



# The Modern English

## Volume 2: 1.c4 c5, 1...Nf6, 1...e6

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Semko Semkov

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**The Modern English** Volume 2: 1...c5, 2...f6, 2...e6

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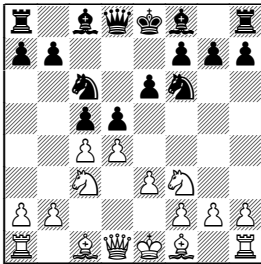
The Week In Chess ([www.theweekinchess.com](http://www.theweekinchess.com))

Chess Publishing ([www.chesspublishing.com](http://www.chesspublishing.com))

# Introduction

Many grandmasters claim that the best answer to 1.c4 is 1...e5. If you consider only the chances this move offers for complex fight for all three results, that may be true. However, for a theoretician, the symmetric answers always present the biggest challenge. They are notoriously not just “balanced”, but often bluntly drawish.

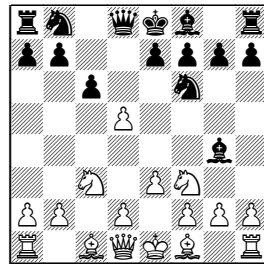
I devoted two thirds of the book on the Symmetrical 1.c4 c5. While plans with further ...g6 or ...b6 generously cede space to White and were fun to explore, the most restraining scheme with 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.e3 e6 5.d4 d5 was the toughest nut to crack.



In Chapter 2 I analyse 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♗b5, where we generally learn how to play around an isolated and hanging pawns. In Chapter 3 the roles are reversed – 6...♘xd5 7.♗d3 puts us on the other side of the barricade, but the extra tempo does

matter. White has several ways of obtaining a lasting initiative. The good news is that Black does not have forced draws and should work strenuously to keep the balance.

The other symmetric in spirit system is the Slav. One of the most attractive features of the English Opening is that it assures White of an initiative after 1...c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♗g4 5.cxd5!?



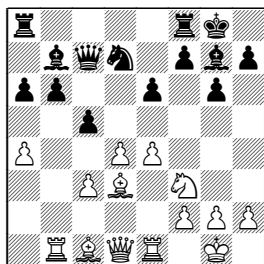
5...♗xf3 6.♙xf3 cxd5 7.♗b5+ ♘c6  
8.♗xc6+ bxc6 – Chapter 9.

White’s task is more complicated in the Meran set-up. Five years ago the plan with g2-g4 inspired big hopes, but today we know that it is effective only against ...b6. That should not sound discouraging, as the quiet development ♗e2 is not deprived of venom.

Our Anti-Grünfeld Chapter 6 offers several very different systems.

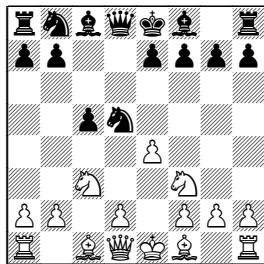
In my youth I was strongly influenced by the instructive game Karpov-Kortchnoi from the world title match in Merano 1981:

1.c4 ♖f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.cxd5 ♗xd5  
 4.♗f3 ♗xc3 5.bxc3 g6 6.d4 ♘g7 7.e3  
 c5 8.♙b5+ ♗d7 9.0-0 0-0 10.a4 a6  
 11.♙d3 b6 12.♞b1 ♙b7 13.e4 ♖c7  
 14.♞e1 e6



15.e5 h6 16.h4 with a nice clear plan. I even followed in Karpov's footsteps 20 years later against Krasenkow. However, since then Black has discovered that he should play ...♙d7 instead of ...♗bd7, with decent chances to equalise.

Therefore, our main dish is the hot line 1.c4 ♖f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.cxd5 ♗xd5 4.♗f3 c5 5.e4!? (instead of the above-mentioned 5.e3 g6 6.♙b5+)



We have discovered several inte-

resting ideas to make Black work hard over the board.

The Anti-Nimzo approach again gives you a choice. If you are a hardcore fan of the Carlsbad structure in the QGD, you should choose 1.c4 ♖f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.e4 – Chapter 8. Although we hide some trumps up our sleeve, I believe that 3...d5 should be balanced.

AlphaZero's choice is 3.♗f3! ♙b4 4.♖c2, and it is the subject of Chapter 7.

You might ask, what about 3...d5? Well, my personal opinion is that the best you can do is to enter the main lines with 4.d4. However, throughout the chapters on the Symmetrical English we often had to deal with e3, followed by a queen's fianchetto. So we added Chapter 11, where we discuss the Anti-QGD approach.

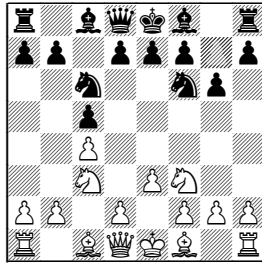
The final chapter called “Odds end Ends” briefly cover our strategy against the King's Indian, the Modern Defence and the Dutch. In short, my advice is: go into the main lines! I only explain how to reach them through the English move order 1.c4 ♖f6 2.♘c3.

When reading the book, please do not skip the “Main Ideas” sections, but always start with them! They often offer examples and explanations which you would not find in the “Step by Step” sections.

*Kiril Georgiev  
 March 2019*

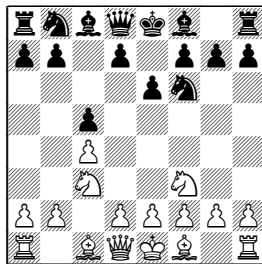
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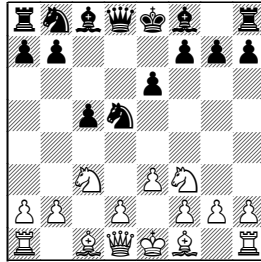
2. ♖f3 (2. ♖c3 10) 2... ♖f6 (2... ♖c6 3.e3 11) 3. ♖c3 ♖c6 (3...g6–Ch.5) 4.e3 g6 (4...d5 12) 5.d4 cxd4 6.exd4 d5 7.cxd5 ♖xd5 8. ♖b3 14

## Chapter 2. 1.c4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♖f6 3. ♖c3 e6 27



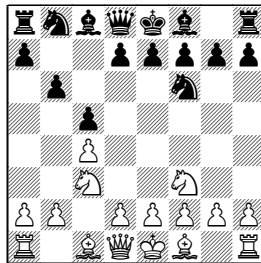
4.e3 d5 (4...a6 31; 4... ♖c6 31; 4...b6 33) 5.cxd5 exd5  
 6. ♖b5+ 33 (6.b3 33)  
 6.d4 a6 35 (6...c4 35)  
     6... ♖c6 7. ♖b5 a6 37  
         7... ♖d6 39  
         7...cxd4 40

**Chapter 3. Symmetrical with ...e6, ...♘d5 59**



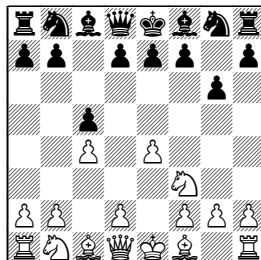
- 1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e6 4.e3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 (6.♙c4 64)  
 6.♘xd5 64  
 6.d4 ♘c6 (6...cxd4 7.exd4 ♘xc3 67) 7.♙d3 ♙e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♚e2 (9.♞e1 69;  
 9.a3 70; 9.♙e4!? 70) 9...b6 71  
 9...cxd4 72

**Chapter 4. Symmetrical with ...b6 81**



- 1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 (2...b6!? 84) 3.♘c3 b6 4.e4 d6 5.d4 cxd4 6.♘xd4 ♙b7  
 7.♚e2!? (7.f3!? 85) 7...♘c6 86 (7...♘bd7 85; 7...g6 85)  
 7...e6 88

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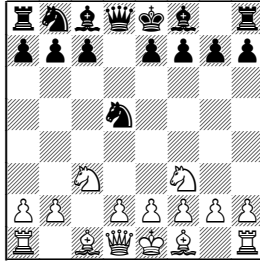
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3...♗g7 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘c6 6.♗e3 ♘f6 (6...♖b6 109) 7.♘c3 0-0 (7...♘g4 110) 8.♗e2 d6 9.0-0 ♗d7 (9...♘xd4 111) 10.♘c2 112

10.♖d2 115

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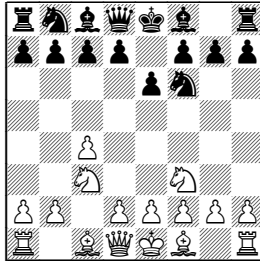
1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.cxd5 ♘xd5 4.♘f3 c5 (4...♘xc3 127; 4...g6 127)

5.e3 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 g6 7.h4 129

7.♗b5+ 131

5.e4!? 132

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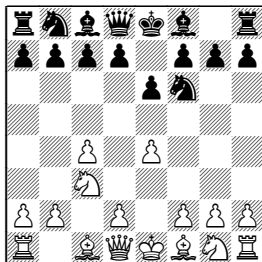
1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 b6 156 (3...d5 – Ch.11)

3...♗b4 4.♖c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3 6.♖xc3 d6 159

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3...d5 4.e5 (4.cxd5 exd5 5.e5 180) 4...d4 5.exf6 dxc3 6.bxc3 ♖xf6 7.♗f3 182

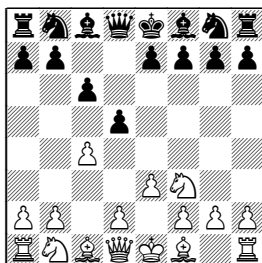
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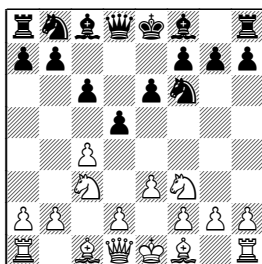
1.c4 c6 2.♗f3 d5 3.e3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 ♙g4 5.cxd5 204 (5.♖b3 204)

4...a6 5.♙e2 ♙g4 208 (5...♙f5 207; 5...e6 207)

5...b5 209

5...dxc4 210

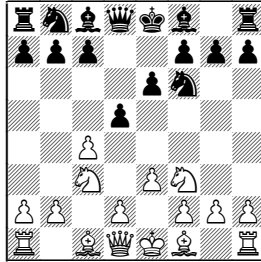
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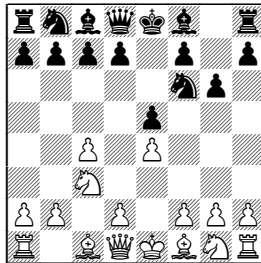
1.c4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.b3 ♙d6 6.♙b2 0-0 (6...♘bd7 220)  
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