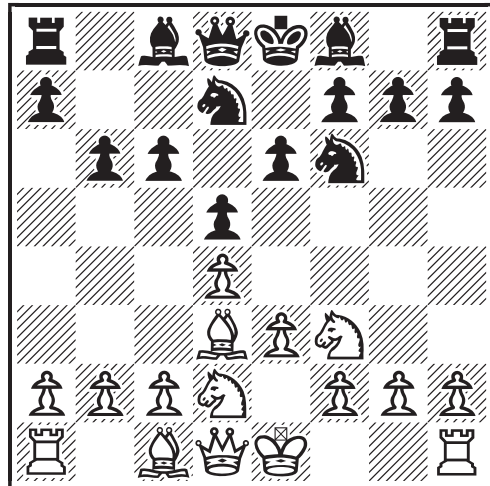
Exercise 6

Last Moves: 7.0-0 c4 8.Be2 Qc7



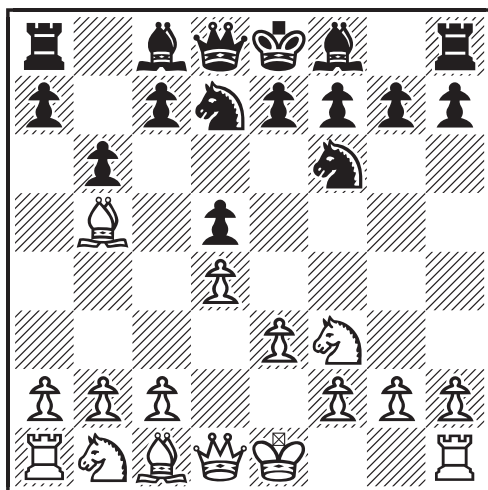
Exercise 8

Last Moves: 5.Bb5+ c6 6.Bd3 Nbd7



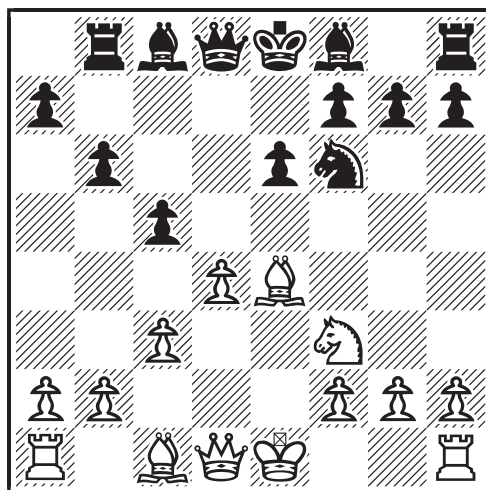
Exercise 9

Last Moves: 3.e3 b6 4.Bb5+ Nbd7



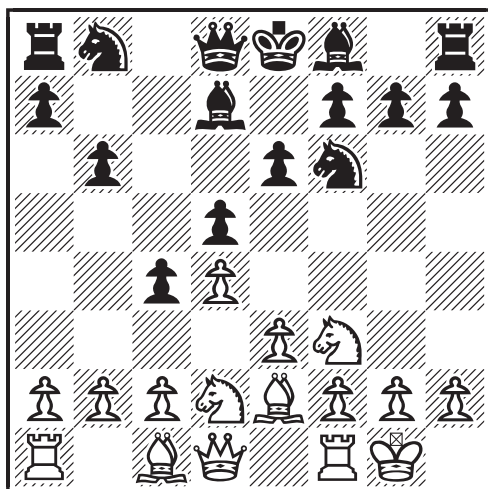
Exercise 11

Last Moves: 9.Bc6 Rb8 10.Bxe4 Nf6



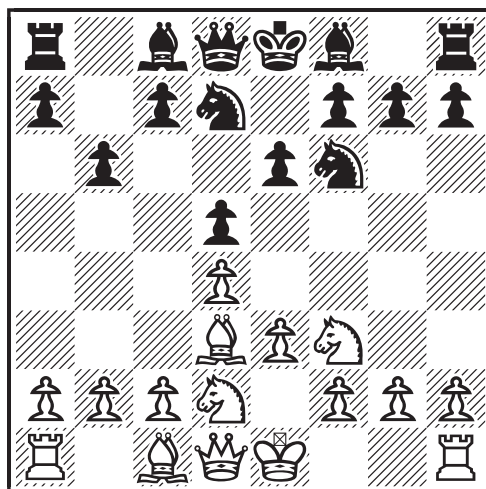
Exercise 10

Last Moves: 7.0-0 c4 8.Be2 Bd7



Exercise 12

Last Moves: 4.Nbd2 Nbd7 5.Bd3 b6

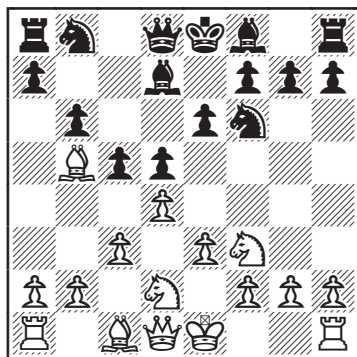


Module 2: Slaying the b7-Monster

Solutions

Exercise 1

Last Moves: **5.c3 b6 6.Bb5+ Bd7**



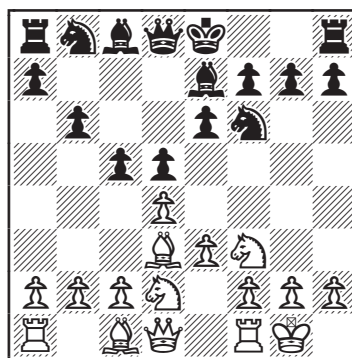
Best Move: **7.Bd3!**

Commentary

White retreats his Bishop and now plans on establishing a Knight on e5. He will look for an opportunity to break with g5.

Exercise 2

Last Moves: **6.Bd3 c5 7.0-0 Be7**



Best Move: **8.Ne5**

Commentary

Black has run White out of moves, so Ne5 is the appropriate play here. Remember, you should not play c3 in response to ...c5 after Black has already played ...b6.

Commentary

Since Black has not played ...Nbd7 (the source of White's frustration in the sample exercise discussed in the module), White can play e4 immediately.

Analysis, Variation, and Notes

7...dxe4

7...cxd4 8.Nxd4, and Black has to be careful about how the center resolves.

8.Nxe4 Nbd7

8...Bb7 9.Nxf6+ Bxf6 10.dxc5.

9.Nxf6+ Nxf6

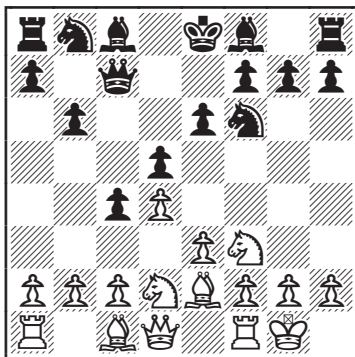
9...Bxf6 10.Be4.

10.dxc5 Bxc5 11.Bf4 0-0 12.Qe2

Black's Queen will have a bit of an issue finding a good square.

Exercise 6

Last Moves: **7.0-0 c4 8.Be2 Qc7**



Best Move: **9.c3**

Commentary

White needs to stop Black from playing ...c3.

Analysis, Variation, and Notes

9...Bb7

Based on the results of this line, it might seem like guarding e5 with a minor piece is more important, but that does not work out well for Black. One problem is that Black knows moving his King's Bishop is a wasted move, but at the same time he has to be careful about White opening up the game with his King still two moves away from castling.

9...Nbd7 10.b3 cxb3 (10...b5? 11.a4) 11.Qxb3 Bd6 (11...Bb7 12.c4) 12.Ba3 0-0 13.Rfc1;

9...Nc6 10.e4! dxe4 11.Ng5.

10.Ne5

It is important to get this in before Black covers e5. Otherwise you can end up with a position too locked up to get anything from. This move gives White some extra space he will use later.

10.b3 cxb3 11.Qxb3 Nc6 is okay for White but not great.

10.Qc2 Nbd7 11.b3 b5 12.a4 a6 and it looks like White will have to lose the tempo war and play Ba3 before Black moves his own Bishop. Depending on your technique, you may find this position quite promising or quite dull. This is why I

Module 2: Slaying the b7-Monster

suggest playing Ne5 earlier.

10...Nbd7 11.f4

Black cannot make use of the e4-square due to the pressure on c3.

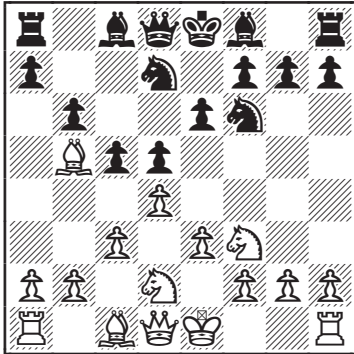
10...b5 11.exf6.

11.Nxe4 dxe4 12.Bf4

Black will have to play pretty scrappily to manage some semblance of equality.

Exercise 7

Last Moves: **5.c3 b6 6.Bb5+ Nbd7**



Best Move: **7.e4**

Commentary

This makes good use of the undefended Rook.

Analysis, Variation, and Notes

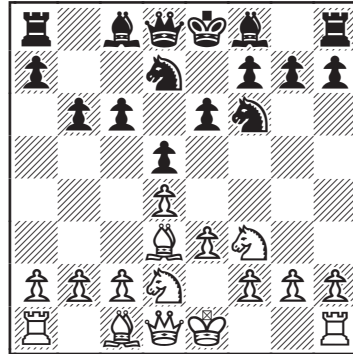
7...cxd4

7...dxe4 8.Nxe4 Nxe4 9.Bc6 Rb8 10.Bxe4 (threatening Bf4!) 10...Qc7 11.0-0 Bd6 12.Bg5 h6 13.Bh4 is about equal, but Black has to play some awkward moves. He would like to play ...Nf6 but would rather not have to recapture with a pawn after Bxf6.

8.Nxd4 Bb7 9.e5 a6 10.Ba4 Ne4

Exercise 8

Last Moves: **5.Bb5+ c6 6.Bd3 Nbd7**



Best Move: **7.0-0**

Commentary

Black has decided to play his Knight out before pushing the c-pawn, this is the sort of inaccuracy strong players know how to punish.

Analysis, Variation, and Notes

7.e4 dxe4 8.Nxe4 Nxe4 9.Bxe4 Qc7 doesn't look too bad for Black. 10.Ne5 Nxe5 11.Bf4 Bd6. Compare the similar lines below.

7...c5

Nothing else puts up much of a fight against e4.

7...Be7 8.e4 dxe4 9.Nxe4 Nxe4 10.Bxe4 Qc7 11.Ne5 Bb7 (11...Nxe5 12.Bf4) 12.Qg4!

7...Bd6 8.Qe2 gets good use out of the unprotected c-pawn. 8...0-0 9.e4 dxe4?! 10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.Qxe4.

8.e4!

White can play e4! because Black's pawn cannot do a Sherman's March to the King (...cxd4,...dxc3,...cxd2+)—there is no c3-pawn to take.

8...c4

8...cxd4?! 9.e5.

9.Be2 c3

9...b5?! 10.a4.

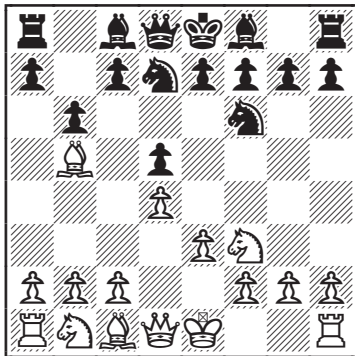
10.bxc3 dxe4 11.Ne5 Qc7 12.Bb5 Be7

12...a6 13.Bc6.

13.Re1.

Exercise 9

Last Moves: **3.e3 b6 4.Bb5+ Nbd7**



Best Move: **5.Ne5**

Commentary

Black pushed his b-pawn a move before he probably should have. He then compounded this by making the natural beginner error of blocking with his Knight. White should take advantage of the locked in Queen and weak c6-square.

Analysis, Variation, and Notes

5...Bb7

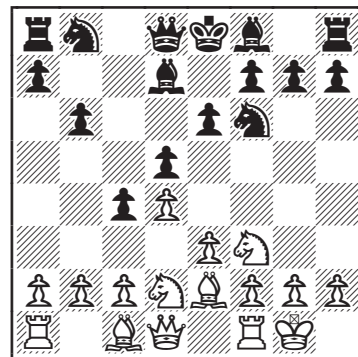
5...c5 6.e4 e6 (6...cxd4 7.exd5 Bb7 8.Qxd4 a6 9.Bc6 Bxc6 10.Nxc6 Qc8 11.0-0) 7.exd5 Nxd5 (7...exd5? 8.Nc6 Qc7 9.Qe2+) 8.c4 Nc7 9.Bc6 cxd4 10.Qxd4 f6 11.Nxd7.

6.Qf3! c6 7.Nxc6 Bxc6 8.Bxc6 Rc8

9.Bxd5

Exercise 10

Last Moves: **7.0-0 c4 8.Be2 Bd7**



Best Move: **9.e4**

Commentary

Black has moved his Bishop to d7 in an effort to reach a stable Q-side. This Bishop puts support on b5 and a4. In particular a future Qa4 (as described in the lesson) is now out of the question. However, Black has overlooked the over-worked nature of his d-pawn, which has to both protect c4 and stop e4.

Analysis, Variations, and Notes

9...Nc6

Consistent with Black's earlier plan as now the Queen can protect the Rook on a1. Still, allowing White to get e5 in must always be considered carefully.

9...dxe4 10.Ne5 and Black cannot hold the c-pawn. 10...b5 11.a4.;

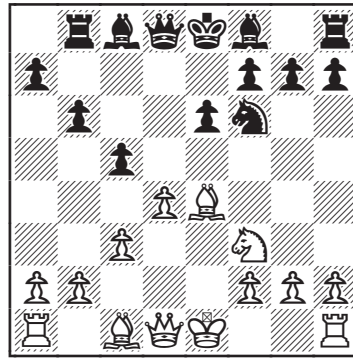
9...Nxe4 10.Nxe4 dxe4 gives White a choice between a stable advantage (11.Ne5) or an active one after 11.Ng5 Bc6 12.f3 Be7 13.Nxf7!

10.e5 Ng4 11.b3 b5 12.a4 a6 13.Nb1

White has options on both sides of the board. His last move foresees pushing the Knight back to h6 and then taking him to introduce doubled, isolated h-pawns in Black's camp.

Exercise 11

Last Moves: **9.Bc6 Rb8 10.Bxe4 Nf6**



Best Move: **11.Bf4!**

Commentary

Black has made a natural move, trying to unwind his position by playing ...Nf6 with tempo against the Bishop on e4. Given the compromised state of his Q-side, this is a luxury he could not afford. ...Qc7 was needed instead with an interesting game ahead (see lesson for analysis of that variation).

Analysis, Variations, and Notes

11.Bf4 Bd6 12.Bc6+ Ke7

12...Bd7 13.Bxd6 Bxc6 14.Bxb8.

13.Ne5 Qc7

13...Bb7? 14.Bxb7 Rxb7?? 15.Nc6+;

13...Bxe5 14.Bxe5 drops the exchange (for some compensation).

14.O-O Rd8 15.Qe2 Kf8 16.Rad1

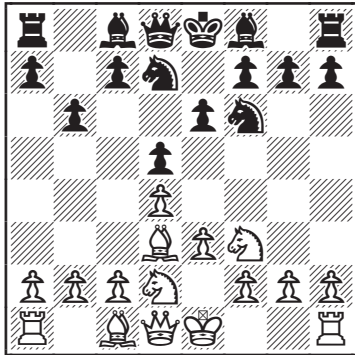
Black has made it unscathed, but

White still has much the better position. He will likely take on c5 soon, giving him targets on the Q-side.

for White and has performed quite well in practice.

Exercise 12

Last Moves: **4.Nbd2 Nbd7 5.Bd3 b6**



Best Move: **6.e4!**

Commentary

Since White's c-pawn is still on c2, White can push e4 safely without having castled first. This leads to a position that has favored White in the past.

Analysis, Variations, and Notes

6...dxe4

6...c5 7.e5 c4 8.Be2 Ng4.

7.Nxe4 Bb7 8.Qe2 Nxe4

8...Be7 has been played in several occasions from here. The text is a sharp try to improve since normal play gives White a good a game. 9.0-0 0-0 10.Rd1 Nxe4 11.Bxe4 Bxe4 12.Qxe4 looks good

9.Bxe4 Bxe4 10.Qxe4 h6

If Black wants to play Bd6, he should play this first to stop Bg5.

11.0-0 Bd6 12.d5 Nc5 13.Qe2 Qf6

13...0-0 14.b4.

14.Qb5+ Kf8 15.dxe6 a6 16.Qc6 Rd8

17.Be3

17...exf7?? Bxh2+ 18.Kxh2 Qxc6.

17...Nxe6 18.c3

White retains an advantage.