A Course in Chess Tactics

Dejan Bojkov and Vladimir Georgiev

A step-by-step approach to mastering tactics and combinations
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Contents

Symbols 4
Introduction 5

Part 1: The Basics

1 Pin 7
2 Deflection 16
3 Overload 23
4 Decoy 28
5 Double Attack 36
6 Knight Fork 44
7 Discovered Attack 50
8 Clearance 56
9 Obstruction 64
10 Removing the Defender 71
11 The Power of the Pawn 77
12 Back-Rank Mate 85
13 Stalemate 91
14 Perpetual Check and Fortresses 96

Part 2: Advanced Tactics

15 f7: Weak by Presumption 103
16 The Vulnerable Rook’s Pawn 111
17 Attacking the Fianchetto 118
18 The Mystery of the Opposite-Coloured Bishops 125
19 Chess Highways: Open Files 131
20 Trapping a Piece 141
21 Practice Makes Perfect 149

Solutions 158
Index of Players 188
Index of Composers 191
Symbols

+ check
++ double check
# checkmate
!! brilliant move
! good move
!? interesting move
?! dubious move
? bad move
?? blunder
+- White is winning
± White is much better
± White is slightly better
= equal position
♀ Black is slightly better
♂ Black is much better
-> Black is winning
Ch championship
1-0 the game ends in a win for White
½-½ the game ends in a draw
0-1 the game ends in a win for Black
(D) see next diagram
Introduction

Why are tactics so important?

Most of our readers will have asked themselves this question at some point. Tactics are the chess tools that everyone uses throughout every game. When we start our thinking process, the first thing that we do is calculation: “If I move here, he will answer there, then I will do this and he will answer that.” We are also trying to discover new ideas, follow plans, and strategically outplay our opponents. But in every stage of the game, tactics are following us, supporting our ideas, or ruining the plans of our adversary.

The then young Alexander Beliavsky made the following comment after his exceptional tournament victory in Alicante 1978 where he scored 13 points from 13 games: “Chess is a very easy game; all you need to do is calculate lines, and everything will be OK.” There is a good deal of truth in this apparently naïve statement, as our tactical ability is what enables us to survive the jungle of our beautiful game, and provides a guide in the sea of lines, and supports our reasoning and logic.

Chess is a complex game – while there are many general principles to assist us, there are also many exceptions to them: in one position one principle might work, but in a slightly different position, other factors might prevail, and only our ability to work out the tactical details will enable us to determine the right path in such cases. From a philosophical perspective, one may conclude that tactical calculations are the one true cornerstone of chess. Therefore it is no wonder that chess engines have become so strong. They can calculate millions of chess moves in a second, and they rarely make tactical errors.

What causes tactics to occur?

Two factors are of great importance: energy and time.

An energetic imbalance often enables one of the players to carry out a profitable tactical operation. For instance, overloaded, pinned, and blocked pieces have less mobility, and thus less energy. Their contact with a fully mobile piece may prove lethal for them. On the other hand, more energetic pieces can easily deliver double and discovered attacks. They may be used to deflect and decoy more important and valuable pieces, or be used to disrupt the harmony within the opponent’s army by such means as blocking, interference, etc.

Time is the other factor that will prove us right or wrong in a tactical operation. Chessboard opportunities are fleeting, and we must seize every chance before the opponent is able to secure his position. By striking at the moment when our pieces have more energy, we can either win material (transforming energy into matter) or achieve the highest aim by mating the enemy king. From here the main principle of tactics is seen: with each of our moves we must create a threat. Even ‘silent’ moves create some threat, even if it is maybe not always obvious.

What does this book aim to do?

Our book is separated into two parts. The first one deals in turn with each of the tactical methods that are important in practical chess. We have presented ideas on how to search for each method; indeed, this was the initial intention of our work. However, a question arises: there are 14 essential tactical methods presented, and will not a large number of principles just confuse the reader? And how exactly will he know which question to ask, and which piece of advice to follow before taking
a crucial decision? In a game of chess there is a great deal to think about in addition to possible tactical ideas, and if we need to ask all these questions, our work will be too laborious.

This is not what the book is all about. Our aim is to help you develop an understanding of the principles of chess tactics, so that they become instinctive. With some practice, you will start to sense the crucial moments, to feel danger in your position and to smell when something is wrong in your opponent’s camp. Inevitably a chess-player learns by trial and error, but it is possible to progress faster and with fewer failures by learning and applying chess principles. Moreover, tackling and solving carefully chosen exercises will help you subconsciously memorize typical patterns.

The first part of the book is written by Dejan Bojkov. I used a lot of personal examples of mine in this material. This is not to show you how good I am, and what an incredible tactician I am supposed to be (indeed, some of the examples are painful defeats), but because when discussing what went through a player’s mind when making a particular decision, and which variations he foresaw, one can speak with far greater authority when the player concerned is oneself! Joel Lautier stated that we “first calculate during the game, and later cover our tactics with words.” This emphasizes the importance of tactics in chess; strategic landmarks are primarily a guide for our tactical work.

The second part of the book is written by both authors. It features the three most common positions of a castled king and various attacking patterns against them, as well as three tactical themes that widely occur in practice. We have sought to discuss these strategic themes in the context of the tactical themes that are most relevant to them.

We hope that our work will help you feel more at home in various tactical situations, and that this will increase the pleasure that you derive from chess.
The pin is one of the most common tactical methods in chess. By using a line piece (a queen, a rook or a bishop) we can ‘freeze’ an enemy piece if moving it would expose to attack a more important piece that is behind it on the same line. If the pin is against the king, then we call this an ‘absolute’ pin, as the pinned piece cannot move by the laws of chess. In other cases, it is not illegal for the pinned piece to move, but doing so may involve a loss (or sacrifice) of material.

The lack of mobility of a pinned piece can be exploited by attacking it with additional units, and this often results in material gains. In order to win material, it is not even necessary to have more attackers than there are defenders: we just need to be attacking it with a lower-value unit, and so pawns are ideal for the purpose. If we attack the pinned piece with a piece of the same value, then we will just be exchanging it, as long as the pinned piece can be adequately defended.

A pinned piece is limited in its actions, and is deprived of much of its potential. However, we must bear in mind that a pin is a temporary advantage that must be used promptly. Otherwise our opponent can escape or break the pin. The following example demonstrates a number of these points in the context of a high-level grandmaster struggle.

**Dreev – Seirawan**

*Wijk aan Zee 1995*

1 d4 󰇕f6 2 󰇕f3 e6 3 c4 b6 4 a3 c6 5 󰇕c3 d5 6 cxd5 cxd5 7 󰇕f4 a6 8 󰇕c1! 󰇕b7

White is better developed, and already has some tactical threats: 8...󰇕e7? loses to 9 󰇕a4!, threatening 󰇕c7, 󰇕xb6, or even 󰇕xe8.

9 e3 (D)

9...󰇕c6

Black is behind in development. While this move is not actually bad (and may in fact be Black’s objectively best move), it is risky as it gives White an interesting tactical opportunity to make use of a pin. 9...󰇕e7? again fails to 10 󰇕a4! (10 󰇕b5 axb5 11 󰇕c7 󰇕c8 12 󰇕xb5+ 󰇕d7 13 󰇕f4 =) 10...󰇕c6 (10...󰇕d6 11 󰇕b3 󰇕xf4 can be met by 12 exf4 󰇕d7 13 󰇕d3 0-0 14 0-0 ± or the more incisive 12 󰇕xb6!) 11 󰇕e5 󰇕xe5 12 󰇕xe5 󰇕d6 13 󰇕xd6 󰇕xd6 14 󰇕c2 ±.

9...󰇕d7 is the safest choice, giving White only a slight edge.

10 󰇕b5!

The ‘Trojan Horse’ is untouchable due to the pin.

10...󰇕c8

10...axb5? 11 󰇕b5 󰇕c8 12 󰇕a4 or 12 󰇕e5 puts unbearable pressure on the pinned knight and Black has to part either with it, or with his bishop after 󰇕e5, which leaves White completely winning. Note that White is able to attack the pinned piece with further units with great speed.

11 󰇕a4 󰇕d7 (D)

11...󰇕d7 is another attempt to break the pin. However, after 12 󰇕e5 󰇕xe5 13 󰇕xc8+ 󰇕xc8 (13...󰇕xc8?? 14 󰇕d6 ++) 14 󰇕xe5 ± White preserves an advantage.

12 󰇕e7+

Dreev again wants to use a pin, this time against his opponent’s queen on the c-file.

12 󰇕d6+ is a reasonable alternative, though Black has the defensive resource 12...󰇕xd6 13 󰇕xd6 󰇕d4! (discovered attack!) 14 󰇕xc8 󰇕xf3+ 15 gxf3 󰇕xc8 16 󰇕d2!. Black’s king
A COURSE IN CHESS TACTICS

should stay in the centre, while White possesses a strong bishop-pair.

12...\texttt{Bc7} 13 \texttt{Bxa6}!!?

A tricky move, which intends to deprive Black of the option 13 \texttt{Bc7} \texttt{Bc7} 14 \texttt{Bxa6} \texttt{Bb8} 15 \texttt{Bb7} (15 \texttt{Bb5} \texttt{Bd6}) 15...\texttt{Bb7} intending ...\texttt{b5} and Black is ready to break the pin. After 16 \texttt{Bxe5} b5 17 \texttt{Bc2} \texttt{Bxe5} 18 \texttt{Bc8}+ \texttt{Bc8} 19 \texttt{Bc8}+ \texttt{Bd7} 20 \texttt{Bb8} White still looks somewhat better, but a discovered attack levels the chances: 20...\texttt{Bb4}+ 21 \texttt{axb4} \texttt{Bb8} 22 \texttt{dxe5} \texttt{Bc8} 23 \texttt{Bd2} \texttt{Bc4} =.

13...\texttt{Bxa6}!!?

Black falls in line with White's plans, and ends up in a difficult situation. 13...\texttt{Bdb8}! (D), providing additional support for the pinned knight, was possible here too.

\begin{center}
\texttt{W}
\end{center}

In his notes Dreev points out the 'refutation' 14 \texttt{Bxb7}?! \texttt{Bxb7} 15 \texttt{Bxb8}? (15 \texttt{Bb5}!?) 15...\texttt{b5} 16 \texttt{Bb6} but misses the simple 16...\texttt{Bb6} 17 \texttt{Bb6} \texttt{Bxb8}, when Black wins. Obviously White would have to transpose by 14 \texttt{Bc7} \texttt{Bc7} to the note to White's 13th move, where Black levels the chances.

What has gone wrong? Why does White have no way to achieve an advantage? Actually, it shouldn't come as a great surprise, as Black did not commit any terrible errors in the opening, while White has been attacking before completing his development. However, Black's defence was by no means easy, and the chances for him to commit serious mistakes were much greater than for White. For instance, the natural 13...\texttt{e5} is not a simple solution to his problems, as 14 \texttt{Bxb7} cannot be met by 14...\texttt{Bxb7}? due to 15 \texttt{Bc6}. Thus Black has to fish in troubled waters with 14...\texttt{Bc8}! (or 14...\texttt{Bd5}!) 15 0-0 exf4.

14 \texttt{Bc7} \texttt{Bc7} 15 \texttt{Bb6} \texttt{Bb7} 16 \texttt{Bc5}

White now has a rook and a pawn for two pieces, but he controls the vital open c-file, and can still use the pin to hinder his opponent's development.

16...\texttt{e7} 17 \texttt{Bf4}! \texttt{f6}

In case of 17...\texttt{Bc4}, 18 \texttt{Bb6}! (much better than Dreev's continuation 18 \texttt{Bc4}) 18...\texttt{Bb6} 19 \texttt{Bxd7}+ \texttt{Bf8} 20 \texttt{Bc6} wins for White.

18 \texttt{Bb5} \texttt{Bxb5} 19 \texttt{Bxb5} \texttt{f5} 20 0-0!

20 \texttt{Bxe6} exd4 21 0-0-0 \texttt{Bf7} 22 \texttt{Bc6} \texttt{Bf6}.

20...\texttt{f4}?! 20...\texttt{f7} 21 \texttt{Bc1} \texttt{d5}? loses to 22 \texttt{Bc7}!, but in my opinion Black was obliged to castle at any rate: 20...0-0 21 \texttt{Bxe6}.

21 \texttt{Bc1}! \texttt{d8}?! 21...\texttt{f7} 22 \texttt{Bf7} 23 \texttt{Bc6} \texttt{Bc6} \texttt{f6} 24 \texttt{Bf5} \texttt{Bf5}+ 25 \texttt{Bxf5}+ \texttt{Bxf5} 26 \texttt{Bc5}+ 27 \texttt{Bxd4} \texttt{g7} 28 \texttt{Bc4} \texttt{Bf6}+ 29 \texttt{Bf6}! and White wins.

22 \texttt{exd4}!
Dreev prefers to attack, rather than defend in the line 22 \( \text{Rc}+ \) \( \text{Qxc8} \) 23 \( \text{Qxc8}+ \) \( \text{Bxc8} \) 24 \( \text{Qc6+} \) \( \text{Bb8} \) 25 \( \text{Qxd7} \) \( \text{Qc8} \).

22...\( \text{Bf8} \) 23 \( \text{a4}! \) +-

The pawn on b6 is pinned now...

23...\( \text{g5} \) 24 \( \text{Ac1} \) \( \text{f4} \) 25 \( \text{a5} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) 26 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{Qd1+} \) 27 \( \text{Qgx2} \) \( \text{Ra1} \) 28 \( \text{axb6} \) \( \text{Qxb8} \)

There is no salvation anyway, since after 28...\( \text{wa6} \) 29 \( \text{Wxa6} \) \( \text{Qxa6} \) 30 \( \text{b7} \) \( \text{Qxc6} \) 31 \( \text{Qxc6} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 32 \( \text{Qd6} \) the pawn will promote.

29 \( \text{Qd6+} \) 1-0

**Advantage in Development**

A pin can be especially effective when our opponent’s king is still in the centre. For the sake of opening the position, pawns and even pieces are often sacrificed to set up pins along the central files or the diagonals leading to an exposed king.

**Bruzon – Flores**

*Morelia 2008*

1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 2 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{g7} \) 3 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 4 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 5 \( \text{Qc4} \) \( \text{e6} \) 6 0-0 \( \text{a6} \) 7 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 8 \( \text{Qe1} \) \( \text{Qb7} \) 9 \( \text{e5}! \)

Black has played too passively in the opening, and White starts to open lines against his king in the centre.

9...\( \text{dxe5} \) 10 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 11 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) 12 \( \text{g5} \)

12...f6 13 \( \text{Qxe5}! \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) 14 \( \text{Qxd7} \) provides no relief for Black.

13 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qb8} \) 14 \( \text{Qc6} \) \( \text{f6} \) (D)

\( W \)

**15 \( \text{Qxf6}! \)**

"With so many pins and a development advantage, the tactical ideas are clearly justified," states the Brazilian GM Vescovi. 15 \( \text{Qxe5} \) \( \text{fxe5} \)

is another way to keep the king in the centre. After 16 \( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{Qxc6} \) 17 \( \text{Qxd8} \) \( \text{Qxd8} \) 18 \( \text{Qad1} \) ± Black has three minor pieces for a queen, which usually favours the side with the pieces. However, here the black king cannot find a safe haven, and White is much better. The way that Bruzon chose is more clear-cut, and should lead to victory.

15...\( \text{Qxf6} \) 16 \( \text{Qxe5} \) \( \text{Qxe5} \) 17 \( \text{Qxe5} \) \( \text{Qf8} \) 18 \( \text{Qd5}?! \)

But here he goes astray. The correct 18 \( \text{Qg4}! \) \( \text{Qf5} \) (18...\( \text{Qf6} \) 19 \( \text{Qe6} \) \( \text{Qf8} \) 20 \( \text{Qxd7} \) ++) 19 \( \text{Qae1} \) \( \text{Qxe5} \) 20 \( \text{Qxe5} \), with the idea \( \text{Qe6-g8} \), should lead to a win (Vescovi). In this line White exchanges one of his active rooks, but for Black’s only active piece. Both knights are now partially paralysed due to the pin, and this causes pain and suffering among Black’s other pieces. 18 \( \text{Qe6}?! \) is also good: 18...\( \text{Qf7} \) 19 \( \text{Wd2} \) \( \text{Qf8} \) 20 \( \text{Qxd7} \) ++. It is quite obvious that Black has to part with his superfluous material. In such situations the attacker must seek to regain the material without loosening his grip or giving up the initiative.

18...\( \text{Qf7} \) 19 \( \text{Qae1} \) \( \text{Qf8} \)

The white queen on d5 is hanging, and so Black relies his position by eliminating some of White’s active pieces.

20 \( \text{Qxd7} \) \( \text{Qxc6} \) 21 \( \text{Qxc6} \)

White is still better but Black managed to save half a point with stubborn defence.

One of the features of the pin is that breaking it is time-consuming. In the next example Svidler cleverly converts his advantage using this fact.

\( W \)

**Svidler – Shirov**

*European Team Ch, Plovdiv 2003*
22 \( \text{Qxe6!} \) \( \text{Qxe3} \)

After 22...\( \text{Qxc4} \) 23 \( \text{Wxb6 Qxb6} \) 24 \( \text{Qd8+} \) \( \text{Qa7} \) 25 \( \text{Qxf8} \) Black loses simply.

23 \( \text{Qd8+} \) \( \text{Qa7} \) 24 fxe3 fxe6 25 \( \text{Qxe6} \) (D)

B

23 \( \text{Qd8+} \) \( \text{Qa7} \) 24 fxe3 fxe6 25 \( \text{Qxe6} \)

After 25...

25 \( \text{Qxc4} \)

Black loses simply.

23

23

\( \text{Qd8+} \) \( \text{Qa7} \) 24 fxe3 fxe6 25 \( \text{Qxe6} \)

(W)

1-0

If Black wants to break the pin he needs to move the bishop from g6, and then play ...g6 and ...\( \text{Qg7} \). Unfortunately, he lacks the time, since White already threatens \( \text{Qf1} \). After 25...\( \text{Qd3} \) he must choose his reply carefully:

a) Not 26 \( \text{Qc1?} \) \( \text{Qc5!!} \) when, using the idea of double attack, Black wins the necessary tempo.

b) 26 \( \text{Qd5?} \) is also a poor place for the bishop and gives Black additional time for regrouping: 26...\( \text{Qc4} \) 27 e6 \( \text{Qxe3} \) (now the bishop is under attack and White cannot push the pawn) 28 \( \text{Qf3} \) (28 e7? \( \text{Qxe7} \) 29 \( \text{Qxh8 Qxd5=} \) 29...\( \text{Qc5} \) 29 \( \text{Qh8 Qg4=} \) = with perpetual.

c) 26 \( \text{Qb3?!} \) g5 27 e6 (Black manages to save the pinned bishop, but White gains enough time to promote his pawn) 27...\( \text{Qg7} \) 28 e7 \( \text{Qg6} \) (28...\( \text{Qb5} \) 29 \( \text{Qc1} \) 29 \( \text{Qf1} \) =+ and there is no escape from \( \text{Qh8} \) and \( \text{Qf8} \), or the immediate \( \text{Qf8} \).

Sometimes even world champions may miss a useful pin. The following diagram provides an example.

Kramnik chose 15 \( \text{Qd3?!} \) and won after a long and hard battle. Instead, everything was ready for a tactical blow based on a pin. Just have a look at all his active pieces – the bishop, rook, and knight on e5, and the second knight ready to join the fray immediately. Correct was 15 \( \text{Qxf7!} \) \( \text{Qxf7} \) 16 \( \text{Qxe7!!} \) removing the strong knight, and deflecting the bishop from its active position. White cannot make use of the pin otherwise (as 16 \( \text{Qe5?} \) is met by 16...\( \text{Qxf2+} \) with ...\( \text{Qd5} \) to follow – Black is putting obstacles in the way of the pin, which is a typical defensive method). After 16...\( \text{Qxe7} \) 17 \( \text{Qe5} \) -- White has won an important pawn, and kept all the advantages of his position.

Both players overlooked this option. Why? “This most probably happened because White was clearly better after proceeding calmly” states Evseev, but I suspect the reason is different – Kramnik saw the idea ...\( \text{Qxf2+} \) and abandoned his calculations.

Sometimes our opponent is protecting his pinned piece with all the forces at his disposal, and we lack an additional attacker. But there are still ways of making use of the pin, such as removing the defending forces:

Flores – Valerga

Fischer Memorial, Villa Martelli 2008

The d5-knight is pinned but it is well protected by both a pawn and a rook. We do not
have a way to attack it with another piece. But maybe we can break the mechanism of the defence somehow?

39 $\text{Bxc6!}$

Physically removing one of the defenders and decoying the second one into a double attack.

39...$\text{Bd7}$

If 39...$\text{Bxc6}$, then after the fork 40 $\text{Bxd5+}$ followed by 41 $\text{Bxc6}$ White emerges a knight ahead.

40 $\text{Bc5 1-0}$

The job is done; there are no longer enough defenders!

When the pin is against any piece other than the king, we must be on the lookout for pin-breaking sacrifices. No doubt you remember Legall’s Mate from your early chess education. However, there are many other examples where a pin against a queen proves insufficient to immobilize a piece.

25 $\text{Ba5}$

White was obviously counting on this pin to save his rook. However, there is a simple and strong reply:

25...$\text{Bxd6! 0-1}$

Black sacrifices his queen, but wins it back with interest: 26 $\text{Bxc7 Bxd1+ 27 Bh2 Bb8}$ and the white queen is pinned.

Sometimes the ultimate use of a pin is not the destruction of the pinned piece itself, but another target, which the opponent cannot protect due to the pin.

Bosboom — Janssen

*Dutch Ch., Hilversum 2007*

24 $\text{c4}$

An energetic way of exploiting the pin. White is not only a pawn up, but he keeps the knight pinned, and shall finally win it.

24...$\text{g5}$

24...$\text{dxc4}$ 25 $\text{Bxc4}$ and the pin is towards the king.

25 $\text{Bc7 Bc8 26 Bxb7 Bxc7 27 Bb6 dxc4 28 Bxe6! 1-0}$

The final touch. Black resigned in view of 28...$\text{Bxe6}$ 29 $\text{Bxc7 Bc7}$ 30 $\text{Bxc4 Bd5}$ 31 $\text{Bb7}$. 

Black’s knight on e6 is desperately pinned, but how can White strengthen his attack? There are no other pieces that can be brought to bear on the knight. However, if we take a closer look at the position we discover that Black has two weak pawns — those on b6 and e6. This is exactly what Sokolov uses in addition to the pin:

22 $\text{Ba7! Bb8}$

After this White wins the b6-pawn, but if 22...$\text{Ba7}$ then 23 $\text{Bxb6}$ wins the pawn on e6.

23 $\text{Bxb6 Bb8}$ *(D)*

A. Sokolov – Nevednichy

*Yugoslav Team Ch, Igalo 1994*
A skilful opponent will generally be well aware of the dangers that a pin may cause. However, we may nevertheless be able to direct the game along the course we desire by forcing a pin:

**Peredy – Malanca**

*Budapest 2003*

Black first activates his rook:

30...\( \text{d}1+! \) 31 \( \text{h}2 \) (D)

And now forces his opponent’s king to step on a minefield:

31...\( \text{h}1+! \) 32 \( \text{x}h1 \) \( \text{w}xh3+ \) 0-1

For the hyper-important tempo Black sacrificed a whole rook, and was rewarded with mate.

**Defence Against Pins**

So far we have only seen how dangerous the pin can be. But what should we do when we are faced with a pin on one of our own pieces? First of all, do not panic; there are many possible ways to neutralize the threats generated by a pin:

- Exchange off or move the piece against which the pin is made.
- Deflect the pinning piece.
- Support the pinned piece along the line of the pin: a pawn can be useful for this purpose.
- Interpose along the line of the pin so as to attack the pinning piece (with a bishop vs a bishop, for example).
- Provide additional support for the pinned piece – less valuable pieces support first.
- Remove the enemy forces that could add to the attack against the pinned piece.

**J. Polgar – Aronian**

*Wijk aan Zee 2008*

It looks like Black will lose his knight because of the pin against his king. However, this knight still has some energy left in it, and attacks the important f4-pawn. By using a decoy, Black wins an important tempo and neutralizes the threats with minimal material losses.

23...\( \text{f}3+! \)

Only move. Otherwise, after 23...\( \text{f}7 \) 24 \( \text{exd}5 \) \( \text{xd}5+ \) 25 \( \text{xd}5+ \text{cxd}5 \) 26 \( \text{g}3 \) White is
a solid pawn up, and has every chance to win the endgame.

24 \(\text{xf3}\)
Forced. Now the d5-knight and the f8-rook will combine their efforts.

24...\(\text{xf4+}\)
Everyone knows that 'a pinned piece does not defend', but here we see an exception: while the d5-knight is not allowed to move by the laws of chess, by that same set of rules it nevertheless defends the f4-rook against capture by the white king.

25 \(\text{g3}\) \(\text{fxe4}\) 26 \(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xe4}\)
The position is about equal, and later ended in a draw. This saving idea had already been seen in the game Nakamura-Aronian, Gibraltar 2005.

### The Pin as a Defensive Method

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\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{board.png}
\end{center}
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\textbf{Aggelis – Bojkov}

\textit{Veria 2008}

"My position is clearly better," I thought when it arose, "and I only need to find the most precise plan." Unfortunately this was far away from the truth. After some twenty minutes of deliberation I went for what seemed to be my best practical chance:

33...\(\text{g3}\)
This naive-looking move creates an unpleasant threat of a fork, which my opponent missed.

34 \(\text{e3}\)?
Since 34 \(\text{f1}\)?? is not possible because of 34...\(\text{h1}\), 34 \(\text{e4}\) was White’s only move. Then:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) The problem with 34...\(\text{xf4}\) is that White recovers his pawn by force: 35 \(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{e2+}\) 36 \(\text{f2}\) \(\text{xf4}\) 37 \(\text{f3}\) g5 (37...\(\text{h5}\) 38 \(\text{xg6}\) 38 \(\text{g4}\) =).
  \item b) 34...\(\text{h3}\) (threatening the bishop) 35 \(\text{f3!}\) (White must keep the knight pinned against the queen to gain enough time for defence) 35...\(\text{f7}\) 36 \(\text{d3}\) = and the worst is behind White.
  \item c) 34...g5!? is objectively best: 35 \(\text{fxg5}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 36 \(\text{xe3}\) \(\text{xe2}\) with a slight edge for Black in the endgame.
\end{itemize}

34...\(\text{xf4}\) 35 \(\text{we7}\) \(\text{f7}\)
Black won an important pawn and soon the game.

A counterpin is also a useful defensive method. But never forget that a pinned piece can still exert a lot of influence, despite its lack of mobility:

```
B

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{board2.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Miszto – Kloza}

\textit{Poland 1955}
```

Black’s rook is pinned and he decided to free it by means of a counterpin:

1...\(\text{c5}\)\
Unfortunately for him, the bishop remains active enough to support two raging rooks. But first White needs to gain a decisive tempo:

2 \(\text{h7+!!}\) \(\text{h7}\) 3 \(\text{xg7+}\) \(\text{h8}\)
3...\(\text{h6}\) 4 \(\text{g1g6}\#\).

4 \(\text{g8++}\) \(\text{h7}\) 5 \(\text{g1g7+}\) \(\text{h6}\) 6 \(\text{g6+}\) \(\text{h7}\) 7 \(\text{g8g7+}\) \(\text{h8}\) 8 \(\text{h6}\#\) (1-0)

While this book was being written, the chess world witnessed a remarkable demonstration that everyone can go astray, even the great champions (see following diagram).

29 \(\text{xd4??}\)?
For such a high-level game, this is a terrible blunder, which effectively sealed Kramnik’s fate.
in the match, and reconfirmed Anand as the world champion. Kramnik obviously saw that his back rank was weak, and also perceived that his bishop could interpose:

\[
29 \ldots \text{d}4 30 \text{d}1 \text{f}6! 31 \text{x}d4 \text{x}g4 32 \text{x}d7+ \text{f}6 33 \text{xb}7 \text{e}1+ 34 \text{f}1 (D)
\]

But as he confessed at the press-conference after the game, he overlooked a cunning tactic that achieves one of the ideas we have already described: “put more pressure on the pinned piece”.

\[
34 \text{e}3!! 35 \text{fxe}3 \text{fxe}3 0-1
\]

Since “escaping from a pin is time-consuming”, White cannot avoid the deadly ...e2.

---

**Exercises**

1

Black’s pieces appear stuck, but he found a way to make use of a pin.

2

Show how White can exploit a pin.

3

Can Black win a pawn?
How can White conclude his attack?

Force Black into a pin!

Create and exploit a pin by using the tactical features of the position.

Is Black lost?

Must White retreat?
In the course of the game we try to deploy our pieces as actively as we can. We try to dominate our opponent’s pieces. Some of them are needed for protection of important squares and lines, and the same goes for our opponent.

A piece can perform various functions, and it can defend another piece, or pieces, or important defensive points, especially around the king. If the square that particular piece is protecting is vital for our opponent, it may be worth our while to sacrifice material to deflect the piece.

We can use deflection in two general ways: either to profit immediately from it (gain of material or creation of a deadly mating-net) or as an instrument to gain time and, e.g., achieve a decisive attack.

Larino – Bojkov
Ferrol 2008

1 d4 g6 2 c4 g7 3 d3 c5 4 c3 e4 5 e5 e6 6 c3 d5 7 e4 f5 8 f4 Bf5

Larino chooses a sharp line with pawn sacrifices that was developed by Ivan Cheparinov. I had analysed this line beforehand, and funny enough it coincided with Larino’s preparation for Black, as we discovered in the post-mortem.

10...h6 11 h4 exd4 12 d5 g5 13 xA6 gxh4 14 xC7 Wc6 15 cxd6 bxa6 16 c3

\[ \text{Wxd6 17 xA8 h3 18 c7 hXg2 19 e1 d3 20 d5 d4 (D)} \]

I was very happy with my position. The opening complications seem to have come to an end, and for the sacrificed exchange Black has the bishop-pair, a dangerous passed pawn and strong pressure. I considered White’s only move to be 21 \text{Wxd3}, giving back the exchange, and I was quite pleased with the position arising after 21...xf2+ 22 xg2 xel 23 xex1 xh7 with reasonable counterplay. 21 xg2? was one of the possible lines I was dreaming of, when all my pieces participate in a decisive assault: 21...xf2 22 xd2 xh3+ 23 xg1 xex4+ and an easy point for me. While I was still daydreaming, my young opponent played a totally unexpected move:

21 xC2!

This is a deep idea based on deflection for both defensive and counterattack purposes. White is again exchanging the dark-squared bishop and returning the exchange, but in this line he also activates his queen to the maximum on the long diagonal, and creates threats against Black’s king. Meanwhile, my knight on g4 becomes misplaced and vulnerable. The only drawback of the idea is that Black obtains a passed pawn on e2, the power of which I failed to appreciate. After spending more than half an hour, I could not find anything better than following a forcing line:
21...dxe2 22 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qb7} \)

My engine first claimed that after 22...f6 Black has survival chances, but this is hardly the objective truth. White has many options; for instance, 23 \( \text{Qxe1} \) (only not 23 \( \text{Qxc6??} \), when suddenly Black’s passed pawn starts kicking: 23...\( \text{e1Q+} \) 24 \( \text{Qxe1} \) \( \text{Qxh2#} \); 23 \( \text{Qc4??} \) is another idea though) 23...\( \text{Qe5} \) 24 \( \text{Qxe5} \) \( \text{fxe5} \) 25 \( \text{Qc3} \), meeting 25...\( \text{Qg4} \) with 26 \( \text{Qg3} \pm \).

23 \( \text{h3} \)

This move forces the exchange of all my active pieces, or at least, so I thought.

23...\( \text{Qxd5?} \)

While preparing the game as an example for this book, I suddenly discovered that my position was not yet lost and I had a wonderful combination at my disposal: 23...\( \text{f5!!} \) (D).

We both saw 24 \( \text{hxg4} \) \( \text{fxe4} \) 25 \( \text{Qc7} \) \( \text{Qxc7!} \) 26 \( \text{Qxc7} \) \( \text{Qxf3} \) 27 \( \text{Qc4+} \) with a double attack and ended our calculations here. This was a shame – I could have probably saved half a point thanks to the energy left in my pieces, and using the ideas of clearance and deflection. After 27...\( \text{Qg7} \) 28 \( \text{Qxe2} \) e3! (deflecting his pawn and entirely clearing the long diagonal for my bishop) 29 \( \text{fxe3} \) \( \text{Qf1+} \) Black’s pieces manage to coordinate their efforts, and the resulting endgame is drawn; for example, 30 \( \text{Qxf1} \) \( \text{gxh1Q} \) + 31 \( \text{Qxf1} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 32 \( \text{Qf2} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) (trying to trap the knight; 32...\( \text{Qg5??} \) 33 \( \text{Qg3} \) \( \text{Qc8} \) is a fair alternative) 33 \( \text{Qd4} \) \( \text{Qd5} \) 34 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) 35 \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) =.

24 \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 25 \( \text{Qc6} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) 26 \( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{Qxf3} \) 27 \( \text{Qxf3} \) e1Q+ 28 \( \text{Qxg2} \) \( \text{Qd2} \) 29 \( \text{Qxa6} \) (D)

White has won a pawn, and soon the game.

29...\( \text{Qxb2} \) 30 \( \text{Qxh6} \) \( \text{Qd8} \) 31 \( \text{Qa6} \) \( \text{Qg7+} \) 32 \( \text{Qg3} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 33 \( \text{Qa4} \) \( \text{Qxg3+} \) 34 \( \text{fxg3} \)

The rest of the game is not important to our theme, so I shall not examine it in detail. The young Spaniard comfortably converted his advantage into victory.

34...\( \text{Qg7} \) 35 \( \text{Qa6} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 36 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{Qc2+} \) 37 \( \text{Qh3} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 38 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 39 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 40 \( \text{a5} \) \( \text{Qb7} \) 41 \( \text{Qh4} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 42 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{Qb7} \) 43 \( \text{h6+} \) \( \text{Qg8} \) 44 \( \text{Qg5} \) \( \text{Qh7} \) 45 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 46 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 47 \( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 48 \( \text{Qf5} \) \( \text{Qb7} \) 49 \( \text{Qf6} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 50 \( \text{Qd6} \) \( \text{Qg8} \) 51 \( \text{Qd8+} \) \( \text{Qh7} \) 52 \( \text{Qf8} \) \( \text{Qc6+} \) 53 \( \text{Qxf7} \) a6 54 \( \text{Qe7} \) \( \text{Qc5} \) 55 \( \text{Qxf7+} \) \( \text{Qg8} \) 56 \( \text{g6} \) \( \text{Qc8} \) 57 \( \text{Qd7} \) \( \text{Qb8} \) 58 \( \text{Qc7} \) \( \text{Qe8} \) 59 \( \text{Qd7} \) 1-0

How does deflection work?

Black’s queen is obliged to defend the g7-square. If we can somehow deflect it, we can deliver mate.

21 \( \text{Qh4!} \) \( \text{Qf7} \)

If 21...c5, we can simply grab the pawn, and the same problems remain for Black.

22 \( \text{Qf8} \) \( \text{Qxf8} \)

White has already won an exchange, but the queen still needs to guard the g7 point, which makes a further blow possible.

23 \( \text{Qd8!} \) 1-0
How to spot which piece to deflect

If White’s rook were not defending the vital f2-pawn, it would be mate in one with ...\texttt{Qxf2#}. That is why Bacrot deflects the rook.

31...\texttt{Bb1!} 32 \texttt{h3}

As we know, the rook is poisoned (32 \texttt{Bxb1 Qxf2#}), but now the same rook is pinned by its counterpart and Black can grab a pawn:

32...\texttt{Qxf2+ 33 Bh2 Qxf1 34 Qxf1 Qc3 0-1}

Two extra pawns are more than enough for an easy win.

Let us analyse the situation from Black’s point of view.

Material is approximately equal, or else a little worse for us – we have an exchange for a couple of pawns. Our king looks safer than the opponent’s. Obviously our chances are in the middlegame, in the form of an attack against the white king, which is stuck in the centre. We have two excellent attacking pieces: the queen and the knight. However, the black rook is not showing its full potential, and right now our knight is under attack.

If we now take a look at the opponent’s camp, which piece is his best defender? That’s right: the knight. It protects vital squares around the king, including c1, and shields important squares on the second rank.

Is there a move that can achieve two goals at the same time: activate Black’s last piece, and get rid of White’s best defender? Yes, there is:

36...f3!

This move deflects the pawn and frees an important square.

0-1

White resigned in view of 37 gxf3 \texttt{Qgl+!!} (now deflecting the knight) 38 \texttt{Qxg1 Qc1+ 39 Qxe2 Qf4#}.

Successful deflection is usually based on an overload (more on this theme in the next chapter): one of our opponent’s pieces has too many duties to take care of. If we spot such a piece, we can bravely attack it – it usually has nowhere to go. It is even better if we can target that piece while also attacking another one, as in the following example:

The e7-knight has to guard the vital c8-square, and Georgiev finds a way to deflect it:

53 \texttt{Qg8! 1-0}

This is also a double attack. Black needs to take by 53...\texttt{Qxg8} but then 54 \texttt{Wc8+ Wa7 55 Ec7+ wins a queen, and later a double attack.
will deal with Black’s knights – as an exercise, find it yourself!

Here it is more complicated:

Fedorchuk – Buhmann
World Under-18 Ch, Oropesa del Mar 1999

Black’s king is in a precarious situation, but White needs to hurry to exploit this circumstance. Both the eighth rank and the d7-square seem well protected but White mates with the help of two deflections:

26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{W}}f4!! 1-0}

This is not just an exchange, but a deflection. After 26...\textit{\textbf{\textit{W}}}xf4 (26...\textit{\textbf{\textit{W}}}c8 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}e6+), 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}e8+! is the second deflection: 27...\textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}xe8 28 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}d7#.

Before the decisive break, we may need to identify and deal with the main defenders in order to improve our chances for success.

Black now opens all the files and diagonals for his remaining pieces. White’s queen is too far away at the moment when it is most desperately needed, and Black wins in all lines.

25 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}e2

Or:

a) 25 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}f1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{W}}}f3+ 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}g1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}h3 –+

b) 25 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}c2 (the queen will be one tempo too slow to secure her king) 25...\textit{\textbf{\textit{W}}}f3+ 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}g1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}h3 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}xe4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{W}}}xf2+ 28 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}h1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{W}}}f1+ 29 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}xf1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}xf1#.

c) 25 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}c4+ \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}h7 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}e2 (26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{W}}}f1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}h3+!! 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}xh3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{W}}}f3#) 26...\textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}g4 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}e3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}f3+ 28 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}f1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}f5 29 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}e2 and now 29...\textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}g4 or 29...\textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}d8.

d) 25 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}xe4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}xf2+ 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}h1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}g4!! and Black wins.

25...\textit{\textbf{\textit{W}}}f3+ 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}g1 e3! 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}c2 \textit{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}h3 0-1

Black invested an exchange in order to deflect the white queen and as a result won two tempi, which was enough to give his attack a decisive impetus.
In the examples that we have examined so far, deflections of key defenders were made in the name of checkmate. Sometimes though we deflect pieces with more prosaic ideas, such as material gain:

\[ \text{Hebden - E. Moser} \\
\text{European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008} \]

The pawn on h6 is pinned, and if we imagine for a second that the bishop on e7 does not exist then there will be a decisive fork by g5+. This thought leads us quickly and logically to find the decisive idea:

\[ 18 \text{d6! } xd6 \]

The capture of the rook is forced, since after 18...\text{f5} 19 \text{h6+ } g7 20 \text{g3+ Black is getting mated.} 

\[ 19 \text{g5+ 1-0} \]

Black also loses the bishop, so she decided to call it a day.

**Deflection in Defence**

\[ \text{McNab - Berelovich} \\
\text{Jessie Gilbert Memorial, Coulsdon 2008} \]

White has advanced his a-pawn too quickly, and now it looks as if he might have to resign due to the threat of 80...\text{g2#}. However, a deflection saves the day:

\[ 80 \text{e3+!} \]

This deflects the black queen away from threatening mate, and gains a vital tempo.

\[ 80...\text{xe3} 81 \text{a8} \]

White's sacrifice turns out to be of just a pawn after all! Now he threatens mate on h8, and this gives him the time he needs to parry Black's mating ideas.

\[ 81...\text{g7} 82 \text{b7+ } f8 83 \text{b4+ } 1/2-1/2 \]

We should now look at a more sophisticated case of deflection.

\[ \text{Sulashvili - G. Guseinov} \\
\text{Baku 2008} \]

The following move is one the most profound deflections I have ever seen:

\[ 28...\text{h5!!} \]

An unbelievable winning move. The point? The answer comes from a logical analysis of the position. White's position is quite shaky, but straightforward methods do not give Black anything: 28...\text{g6?} 29 \text{e2!} or 28...\text{h1+?} 29 \text{e2 xg2+ 30 }\text{d3. To succeed, he needs to deflect both of White’s active pieces from the central squares – thus freeing either the c-file for his rook or the a6-f1 diagonal for his bishop.

\[ 29 \text{xe6+} \]

In case of 29 \text{xc6 } c4+! the diagonal is freed! (or first 29...\text{h1+ 30 }\text{e2 and now 30...c4+!).

\[ 29 \text{xa2 } xa2 30 \text{xa2 } he6! \] is similar to the game.

\[ 29...\text{hxe6! (D)} \]
30 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet x e 6+t}}

Desperation, but in the line 30 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet x e 6 \textbullet h 1+}}
31 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet e 2 \textbullet x g 2+t}} 32 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet d 3}} comes the key point behind Black's 28th move: 32...\textit{\texttt{\textbullet c 2#}}. Black also wins quickly in the line 30 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet c 2 e 2+}} 31
\textit{\texttt{\textbullet x e 2 \textbullet h 1+}} 32 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet f 2 \textbullet x e 2+t}} 33 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet x e 2 \textbullet x g 2+t}}, etc.

30...\textit{\texttt{\textbullet x e 6}} 31 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet x e 6 \textbullet h 1+}} 32 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet e 2 \textbullet x g 2+t}}
33 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet d 3 \textbullet g 6+t}}!
A double attack. Black recovers the material with interest and continues attacking.
34 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet c 3 \textbullet x e 6}} 35 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet d 5 \textbullet e 5+}} 36 \textit{\texttt{\textbullet c 2 \textbullet a 6}} 0-1

\textbf{Exercises}

A simple exercise just to check you are concentrating...

\begin{itemize}
  \item White's b2-square and back rank are both weak. Take advantage of this!
\end{itemize}
White is on top due to the line 22...\(\text{d}xh6\) 23 
\(\text{d}xc7\) \(\text{b}b7\) 24 \(\text{b}5\). True or false?

If only Black could chase the knight away 
To the right, to the left...

How can White start a decisive attack?
An overload occurs when a piece has more than one duty, and when it is forced to carry out one of these tasks, this leaves it unable to perform its other functions. For example, a piece might be protecting two or more pieces simultaneously, or might be guarding a number of critical squares.

The removal or annihilation of an overloaded piece may bring about a total collapse of the defence:

Fahnenschmidt – Ma. Tseitlin
European Seniors Ch, Bad Homburg 2005

Black would like to give a standard mate with his rooks on White's second rank. For the moment the only piece that prevents this is White's light-squared bishop. Therefore Black can consider any means to remove this piece, even a sacrifice of his most valuable piece:

27...\textit{g4+}! \textit{xh}x6

The priority is to safeguard the king, so Black cannot afford 27...axb6 allowing instant mate by 28 \textit{a}4#.

28 \textit{x}xc1 \textit{x}xc1+ 29 \textit{h}xgl \textit{g}xh2#.

An overloaded piece is also limited in its mobility due to its onerous duties:

Lechtynsky – Tupy
Pribram (rapid) 1996

The c8-rook needs to protect the black queen. This means that White can easily threaten it even on the back rank, which such a rook would usually cover very naturally:

25 \textit{e}8+! 1-0
We can also exploit an overloaded piece to gain time to improve our own pieces.

**Gil Alba – Fernandez Cardoso**  
*Santa Clara 2003*

The black queen is tied to the defence of its knight, and White exploits this fact to prepare a deadly discovered attack:

1. **CDe3!**  
2. **CDf3**  
2 ... **Yd6**  
3. **Macl**  

An important skill is being able to **spot which piece is overloaded.**

**Rowson – Brunello**  
*Palau 2008*

Black is holding the position due to his queen – it protects both the rook and the knight. This provides the setting for an overload, which can be exploited here by removing the queen by exchanging it off:

33 **Wf7+! Wxf7** 34 **exf7+ Wxf7** 35 **xh5** 36 **h4** 37 **xa4** 38 **h4** 1-0

In many cases it is not obvious which piece can become overloaded. In this example White is attacking the a6-pawn twice, and Black is defending it twice. However, if White captures with the bishop, he opens a line for his rook, and a hidden threat of mate on d8. This means that Black also needs his rook on his back rank – thus it is overloaded, and its defence of a6 turns out to be illusory:

17 **xa6! Wxa7** 18 **b5! Wb7**  
(D)
emphasize another overload – this time of the c6-bishop.

19 \textit{We}4! 1-0

Another way to view this example is that Black delayed castling too long and White was able to deflect the sole defender of the back rank to deliver mate.

One thing is certain: an overload is usually exploited by a deflection.

The black queen and the e6-bishop need to guard the d5-knight. One of these pieces can be deflected:

18 \textit{Oxf7}! 1-0

After 18...\textit{Oxf7} 19 \textit{Oxb8} the queen needs to abandon the knight: 19...\textit{Wxb8} 20 \textit{Oxd5} +--.

Sometimes a whole position turns out to be loose because first one piece and then another is overloaded.

In the following position, the e7-bishop is overloaded since it needs to protect both the d6-pawn and the important f6-square:

Miroshnichenko – Turzo
Budapest 1999

19 \textit{Oxd6}! \textit{Oxd6} 19...\textit{Oxh5} is met by 20 \textit{Oxd5} +-- with the idea \textit{Wxe5}.

20 \textit{Of6}+ \textit{Og7}

20...\textit{Oh8} 21 \textit{Wh4} +--.

Now the key piece becomes the e5-knight, which has too many duties: it is the protector of the g4-bishop, but also has the higher duty of guarding its king.

21 \textit{Oed5}! \textit{Wb8} (D)

Black provides extra support for his knight, since his position will collapse after 21...\textit{cx}d5 22 \textit{x}x\textit{e}5 \textit{x}x\textit{e}5 23 \textit{Wxe5 \Oxh8} (23...\textit{Wxb8} 24 \textit{Oe8}++ \textit{Oxh6} 25 \textit{Wg7+ \Oxg5} 26 \textit{h4+ \Oxh4} 27 \textit{Wxh6+ \Oxg5} 28 \textit{Wxf4+ \Wxf4} 29 \textit{Wxf4+ \Og4} 30 \textit{Wf6} \textit{h5} 31 \textit{Wg2} followed by g3#) 24 \textit{Oxg4}+ \textit{f6} 25 \textit{Oxf6} +-- with the point 25...\textit{Wxb8} 26 \textit{Oe8++ \Wxe5} 27 \textit{Wxf8#}.

However, it is now the bishop that becomes overburdened.

22 \textit{c5}!

Black’s defences disintegrate under White’s pressure.
However, we cannot expect a skilled opponent simply to leave his pieces overstretched in their defensive tasks. Thus we need to consider how we can create overloaded pieces.

Shavtvaladze – Avrukh  
*European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008*

The most usual way is by decoying pieces to vulnerable squares.

31 e6  
Black now saw a pin and became overambitious, missing White’s cunning reply:

31...\(\text{We7}??\) 32 f5!  
This decoys the rook to a vulnerable square.  
32...\(\text{xf5} (D)\)

Now the g6-pawn needs to protect both a rook and a knight, which is beyond its abilities. White therefore won material:

33 exd7 \(\text{Wxe3} 34 \text{Exh5} \text{Ef2} 35 \text{Exh3 We7}\)  
35...\(\text{We2}\) loses after 36 \(\text{Wxe2} \text{Exe2} 37 \text{Cc3 Ef2} 38 \text{Cc8+ Ef8} 39 \text{xa8 Exa8} 40 \text{Cc1}.

36 \(\text{Dh1 Ef8 (D)\)}

White now found one more overloaded piece – the f8-rook which must defend its colleague on f2:

37 \(\text{d8W! 1-0}\)

Avrukh resigned due to the line 37...\(\text{xd8} 38 \text{xh7+ Wxh7} 39 \text{xh7+ Wh7} 40 \text{Wh4+}.

**Exercises**

This is a warm-up exercise.

Another warm-up.
There is no breathing space for White’s king, but a soldier still guards him.

White can win most neatly by exploiting an overloaded piece in Black’s camp.

If one of White’s pieces were not there it would be mate...

Black is worse, but what is his best practical try?
Decoy is a tactical method in which we try to force a piece to go onto a particular unfavourable square. We can also call this square mined. Once the piece is on this square, we can either win the decoyed piece immediately, or employ some other tactical method (pin, double attack, discovered attack, etc., or even mate) that is possible due to the piece’s unfortunate presence on this square.

Decoy can also take the form of dragging out our opponent’s king in front of his pawn-chain. Without his safe shelter, the king becomes an easy target for the attacking pieces.

When speaking about the dragging out of a king, Garry Kasparov’s ingenious victory over Veselin Topalov naturally springs to mind. Although every chess lover will no doubt have marvelled at this masterpiece already, I would like to go over Kasparov’s combination and some of the main variations, with a particular emphasis on the leading role played by decoy:

**24...\textit{Qxd4}!! cxd4?**

As is now well-known, Topalov should have played 24...\textit{b6}!.

**25 \textit{Qe7}!! \textit{b6}**

The king is forced to go for a long and dangerous walk, since after 25...\textit{b8} 26 \textit{Wxd4}! White has enough resources to execute Black’s king in his own camp; for example, 26...\textit{Qd7} (26...\textit{We7} 27 \textit{Wb6}+ \textit{b7} 28 \textit{Qc6}+ \textit{a8} 29 \textit{Wa7}#) 27 \textit{Qxd7} \textit{Qxd5} 28 \textit{c4}! \textit{We7} 29 \textit{Wb6}+ \textit{a8} 30 \textit{Wxa6}+ \textit{b8} 31 \textit{Wb6}+ \textit{a8} 32 \textit{Qc6}! \textit{Qxc6} 33 \textit{Qxc6} +–.

26 \textit{Wxd4}+ \textit{xa5}

In the event of 26...\textit{We5} 27 \textit{Wxf6}+ \textit{d6} Kasparov intended to sacriﬁce his bishop by 28 \textit{Qe6}!! in order to gain a couple of tempi, and to keep Black’s pieces locked up: 28...\textit{Qxd5} (or 28...\textit{Qhe8} 29 \textit{b4}! +–) 29 \textit{b4}! \textit{a8} 30 \textit{Wxf7} \textit{dd1}+ 31 \textit{Qb2} \textit{Wf3} 32 \textit{Qf5} +–.

27 \textit{b4}+ \textit{a4}

Black’s king has been dragged out from his pawn-shield. Now the play becomes highly concrete because any check by White is likely to be mate. But in order to give the cherished check, White needs to deal with Black’s many defenders with great precision. Various deflection and decoy ideas will support his mission.

28 \textit{Wc3}

Later it was discovered that it is even better to start with 28 \textit{a7}!, which prepares a capture on a6 in order to deflect various defensive forces:

a) 28...\textit{Qxd5} 29 \textit{Qxa6}+!! \textit{Wxa6} 30 \textit{Wb2} \textit{Qc3}+ 31 \textit{Wxc3} \textit{Qd5} 32 \textit{Qb2} and \textit{Qb3}+ is inevitable, whereafter the modest c-pawn has the pleasure of delivering mate.

b) 28...\textit{Qxd5} 29 \textit{Wc3} \textit{Qhe8} 30 \textit{Qb2} \textit{Qe2} 31 \textit{Wc7}! +– and Black’s bishop blocks his queen’s access to d4.

c) 28...\textit{b7} (the best defence is counter-deflection) 29 \textit{Wxb7} and now:

\textit{c1}) 29...\textit{Qxd5} 30 \textit{Qd7}! (the threat is 31 \textit{Qxb5}+, and the white bishop decoys the black rook onto a mined square) 30...\textit{Qxd7} 31 \textit{Wb2} \textit{Qxb4} (the only defence) 32 \textit{Wxd7} (now the idea of 30...\textit{Qd7} is revealed – the queen on d6 is overloaded!) 32...\textit{ce5} 33 \textit{Qd4} \textit{Cc8} 34 \textit{Qb3}+ and White wins the queen.

\textit{c2}) 29...\textit{Qxd5} 30 \textit{Qb6} a5 (30...\textit{a8} 31 \textit{Wxf6} \textit{a5} 32 \textit{Qf1} \textit{Qhb8} 33 \textit{Qd6} wins for White) 31 \textit{Qa6} \textit{a8} 32 \textit{We3}!! \textit{Qxa6} 33 \textit{Qb2} \textit{axb4} 34 \textit{axb4}
\[\text{a2} + \] (otherwise mate from a3, with or without a preliminary check on c3) 35 \text{\textit{\textbf{xa2}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{xb4}}} 36 \text{\textit{\textbf{b2}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{c6}}} 37 \text{\textit{\textbf{f1}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{a8}}} 38 \text{\textit{\textbf{e7}}}+ \text{\textit{\textbf{a5}}} 39 \text{\textit{\textbf{b7}}}+.

Kasparov’s combination is especially beautiful for the juggling with his last three remaining pieces that manage always to be one move ahead of the powerful black army. The exuberance of defensive options for Black is another vintage point of his exceptional combination.

28...\text{\textit{\textbf{wxd5}}} 28...\text{\textit{\textbf{xd5}}} 29 \text{\textit{\textbf{b2}}} is simple, with mate from b3 with the pawn as above.

29 \text{\textit{\textbf{a7}}}!

29 \text{\textit{\textbf{c7}}}? \text{\textit{\textbf{d1+}}} will only lead to perpetual check.

29...\text{\textit{\textbf{b7}}}! 30 \text{\textit{\textbf{xb7}}} (D)

30...\text{\textit{\textbf{c4}}} 30...\text{\textit{\textbf{d6}}} 31 \text{\textit{\textbf{b6}}}!! deflects the rook and gives the white king a chance to make the desired step to b2.

However, in defence the principle of maximum involvement of the pieces is also valid, and Black had to try 30...\text{\textit{\textbf{he8}}}, which should nevertheless lose, but gives White the most chances to go wrong: 31 \text{\textit{\textbf{b6}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{a8}}} 32 \text{\textit{\textbf{f1}}}!! (the flashy 32 \text{\textit{\textbf{e6}}}? \text{\textit{\textbf{xe6}}} 33 \text{\textit{\textbf{xe6}}}, with the idea 34 \text{\textit{\textbf{b2}}}, is refuted by the no less spectacular 33...\text{\textit{\textbf{c4}}} 34 \text{\textit{\textbf{xc4}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{bxc4}}} 35 \text{\textit{\textbf{xf6}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{xa3}}} 36 \text{\textit{\textbf{xf7}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{e8}}} and Black’s advantage in the endgame is overwhelming; in this line the king turns from prey to a hunter) and now:

a) In the event of 32...\text{\textit{\textbf{ed8}}} Kasparov points out a calm way to build the familiar mating-net: 33 \text{\textit{\textbf{c6}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{h5}}} (not 33...\text{\textit{\textbf{d7}}} 34 \text{\textit{\textbf{d6!}}} 34 \text{\textit{\textbf{ec5}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{ac8}}} 35 \text{\textit{\textbf{b2}}}}+ and after the forced exchange of the queens White liquidates to a winning endgame.

b) 32...\text{\textit{\textbf{d7}}} 33 \text{\textit{\textbf{d6}}}! (taking both vital squares from the queen) 33...\text{\textit{\textbf{ec8}}} 34 \text{\textit{\textbf{wb2}}} and White wins.

c) 32...\text{\textit{\textbf{e6}}} also fails to save Black: 33 \text{\textit{\textbf{xe6}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{fxe6}}} 34 \text{\textit{\textbf{b2}}}+.

d) 32...\text{\textit{\textbf{e1+}}}!! 33 \text{\textit{\textbf{xe1}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{d7}}} (D).

30...\text{\textit{\textbf{c4}}} 31 \text{\textit{\textbf{xe4}}}! is another spectacular saving attempt.

Suddenly the white rook is trapped, but 34 \text{\textit{\textbf{b7}}}!! \text{\textit{\textbf{xb7}}} (after 34...\text{\textit{\textbf{c5}}} we witness a double attack for the sake of deflection: 35 \text{\textit{\textbf{c3}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{xc3}}} 36 \text{\textit{\textbf{d3}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{d5}}} 37 \text{\textit{\textbf{c4}}}+ 35 \text{\textit{\textbf{d1}}}!! is an incredible ambush. Even from the first rank the queen can be fearsome. 35...\text{\textit{\textbf{xa6}}} is met with 36 \text{\textit{\textbf{c3}}} followed by \text{\textit{\textbf{c1+}}, \text{\textit{\textbf{c2+}} and \text{\textit{\textbf{c2#}}}}.

30...\text{\textit{\textbf{e4}}}! 31 \text{\textit{\textbf{xe4}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{wc4}}} (D) is another spectacular saving attempt.

After 32 \text{\textit{\textbf{a7}}}!! \text{\textit{\textbf{d1+}}} (32...\text{\textit{\textbf{a8}}}} loses to 33 \text{\textit{\textbf{e3}}} and \text{\textit{\textbf{b2}}, as usual) 33 \text{\textit{\textbf{b2}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{xc3+}}} 34 \text{\textit{\textbf{xc3}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{d6}}} 35 \text{\textit{\textbf{e5}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{b6}}} 36 \text{\textit{\textbf{b2}}}, Black has managed to liquidate to an endgame, but his king is still in danger. As before, any check is fatal for him, and the white bishop now enters the game: 37 \text{\textit{\textbf{g2}}}!! \text{\textit{\textbf{d8}}} (37...\text{\textit{\textbf{xe5}}} 38 \text{\textit{\textbf{b7}}+} with the idea 38...\text{\textit{\textbf{e6}}} 39 \text{\textit{\textbf{d5}}} 38 \text{\textit{\textbf{b7}}} \text{\textit{\textbf{d7}}} 39 \text{\textit{\textbf{c6}}}!! \text{\textit{\textbf{d8}}} (39...\text{\textit{\textbf{d2}}} 40 \text{\textit{\textbf{e8}}}+ 40 \text{\textit{\textbf{d7}}}+ followed by 41 \text{\textit{\textbf{c4}} and either 42 \text{\textit{\textbf{xa6+}}}!!
and \( Axe5 \), or (in case of \( Axe8 \) to hamper this plan) \( Axe4-d1 \). Magnificent geometry!

31 \( Axe6 \) \( Axea3 \)

31...\( Axe1+ \) 32 \( Axe2 Axea8 \) (\( D \)) is relatively best.

After 33 \( Axe6 \) ! \( Axea4+ \) (33...\( Axe5 \) 34 \( Axe7+d7++\) 34 \( Axe4 Axe4 \) Black again survives to an endgame, but after 35 \( Axe7 a5 \) White has a slight advantage in material and a large positional plus, which he will convert into victory after 36 \( Axe6 axb4 37 \( Axeb3+ Axea5 38 axb4+ Axeb6 \) (38...\( Axeb4 39 c3++\) 39 \( Axeh7 Axe8 40 h4+--. 32 \( Axea6+ Axexb4 33 c3!! \)

This additional decoy idea – which is essential for this line to work – was forecast well in advance by Kasparov.

33...\( Axe3 34 Axea1+ Axe2 \)

34...\( Axeb4 35 Axeb2+ Axea5 36 Axe3+ Axea4 37 Axea7+--. 35 \( Axeb2+ Axe1 36 Axe7! \)

Decoying the queen to a poor square.

36...\( Axe2 \)

36...\( Axe7+! 37 Axee2 Axe1 38 Axe7+ reveals one of the points behind 36 \( Axe7 \).

37 \( Axe7+! Axe7 38 Axea4 bxc4 Axea4 39 Axeh8 Axe3 40 Axea8 c3 41 Axea4+ Axe1 42 f4 f5 43 Axe1 Axea2 44 Axea7 1-0 \)

Glorious, is it not? Without any doubt this is one of the most beautiful chess combinations ever.

The next game was also praised highly by its winner, who claimed that it was his best to date:

**Krasenkow – Nakamura**

*Barcelona 2007*

1 \( Axe3 Axe6 2 Axe4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 Axe2 Axe7 5 0-0 0-0 6 Axe3 Axea5 7 Axe3 c6 8 Axe4 Axebd7 9 Axe2 b6 10 e4 Axe6 11 Axe2 Ajax 12 exd5 cxd4 13 Axe5 Axe5 14 Axe4 Axe8 15 Axe1 Axe5 16 Axe2 Axe8 17 Axe1 Axe4 18 bxc4 Axe4 Axeb6 19 Axe1 dxc4 20 Axe6 Axe6 21 Axe6 (\( D \))

In this crazy position where three of Black's pieces are hanging, Nakamura finds a way to create a forceful attack:

21...\( Axe2+!! \)

Dragging the white king in front of the pawn-chain. Black will have enough material to mate even without his queen. Krasenkow later admitted that he saw this possibility immediately after he took on f6, but it was already too late by then.

22 \( Axe2 Axe5+! \) (\( D \))

23 \( Axe3 \)

After 23 \( Axe7 \) the winning move is 23...\( Axe7+! \) (but not 23...\( Axe7+?? \) 24 \( Axe3 Axe3+ 25 Axe2 \) \( Axe2+ \) 26 \( Axe1 Axe3+ \) -- Black wins back the queen, as well as at least a whole rook as compensation.

23 \( Axe4 Axe7 24 Axe3 Axe7+ 25 Axe4 Axe5+ leads to a similar position as in the game, with
the sole difference that the bishop is on d4 instead on c5, which is not important.

23...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{exf6}}} + 24 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g4}}} (D)}

For the queen, Black has only a bishop and two pawns, but his attack is unstoppable. The most important thing when dragging a king in front of his pawn-chain is to make sure that it cannot be securely protected by any of its pieces.

24...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{xe5}}+!}

This important move had to be foreseen in advance. The attack must be conducted with tempo (preferably with checks, as they are so forcing). This move also opens an important diagonal for the light-squared bishop – the last piece to join the hunt.

25 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g5}}}

It is more resilient to eliminate the black knight by 25 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xe5}}}, but it does not help either: 25...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c8}}+! 26 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f5}}} (you should always consider moves like this when sacrificing huge amounts of material!)} 26...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{xf5}}} + 27 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h6}}}+ 28 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{c8}}} (29...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e3}}}# is a threat) and then:

a) 29 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f1}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g6}}}+ 30 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f6}}}+ 31 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{e5}}}+ 32 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h6}}}+ 33 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{exh5}}}#.

b) 29 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{e1}}} allows a forced mate, but you do not need to calculate this line in advance, since the simple swap of the rook for the queen is enough to secure a winning endgame. For those interested, here is the mating line: 29...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e3}}} 30 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{e4}}} (30 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f3}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g6}}}+ 31 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{c7}}}+ 32 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h6}}}#) 30...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{g6}}}+ 31 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g4}}}+ 32 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{e5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g5}}}+ 33 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f5}}}+ 34 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h5}}}+ 35 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{c7}}}+ 36 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xg5}}}+ 37 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xh5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g6}}}+ 38 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{d5}}}#.

c) 29 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xc4}}} (D) controls both e3 and e5.

However, Black wins by 29...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{g6}}}+ 30 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f6}}}+ 31 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{e5}}}+ (deflecting the knight away from the important diagonal) 32 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xe5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{e3}}}+ 33 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h6}}}+ 34 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g5}}}#.

25...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{g6}}}+ 26 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f6}}}...

...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{h6}}}# is coming. Note that White does not have a piece that can cover the h6-square, despite his material advantage. 26...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c8}}} would also work.

27 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xe5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xe5}}}+ 28 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{e8}}! 0-1}

It is mate in six more moves: 29 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{d5}}}+ \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xd5}}} 30 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{d3}}} 31 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f3}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xf3}}} 32 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xf3}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g4}}}+ 33 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h5}}} (33 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h3}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g5}}}+ 34 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f2}}}) 33...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{g6}}}+ 34 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h6}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f8}}}#.

When sacrificing a lot of material for a mating attack, \textbf{precise calculation is essential}. If something goes wrong and our opponent escapes, we might be left in a lost position. But do not worry; the calculations are usually simple enough due to the forcing nature of the lines.

\textbf{Speelman – Peng Xiaomin
Erevan Olympiad 1996}

White has some threats, but precise calculations show that a forced mate can be delivered thanks to a sequence of decoys:

44...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{exg3}}}+! 45 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g3}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h4}}}+! 46 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xf4}}}

46 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h2}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{xf2}}}+ 47 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h1}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f3}}}+ 48 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g1}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f2}}}+ 49 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f1}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g3}}}+ 50 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g1}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{f2}}}+ 51 \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h1}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h2}}}#.
This was a fairly long line, but a forced one, so I am pretty sure that most of my readers could have worked it out for themselves.

46...\texttt{xf2+} 47 \texttt{g5} \texttt{f5+}
Or 47...\texttt{f6#}.

48 \texttt{h4} \texttt{f4#} (0-1)

The next example illustrates a noteworthy decoying pattern which can be added to your armoury:

![Chessboard diagram]

\textit{Yuldachev – Belkin}
\textit{Uzbekistan Ch, Tashkent 1993}

15 \texttt{xg7!} 1-0
15...\texttt{xg7} 16 \texttt{h6+} \texttt{xh6} 17 \texttt{xf6+} \texttt{h5}
18 \texttt{f3#}.

Decoys are based on the potential power of our pieces. If we do not find a direct way to make use of our pieces’ latent possibilities, then we can seek to create the right preconditions by disrupting our opponent’s defensive mechanisms.

Almost all White’s pieces are optimally placed, but for the moment they attack only light squares. The pawn on c6 is the last shield of Black’s king. It needs to be advanced or removed. White needs only one move to unleash the energy of his pieces:

28 \texttt{b8+!!} 1-0
Decoying the king onto a fatal square, and releasing the power of the pieces. There would follow 28...\texttt{xb8} 29 \texttt{c7#}.

Decoy can be used to place an enemy piece on a square where we can destroy it – a mined square:

![Chessboard diagram]

\textit{Hendriks – D. Boros}
\textit{Budapest 2008}

We can use a knight fork to win material after decoying the king onto a mined square.

52...\texttt{h2+!} 0-1
A decoy can be used to make material gains. We decoy an enemy piece, and trap it:

![Chessboard diagram]

\textit{Kuporosov – Yudasin}
\textit{Kostroma 1985}

\textit{H. Nguyen – Porat}
\textit{Budapest 2008}
DECOY

26...\textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xe5!} 0-1
The queen is dragged to a place from which there is no return: 27 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xe5} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}f6}.

\textbf{Decoy as a Defensive Method}

We may also decoy a piece in order to gain an important tempo for our defence:

\textbf{The position is equal if Black simply recap­tures on c6. Instead he thought he had found a beautiful combination:}

\begin{align*}
20 \ldots & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g2+?} \\
21 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xg2} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g6+} \\
22 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}h1} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}e4+} \\
23 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}f3} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g8} (D)
\end{align*}

This is the position that Black was aiming for. He obviously was counting on the line 24 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g1??} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xf3+} 25 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g2} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xg2#} or 24 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xf2??} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xf3+!} 25 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xf3} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g2#. However, a cold shower followed:}

\begin{align*}
24 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}d7+!} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xd7} \\
\text{Otherwise White will play} & 25 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}h3 protecting g2.}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
25 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}b5+!}
\end{align*}

White has won a decisive tempo to drag and drop his queen back home.

\begin{align*}
25 \ldots & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}c8} \\
26 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}e2} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}d3} \\
27 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}d2} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xf1} \\
28 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xf1}
\end{align*}

As a result of his superb defence, White has emerged a piece ahead and won the game later.

\textbf{Here is a sophisticated case of decoy:}

\textbf{Black is the first to decoy his opponent’s king:}

\begin{align*}
38 \ldots & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g2!} \\
39 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xg2} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}f3+} \\
40 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g3} (D)
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
40 \ldots & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g1} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}h3} \text{is a very simple win for Black.}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
40 \ldots & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}f5??} \\
\text{Sad but true. One suspects that time-trouble contributed to this losing move. Black could instead have delivered checkmate by force:}
\begin{align*}
40 \ldots & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}h3+} \\
41 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}f4} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}h2+} \\
42 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xg4} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g2+} \\
43 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}f4} (43 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}h4} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}h5+} 44 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xh5} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g5#}) \\
43 \ldots & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}f5+} \\
44 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}e4} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g4+} \\
45 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}e3} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}g5+} \\
46 & \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}d4} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}f4#}.
\end{align*}

41 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xe7+!} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xe7} (D)
\begin{align*}
\text{Or} & 41 \ldots \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xe7} 42 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}c8\textbf{\textnumero}+} \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}e8} 43 \textit{\textbf{\textnumero}xe8+!} \text{and Whi}
\end{align*}
A COURSE IN CHESS TACTICS

42 \textit{d7+ f8}
Black will be cruelly punished for letting the mate slip out of his grasp.
43 \textit{h1}!! \textit{(D)}
Deflection and decoy: The queen will be vulnerable on h1. 43 \textit{f7+ g8!} 44 \textit{e7+ f8} 45 \textit{f7+} is only a draw.

43 .. \textit{xh1} 44 \textit{f7+ g8} 45 \textit{e7+ h8} 46 \textit{xe8+ g7} 47 \textit{g8+ h7} \textit{(D)}

Now White needs to decoy his opponent's king onto its back rank.
48 \textit{h8+! xh8} 49 \textit{c8+ g7} 50 \textit{g8+} 1-0
Black loses his queen.

Exercises

After 48...\textit{d7} 49 \textit{e8++ xe8} 50 \textit{b7 b2} Black is obviously better, but will that be enough for a win? Or is there something better?

Black is very weak on his light squares. Can we use this fact to win material?

Decoy your opponent's king!
Drag out an enemy piece to promote your pawn.

Find a way to break Black's defensive construction.

Black's rooks are cooperating perfectly; e.g., 36 a7? h1+ 37 h3 f2 →. Can we break their synergy, and decoy a rook onto a mined square at the same time?

Try to calculate as far as you can the attack against Black's king. A hint: it is going for a walk to b3!

Chase the queen using decoys until she must surrender.
Double attack is the most common tactical method. It can be successfully applied by every chess piece, as they are all capable of attacking two targets at the same time.

Some other familiar tactical methods are specific cases of a double attack. Discovered attack is most effective when the moving piece also threatens something (and thus the discovered attack becomes a double attack). Likewise, clearance is also most effective when we perform it with gain of tempo.

Double attacks are often employed in punishing weak opening play. Here is an example featuring short-range pieces at work – knights and pawns in this case, although the king is also an effective double-attacker, given the right circumstances.

**Bojkov – Panbukchian**  
*Bulgarian Ch, Pleven 2005*

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 wxd5 3 c3 wxd6 4 d4 f6 5 c3 c6?!

In my opinion this move is an inaccuracy, and 5...a6 or 5...c6 is better.

6 b5 d8 7 d5 (D)

This advance is based on a double attack.

7...b4

7...xd5?? loses to the knight fork 8 wxc5 wxd5 9 wxc7+.

8 c4 c6

Black needs to challenge White's strong centre. In case of 8...e6 9 f4, simple development brings White a superior endgame: 9...a6 10 d6 cxd6 11 wxd6+ wxd6 12 wxd6 wxd6 13 wxd6 with two bishops and better prospects.

9 dxc6 wa5?

This is wrong in an underdeveloped position. For better or worse, Black had to liquidate to an endgame by 9...bxc6 10 wxd8+ wd8 11 wbd4 c5 12 a3 cxd4 13 axb4.

Note that the natural 9...wxc6? is impossible, as White replies 10 wxc6+ wxd5 11 wd5 (D).

Two forks are in the air (12 wc7+ or 12 wxc7+ in case of 11...we8), so Black needs to proceed with 11...e6, but then White is completely dominating: 12 f4 h6 13 wx6+ fxe6 14 0-0-0+ winning.

10 wd2 we4

Black was counting on this 'counterattack', but he lacks resources to back it up. 10...bxc6 was somewhat more resilient, although after 11 a3 cxb5 12 axb4 wc7 13 c5 (or 13 cxb5!?) White has a huge advantage.

11 wcxb4

Deflecting Black’s queen away from defending the c7-square. Now a fork by wc7 will be a threat.

11...wb4+ 12 d2 wb8?

The final blunder, but Black is lost in any case: 12...d8 13 a3 wxd2+ 14 wxd2+wxc2
15 0-0-0!? (15 cxb7  axb7 16 0-0-0) 15...bxc6 16  xxd2+  d7 17  e2 and White wins.
13  c7+  d8 (D)

14  d5 1-0

A double attack against the queen and the c7-square terminates Black's resistance. After 14...  xd2+ 15  xd2  xxd2 there is one more double attack, this time also a zwischenzug: 16  c7+.

A double attack: the obvious one is against the knight, and the other is against the b7-square.
13...  f6 14  c8

Black can neither protect the pawn, nor move it, since he would lose a whole rook after 14...b6 15  b7.
14...a5 15  d4!

White is not in a hurry to recapture the pawn. With the help of the threat to trap the rook, White will force Black to move his knight, thus creating another double attack.
15...e5 16  e3  b4+ 17  e2  bd7 (D) Forced.

The bishop has worked gloriously and can now collect its prey.
18  xb7  b8 19  xc6  e7 20  d1  c8 21  xd7  xd7 22  b3  c6 23  d5  e6 24  ad1  f6

Now White’s second bishop can show its worth.
25 f4! e4

Opting for a swift execution. 25...exf4 26  xf4 is yet another double attack of sorts – the bishop is hitting the b8-rook and supporting  e5#.
26  e5# (1-0)
Now let's see the **rook** in action.

![Diagram](image1)

**Bojkov – Misojčić**  
**Golubac 2008**

Black is trying to evacuate his king to the queenside. His possible plan is ...\(\text{a8}f8\), and then to transfer his king by ...\(\text{d8-c8-b7}\), which will leave him ultra-solid. Fortunately, I had seen a good idea in advance:

23 \(d4\)

This move opens the d-file for the d1-rook, and cuts off the black king's route to safety. The following blows are easy to foresee:

23...\(\text{cxd4}\)

23...\(\text{exd4}\) leaves the queens facing one another, and so overloads the black king: 24 \(\text{xf7+ d7}\) 25 \(\text{xd6}\) nets a queen.

24 \(\text{xd4 c5}\)

Now the white rooks will work in harmony on the seventh flank. The first one is sacrificed to enable the other to triumph:

25 \(\text{xf7+ xf7 26 d7+ 1-0}\)

Now it is the turn of the **queen**, which has the greatest capacity of all for creating double attacks, or indeed multiple attacks. A funny case of mutual chess blindness happened in the following game:

**Madan – G. Jones**  
**Jessie Gilbert Memorial, Coulsdon 2008**

1 e4 c5 2 \(\text{f3}\) g6 3 c3 d5 4 \(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 5 d4 \(\text{g7}\) 6 \(\text{e3}\) \(\text{cxd4}\) 7 \(\text{cxd4}\)

First Black blundered badly with...

7...\(\text{h6?? (D)}\)

But this was left unpunished by his opponent:

![Diagram](image2)

8 \(\text{c3??}\)

Alex Baburin wrote: “In the first game where this position occurred (Vasiukov-Razuvaev, Polanica Zdroj 1972) White played the correct 8 \(\text{xc1}\)!. Since then about 60% of all players who reached this position with White found that move. But many didn’t, including some GMs. Gawain Jones joined a number of GMs who got seduced by the idea ...\(\text{h6-f5}\) – Razuvaev, Ptäčnik and Degraeve. I believe that Alexander Shabalov also made that mistake.”

This story only shows how difficult some double attacks can be to spot, especially if they are performed from very far away. After all, here White does not even have to find a combination, but rather a simple double-attacking move. After 8...\(\text{a5}\) the game ended later in a draw.

**How Does it Work?**

First of all we are going to demonstrate the double attack with the help of a discovered attack.

![Diagram](image3)

**Diamant – Fier**  
**Santos 2008**
Black would very much like to remove his knight from e5, unleashing the power of his rooks – better still if the knight can also threaten something at the same time, as this will give White no time to escape. However, Black needs to be precise – only one square is correct:

\[32... \text{d}3! \ 0-1\]

Attacking both rooks, with the point that after 33 \text{xe}7 Black has a zwischenzug that wins an exchange: 33...\text{xf}2+. The importance of the d3-square for the knight is demonstrated by the line 32...\text{g}4? 33 \text{ff}1, where White keeps everything intact (the b6-bishop is eyeing the f2-square!). After the text-move, 33 \text{fe}2 is met by 33...\text{xe}1.

A closely related idea is the skewer, in which two pieces are attacked along the same line. We must be very wary of vulnerable lines such as this.

\[27... \text{xe}4! \ 0-1\]

Black clears the f-file. After 28 fxe4 he forces the white king onto this line and wins material: 28...\text{c}1+ 29 \text{f}2 \text{f}1+.

In the following diagram, vulnerable pieces on the same diagonal are exploited.

Black has ideas of winning the h2-pawn, but straightforward measures do not prove effective: 1...\text{e}5 is well met by 2 f4. Therefore, he first needs to tempt the queen closer:

\[1... \text{f}4! \ 2 \text{xf}4\]

2 \text{d}3 allows a double attack by 2...\text{h}4, while after 2 \text{f}3 \text{h}4 3 h3 \text{e}5 and ...f3 White’s kingside collapses.

\[2... \text{xf}4! \ 3 \text{xf}4 \text{e}5\]

White no longer has a reply to the skewer on this diagonal. With the loss of the vital h2-pawn, White’s position disintegrates and his king is fatally exposed.

\[4 \text{d}2\]

After 4 \text{f}3 \text{h}2+ 5 \text{h}1 \text{h}4 White cannot cover his king: 6 \text{h}3 \text{xf}2+.

\[4... \text{h}2+ 5 \text{h}1 \text{h}4\]

Preparing a decisive discovered and double attack.

\[6 g3 \text{g}3+ 7 \text{g}2 \text{h}2+ 8 \text{f}3 \text{e}5+ 0-1\]

White did not wait to see the final tactic, which is a skewer: 9 \text{e}2 \text{g}4+ 10 \text{e}3 \text{h}6+.

Here is an example where Black profited from the unfortunate locations of a queen and a bishop.
Often we need to work to create a double attack. Here we see a decoy used for this purpose:

30 e5+

With this multi-purpose move, White opens a diagonal for his bishop and decoys his opponent’s king into a series of decisive blows, two of them based on double attack.

30...d7 (D)

30...xe5? walks into a fork after an exchange of bishops: 31 xb3 cxb3 32 d3+.

30...c7 defends the b7-knight but steps into a pin, and White simply captures by 31 xb3.

The game continuation allows a move that interferes with the black rooks’ defence of one another, thus leaving the f2-rook and the b7-knight both under attack:

31 f3 xb2 32 xb7

White won material and later converted his extra knight into a full point.

In the next example, two decoy ideas are used to set up a decisive double attack:

White’s knights are on the same line as the black queen, but for the moment the e3-knight is firmly defended by the white queen. The fact that Black has a light-squared bishop and White is holding on the dark squares is not in my favour. So first I decoy his knight onto a light square:

32 d5 33 xd5

And then the king:

33 e2+ 0-1

34 g2 xg2 35 g2 xd5+.

A double attack may be prepared by removing a vital defensive piece.

Here White has an excellent bishop, which suggests the idea of a destructive sacrifice:

27 xc6! 28 xc6

Black has not only deflected the rook from covering the e4-square, but also decoyed it to a vulnerable position.
28...\textit{e}4 0-1
This is in fact a triple attack: against the king (29...\textit{x}g2#), against the rook, and against the queen (29...\textit{e}e2+). No wonder that White decided he had seen enough.

Seeking out overloaded pieces can help us find sore points in the enemy’s camp, and allow us to target several pieces with double attacks.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Filipowicz – Silva}
\textbf{Varna Olympiad 1962}
\end{center}

After 25 \textit{c}c7! 1-0 it becomes clear that the black queen had too many duties. Thanks to the double attack on the seventh rank White deflects it away from the knight. After 25...\textit{xc}7 26 \textit{xe}4 White has another double attack, this time against the rook and the king (27 \textit{wh}7+ and 28 \textit{wh}8# is the second crucial threat).

In the following example both players delivered double attacks until an endgame was reached.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Grishchuk – Volokitin}
\textbf{Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2007}
\end{center}

16 \textit{xd}5 \textit{f}f4+
Black was counting on this double attack to solve his problems.

17 \textit{b}b1 \textit{xa}4
Another double attack, 17...\textit{e}e3, was better although even here White retains the better chances: 18 \textit{xa}8 \textit{de}e4 20 \textit{f}xe4 \textit{f}f2 21 \textit{g}g1 \textit{xe}4 22 \textit{d}d3 \textit{d}d7 23 \textit{e}e1 \textit{xe}4 24 \textit{xe}4 \pm. In the inevitable rook endgame, the white pawns should be faster.

18 \textit{xa}8 \textit{e}e3 19 \textit{d}d3?!
White is ready to part with his superfluous material in order to reach a technically winning endgame.

19...\textit{f}f5 20 \textit{xa}6
And not 20 \textit{b}7?? \textit{xd}3 21 cxd3 \textit{wc}2+ 22 \textit{a}a2 \textit{xd}1 --.

20...\textit{xa}6 21 \textit{xa}6 \textit{xc}2+ 22 \textit{c}c1 \textit{xd}1 (D)

For the moment it looks like Black has achieved a material advantage, but the next move clears the smoke:

23 \textit{e}e1! \textit{xf}3
After 23...\textit{e}e8 24 \textit{d}d2 White regains material with interest.

24 \textit{xf}3 \textit{xf}5 25 \textit{e}e5
White has a good \textit{f}+\textit{f} tandem.

25...\textit{d}d4 26 \textit{c}c4 \textit{e}e6
26...\textit{xf}3 27 \textit{f}f5 \textit{d}d4 (27...\textit{xh}2? 28 \textit{e}e2 traps the knight in the corner) 28 \textit{xc}5 \pm.

27 a4 \textit{a}a8 28 b3 \textit{a}a5 29 \textit{b}b2 \textit{f}f8 30 \textit{xe}6 \textit{fxe}6 31 \textit{xe}6
White wins a pawn and soon the game.

31...\textit{c}c4 32 \textit{e}e4 \textit{xb}3 33 \textit{xb}3 \textit{h}h5 34 h4 \textit{f}f5 35 \textit{f}f4 \textit{h}h5 36 \textit{b}b4 \textit{xc}4 37 a5 \textit{h}h1 38 a6 \textit{f}f7 39 \textit{a}a5 \textit{d}d1 40 a7 \textit{d}d8 41 \textit{b}b4 \textit{a}a8 42 \textit{a}a6 \textit{e}e6 43 \textit{b}b5 \textit{f}f8 44 f5+ \textit{d}d7 45 \textit{b}b7+ 1-0
Exercises

1

White has just freed himself from a pin by 12 \textit{d}4-b3. This was a good idea, wasn’t it?

2

White is ahead on material, but the position of his king is worrying.

3

You need to spot an important detail.

4

Profit from Black’s open lines.

5

White is very active, but his opponent wants to finish his development.

6

Press home your passed pawn.
An attack does not always need to be on the anks.

Decoy White’s king to reap a rich harvest.
The knight is considered to be the least powerful piece in chess (besides the pawn, of course). As the great world champion Jose Raul Capablanca taught us, the other minor piece, the bishop, is better in 90% of cases. However, due to its specific qualities the knight is a tremendously dangerous piece. It is nimble and its jumps can be quite shocking. That is why a double attack by a knight is usually distinguished from other double attacks and called a fork.

A single knight may cause incredible damage in the right circumstances:

First White decoys his opponent’s pieces into forks:

1 \text{\textit{W}}f5+!! \text{\textit{B}}xf5 2 \text{\textit{W}}e7+!! \text{\textit{B}}xe7 (D)

White is now a queen and two rooks down – a deficit of approximately 19 ‘pawns’. His only remaining piece is a knight. But a brave one...

3 \text{\textit{W}}e3+ \text{\textit{B}}f6 4 \text{\textit{W}}xd5+ \text{\textit{B}}f5 5 \text{\textit{W}}xe7+ \text{\textit{B}}f6 6 \text{\textit{W}}xg8+ (D)

The knight has managed to remove most of Black’s army. Now it is the king’s turn to suffer:

6...\text{\textit{W}}f5 7 \text{\textit{W}}e7+ \text{\textit{B}}f6 8 \text{\textit{W}}d5+ \text{\textit{B}}f5 9 g4#

Our opponent will not be very eager to walk into a fork, so we may need to force it. Deflection and decoy are very common methods:

21 \text{\textit{W}}xd5 cxd5

White seems to be in an unpleasant pin, but he has fully appreciated the power of his horse.
22 \text{\textit{\textgreek{n}xc7}}\!\\
Deflection from the vital f6-square.\\
22...\text{\textit{\textgreek{n}xc7}?}\\
Black had to settle for 22...\text{\textit{\textgreek{f}xe4}} 23 \text{\textit{\textgreek{w}xb7}}\\
with some chances for a draw.\\
23 \text{\textit{\textgreek{f}6+}} \text{\textit{\textgreek{h}8}} 24 \text{\textit{\textgreek{xe}8+}} 1-0\\
Black realized what was coming after the forced 24...\text{\textit{\textgreek{xe}8}} (D):\\
\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board1.png}
\end{center}

25 \text{\textit{\textgreek{g}7+!!}} decoys the king to g7, after which the knight picks up a rook and a queen.\\
Deflection is especially effective in conjunction with decoy.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board2.png}
\end{center}

Pashikian – Ozturk\\
\textit{Istanbul 2007}

24 \text{\textit{\textgreek{w}c7+!!}} 1-0\\
It suddenly becomes clear that Black’s queen is overloaded.

A far-advanced pawn may also be bait for a piece to be forked (see following diagram):\\
The passed pawn on b3 is well blockaded ‘\textit{à la} Nimzowitsch’ with a knight. However, Black can force a change of guard:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board3.png}
\end{center}

Semionova – Alexandrova\\
\textit{Alushta (Women’s Zonal) 1999}

53...\text{\textit{\textgreek{xb}2!}} 54 \text{\textit{\textgreek{xb}2 \textit{\textgreek{c}4}}}\\
The knight will usher the b-pawn through to promotion. Because of the possible fork on d2, the pawn is invulnerable.\\
55 \text{\textit{\textgreek{e}2}} b2 56 \text{\textit{\textgreek{e}1}} b1\text{\textit{\textgreek{w}}} 57 \text{\textit{\textgreek{xb}1 \textit{\textgreek{d}2+}}} 58\\
\text{\textit{\textgreek{g}4}} \text{\textit{\textgreek{xb}1}} 59 \text{\textit{\textgreek{g}5 \textit{\textgreek{d}2}}} 60 \text{\textit{\textgreek{h}6 \textit{\textgreek{e}4}}} 61 g4\\
\text{\textit{\textgreek{f}2}} 62 \text{\textit{\textgreek{h}7 \textit{\textgreek{x}3}}} 63 f5 g5 64 \text{\textit{\textgreek{g}7 \textit{\textgreek{f}2}}} 65\\
\text{\textit{\textgreek{h}6 \textit{\textgreek{x}4+}}} 0-1\\
One last fork before the curtain falls.

A dominant position of a rook and knight duo can even overpower a queen, as in the following group of diagrams:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board4.png}
\end{center}

Raetsky – Avrukh\\
\textit{Biel 1996}

18...\text{\textit{\textgreek{c}1!!}} 0-1\\
The next diagram features a similar motif, with the knight executing the fork on a slightly different square. In the second diagram overleaf, the decoy is prefaced by an exchange sacrifice.
In this position it looks like Black is in trouble, but the tricky knight decides the game by carrying out the decoy on a totally unexpected square.

44...\(\texttt{xf}2+!\) 45 \(\texttt{xf}2 \texttt{yh}1+!!\) 0-1

The forking threat may be useful in attacking weak points.

Black’s troops are awkwardly placed. In this case forking will give White an option to attack on \texttt{c}7 for free.

21 \(\texttt{b}6!\) \(\texttt{yxh}3\)

21...\(\texttt{cxb}6\) 22 \(\texttt{xb}6\) nets at least a pawn for White.

22 \(\texttt{xc}7\)

Another fork.

22...\(\texttt{xg}2\) 23 \(\texttt{gxg}2\) 1-0

We should also examine the fork as a defensive method:

\textbf{Felgaer – Peralta}
\textit{Argentine Ch, La Plata 2008}

\textbf{E. Pähtz – Stefanova}
\textit{Reykjavik 2008}
Elisabeth Pähtz could have saved a half-point here, if she had made the most of her tricky knight.

67...\texttt{a}a1?  
She had to exchange queens first, and advance her passed pawn as far as possible: 67 \texttt{W}xc2+ \texttt{W}xc2 68 \texttt{g}6 \texttt{Q}e4 69 \texttt{g}7 \texttt{Q}f6 and now 70 \texttt{Q}g4! is an excellent multi-purpose manoeuvre — the knight is attacking the pawn, deflecting the knight, and in fact is still controlling the f1-square due to the fork on e3! After 70...\texttt{Q}xg4 71 \texttt{g}8\texttt{W} \texttt{W}f1\texttt{W} 72 \texttt{W}c8+ \texttt{Q}d2 White has the choice between a simple draw with 73 \texttt{W}xg4 or stalemate after 73 \texttt{W}c2+ \texttt{W}xc2.

67...\texttt{W}c6 68 \texttt{K}f1 \texttt{Q}xf1 69 \texttt{W}xf2 \texttt{W}c1+ 70 \texttt{Q}a2 \texttt{Q}c4+ 71 \texttt{Q}a1 \texttt{Q}e3 72 \texttt{g}6 \texttt{Q}c2+ 73 \texttt{Q}b2 \texttt{W}b3+ 74 \texttt{Q}c1 \texttt{Q}xa3+ 0-1

Chess-players are often advised not to play for traps. And it is a good piece of advice in those cases where the move that lays the trap does not have any other useful purpose. But if you have a chance to set a trap while furthering your constructive ideas in the position, you should not hesitate to do so. Even if the chances that your opponent will fall into it are small, you are losing nothing.

16...\texttt{Q}e8!  
Correct! To his credit, my experienced opponent sensed or most probably saw the danger: 16...\texttt{Q}f8? 17 \texttt{W}h5 \texttt{h}6 18 \texttt{W}xe6! \texttt{fxe}6 19 \texttt{W}f7+ \texttt{Q}h8 20 \texttt{W}xe8+! \texttt{Q}xe8 21 \texttt{Q}f7+ ---. My trap did not bring immediate victory, but I benefited from the fact that Black’s rook abandoned the open c-file. I kept a slight edge and went on to win fairly quickly after some errors by my opponent:

17 \texttt{W}d3 \texttt{g}6 18 \texttt{W}b5 \texttt{Q}c6?! 19 \texttt{Q}ad1 \texttt{Q}e7 20 \texttt{W}c5 \texttt{W}d8?! 21 \texttt{Q}e3 \texttt{Q}e8 22 \texttt{Q}f3 \texttt{f}6 23 \texttt{Q}d1 \texttt{Q}f7? 24 \texttt{Q}b5 1-0

Nisipeanu discovered that Black missed a wonderful and unexpected knight fork in the next position:

\texttt{W}d1+!!

Transposing with 1...\texttt{c}2+ 2 \texttt{Q}c1 \texttt{W}d1+! also works.

2 \texttt{Q}xd1 \texttt{c}2+ 3 \texttt{Q}c1 \texttt{Q}xb2+! 4 \texttt{Q}xb2

4 \texttt{Q}d2 \texttt{c}1\texttt{W}+ 5 \texttt{Q}xc1 \texttt{Q}xc1+ 6 \texttt{Q}e2 \texttt{Q}xe3 7 \texttt{Q}xc8 \texttt{Q}xf4 8 \texttt{gx}f4 \texttt{a}5 is also winning for Black.

Now rather than 4...\texttt{cxd}1\texttt{W} Black plays:

4...\texttt{cxd}1\texttt{Q}+!! 5 \texttt{Q}b3 \texttt{Q}xe3 and when the smoke clears, we see that Black is winning: 6 \texttt{Q}xc8 \texttt{a}5 7 \texttt{Q}a4 \texttt{Q}e7 8 \texttt{Q}a6 (8 \texttt{Q}b7 \texttt{Q}f1 +-) 8...\texttt{Q}d6 9 \texttt{Q}xa5 \texttt{Q}b8 10 \texttt{Q}b5 (10 \texttt{Q}a4 \texttt{Q}g4 11 \texttt{Q}h4 \texttt{Q}f2 +-) 10...\texttt{Q}a8+ 11 \texttt{Q}xb4 \texttt{Q}xa2 12 \texttt{Q}a4 \texttt{Q}e5 13 \texttt{Q}c6 \texttt{Q}f1 +-

Unfortunately for Black, he did not appreciate the greatness of the underpromotion and...
after 1...\textit{c}6? 2 \textit{xe}8 \textit{xe}8 3 \textit{d}5 \textit{e}4 4 \textit{b}3 \textit{b}5 5 \textit{d}1 the game became unclear.

Here is a sophisticated case of a fork:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[black, ultra thick] (0,0) rectangle (2,2);
\filldraw[black] (1,1) circle (0.1cm);
\filldraw[black] (1,0) circle (0.1cm);
\filldraw[black] (1,2) circle (0.1cm);
\filldraw[black] (2,1) circle (0.1cm);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

A. Gonzalez Perez – Placencia  
Santa Clara 2003

Like any other combination, a knight fork may need to be carefully prepared. We have seen various ways of achieving it, and here is one more, in which the attacker first sacrifices a bishop, then a rook, and finally a queen in order to bring his knight to the juicy squares around the enemy king and start the harvest.

15 \textit{h}6!!

This sacrifice has the modest purpose of gaining a tempo. In the game White played the ineffective 15 \textit{g}5+? and went on to draw.

15...\textit{h}6 16 \textit{g}5+ \textit{g}7 17 \textit{xf}7+

Decoy.

17...\textit{xf}7 18 \textit{h}6+!! (D)

Another decoy.

18...\textit{g}8

No, thank you very much (18...\textit{x}6 19 \textit{xf}7+ \textit{g}7 20 \textit{xd}8 +–).

19 \textit{h}8+!!

The gift must nevertheless be accepted.

19...\textit{x}h8 20 \textit{xf}7+ \textit{g}8 21 \textit{xd}8

White emerges two pawns up. His knight is in danger, but with a few subtle moves and a pawn he manages to retreat it back home.

21...\textit{b}8 22 \textit{f}1 \textit{xb}2 23 \textit{f}2! \textit{a}5 24 \textit{h}3 \textit{a}6 25 \textit{e}6 \textit{h}8 26 \textit{e}5 \textit{dxe}5 27 \textit{xc}5 \textit{c}8 28 \textit{e}2

White has a winning position.

Exercises

1

1

B

Chop off a pawn.

2

2

W

White has very active pieces. Make use of them.
Does White need to retreat the knight? Nigel Short missed a winning move here. Can you find it?

Do you recognize the pattern? Which is true? 49...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{D}f3+} is:
A) good for Black and gives him winning chances.
B) a blunder and loses the game.

Bring your pieces into the attack and win material.

Use as many forces as you can to crack the f7-square.
A discovered attack occurs when a piece moves, unmasking an attack from a piece that stands behind it. Obviously the attacking piece must be a long-range line-moving piece (bishop, rook or queen).

When the discovered attack is against the king, this is a special case that is called a discovered check. If the piece that moves also gives check, then we have a double check – a very dangerous situation for the king since his only defence in that case is to flee as it is impossible to block both checks simultaneously or to capture both checking pieces.

A famous attacking mechanism called the see-saw (or the windmill) is based on repeated discovered checks. These make it possible to capture several pieces because the opponent is busy moving his king out of check.

Gelashvili – Gagunashvili
Batumi 2001

1 e4 c5 2 b3 d6 3 Bb2 f6 4 Bb5+ d7 5 Bxd7+ Bxd7 6 d3 e5 7 Bxe2 d5 8 exd5 Bd5 9 0-0 e7 10 Bc3 Bxc3 11 Bxc3 0-0 12 Bd5 Bxd6 13 Bf3 Bf3 14 Bae1 Bd6 15 g3 Bb8 16 Bg4 Bg6 17 Bc4 Bc6 (D)

18 f4!
Black’s opening play has been none too impressive, as White has been able to occupy excellent positions with his pieces. He now opens a file for his second rook, the only piece that was not yet playing an active role. With all his troops involved in the attack, it is no wonder that Black’s position soon collapses.

18...exf4 19 Bxf4 Bg4? (D)

A blunder in a bad position. Curiously the rook is vulnerable on g4.

20 Bxe6!!
The first discovered attack. Both Black’s rook and queen are hanging.

20...Bh4!
Black finds a clever way to prolong the struggle. 20...Bxc4 21 Bxd8 Bxc2 22 Bb8+ Bf8 23 Bxf7 would lead to immediate mate.

21 Bxf7!! (D)

White is breaking in. He now opens all the lines towards the black king and sets up a variety of discovered attacks.
21...\texttt{xc}4

In case of 21...\texttt{xf}7 White uses the double check idea to decoy Black's king out into the open. You have already seen several examples of the type of king-hunt that then ensues: 22 \texttt{\texttt{d}8++ \texttt{g}6 (22...\texttt{f}8 23 \texttt{f}7#) 23 \texttt{f}7++ \texttt{h}6 24 \texttt{e}6+ \texttt{g}6 25 \texttt{x}g7+ (25 \texttt{x}g6+ also leads to forced mate after 25...\texttt{x}g6 26 \texttt{x}g7+ \texttt{h}5 27 \texttt{h}7++ \texttt{g}4 28 \texttt{x}h4++ \texttt{f}5 29 \texttt{h}3+ \texttt{g}5 30 \texttt{e}6) 25...\texttt{h}5 26 \texttt{f}5+ \texttt{g}5 (26...\texttt{g}5 27 \texttt{h}6#) 27 \texttt{h}3++ \texttt{h}4 28 \texttt{x}h4#.

A counterattack by 21...\texttt{x}g3+ does not suffice since after 22 \texttt{hx}g3 \texttt{x}g3+ 23 \texttt{f}1 Black needs to step into a double check again: 23...\texttt{xf}7 (23...\texttt{h}3+ 24 \texttt{e}2 \texttt{h}5+ 25 \texttt{f}3 leaves White a rook ahead) 24 \texttt{d}8++ and after this White's task is pure pleasure: 24...\texttt{g}6 25 \texttt{f}7+ \texttt{g}5 (25...\texttt{h}6 26 \texttt{c}1+ g5 27 \texttt{e}6#) 26 \texttt{d}6+ \texttt{h}4 27 \texttt{e}4+ and mate is coming soon.

21...\texttt{x}g3 also gives White time to wrap up the game in style: 22 \texttt{x}g7+ \texttt{x}g7 (22...\texttt{h}8 leads to another double check and then mate: 23 \texttt{g}8++ \texttt{x}g8 24 \texttt{d}8+ \texttt{xc}4 25 \texttt{e}8#) 23 \texttt{d}8++ \texttt{f}8 (23...\texttt{xc}4 24 \texttt{e}8#) 24 \texttt{g}7+ \texttt{x}g7 25 \texttt{f}7+ \texttt{h}6 26 \texttt{e}6+ and White wins. 22 \texttt{x}g7+ \texttt{h}8 23 \texttt{b}xc4 (D)

White is not in a hurry. He is creating a see-saw against which Black is helpless.

23...\texttt{h}3 24 \texttt{g}5+ \texttt{d}4

Or 24...\texttt{e}5 25 \texttt{exe}5 \texttt{h}6 26 \texttt{xc}5+ \texttt{h}7 27 \texttt{g}7+ \texttt{h}8 and White can set the see-saw in motion: 28 \texttt{xb}7+ \texttt{g}8 29 \texttt{g}7+ \texttt{h}8 30 \texttt{xc}6 and Black is totally helpless.

25 \texttt{d}x\texttt{d}4 \texttt{e}5

25...\texttt{xd}4 26 \texttt{x}d4+ \texttt{e}5 27 \texttt{exe}5#.

26 \texttt{exe}5 \texttt{h}6 (D)

Now the stage is set for the see-saw.

27 \texttt{e}7 \texttt{hx}g5 28 \texttt{d}6+ \texttt{g}8 29 \texttt{g}7+ 1-0

The mechanism is working, and Black resigned rather than see all his pieces disappear after 29...\texttt{h}8 30 \texttt{xb}7+ \texttt{g}8 31 \texttt{g}7+ \texttt{h}8 32 \texttt{xa}7+ \texttt{g}8 33 \texttt{xa}8+ \texttt{f}7 34 \texttt{x}g5+.

Various features can help us detect when a discovered attack is effective:

1) The piece that we attack is undefended.
2) Our attacking piece is supported by our pieces.
3) The moving piece also attacks something (thus a discovered attack becomes a double attack).

Here all three features apply.

22...\texttt{e}3! 0-1

White threw in the towel because:

1) White's queen is under attack and is undefended.
2) Black's queen supported by both the rook and the pawn.
3) The knight that has moved to e3 attacks a rook, and wins it thanks to a zwischenzug: 23 \texttt{xe}6 \texttt{x}f1+ 24 \texttt{xf}1 \texttt{xe}6.
A COURSE IN CHESS TACTICS

Hint 2 does not matter if the attacked piece is of higher value:

36 ♕xf5! ♗e8

The discovered piece is not protected, but if 36...♗xd2 the moved knight wins a whole queen with 37 ♕e7+.

37 ♖xf6 ♙xd2 38 ♚g7# (1-0)

Various tactical methods can help us successfully apply the double attack.

White has a mechanism for a discovered attack (such a mechanism is known as a ‘battery’), namely the c1-rook and the c5-knight. But if he continues with 25 ♏xe6+ to win the knight on c7, the latter can recapture on e6 and thus sidestep the attack. White needs more stable prey on c7. A decoy will help prepare the attack:

25 ♖xc7! 1-0

25...♗xc7 26 ♏xe6+ fxe6 27 ♘xc7+.

Deflection can also lay the groundwork for a discovered attack:

At first glance it is hard to foresee how White can make good use of a discovered attack. However, he finds a way to deflect the d6-pawn and open the d-file. The idea of a knight fork adds the final ingredient to the combination.

17 ♕e5! ♕xe5

17...dxe5 18 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 19 ♖xd7; 17...♗e8 18 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 19 ♕xc6 ♖xc6 20 ♕xe7+.

18 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 19 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 20 ♕d4 ♖xe4 (D)

We have already seen some examples in which a battery (a mechanism for a discovered attack) already existed and the attacker was simply trying to find the best way to make use of it. Now we shall see how such a mechanism can be created in the cut-and-thrust of a sharp
battle, without giving the opponent any respite to escape.

First White decoys Black’s king into a check.

15 $\text{Bxd6}\!\!\!\!$ $\text{Qg4}$

The basic idea of the combination becomes clear after 15...$\text{Bxd6} 16\text{Qd2+}$ (building the battery of queen on d2 and c3-knight) 16...$\text{Qe6}$ and exploiting it after 17 $\text{Qg5+}$ as the king has to step onto a mined square: 17...$\text{Qe7} 18\text{Qd5+}$ and White wins the queen.

16 $\text{Qg5+}$
White insists.

16...$\text{Qxd6}$
After 16...$\text{Qe8}$ White can sacrifice his queen to hunt down the enemy king: 17 $\text{Qxd8+} \text{Qf7} 19\text{Qh8+} \text{Qxh8} 20\text{Qxg5+} \text{Qf6} 21\text{h4 h6 22Qh7! hxg5 23Qd6+}\text{Qe6 24Qd5#}$. 17 $\text{Qd2+} (D)$

17 $\text{Qe6}$
17...$\text{Qc6} 18\text{Qd5+}\text{Qc7} 19\text{Qb5+}$ and Black has to surrender his queen in any case.

Black decided to cut short his agony. 18...$\text{Qe7} 19\text{Qd5#}$.

19 $\text{Qd5#}$ (1-0)

When you construct a mechanism for a discovered attack and your opponent is tied up and can hardly move, always try to find the best way to collect your bonuses.

White creates the battery with a rook sacrifice:

1 $\text{Bxh6+! gxh6 2 Bxh6 Qe6}$

The alternative defence 2...f6 also fails after the calm 3 $\text{e4!}$, which takes control over the vital h7-square and thus prevents Black’s queen from covering its king: 3...$\text{Qd7} 4\text{Qf5} (4\text{Qg5+}, as given by Glek, wins as well) 4...$\text{Qe8} 5\text{Qg6} \text{Qd7} 6\text{Qg5+}\text{Qg8} 7\text{Qxf6}$ and Black is getting mated.

Now care is needed:

3 $\text{Qe4!}$
White is in no hurry. Black’s king can’t go anywhere, and the discovered check can wait until more reserves have been brought up, and it will be more effective.

3...$\text{Qe7} 3...\text{f5} 4\text{Qxf5 Qe8} 5\text{Qg6} \text{Qd7} 6\text{Qg5+}\text{Qg7} 7\text{Qh7+}\text{Qf8} 8\text{Qh8#}$. 4 $\text{Qg5+}$

White has a quicker forced mate by 4 $\text{Qf8+}\text{Qg8} 5\text{Qxe7}\text{Qxe7} 6\text{Qh7+}\text{Qf8} 7\text{Qh8#}$.

4...$\text{Qg7} 5\text{Qxe7}$
5 $\text{Qh7+}\text{Qf8} 6\text{Qf5 +}$. 5...$\text{Qxe7}$
5...$\text{f5} 6\text{Qxf5}\text{Qxe7} 7\text{Qg6+}\text{Qf8} 8\text{Qxc8 +}$. 6 $\text{Qh7+}!\text{Qf6}$
A COURSE IN CHESS TACTICS

6...\texttt{xf8} 7 \texttt{h8\#}.  
7 \texttt{h6\#} (1-0)

When the attacker controls all the vital lines, material tends to be a secondary factor:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node at (0,0) {B};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Black consistently clears the g-file and the long diagonal.
1...\texttt{xg2}+!! 2 \texttt{xg2} \texttt{g8+} 3 \texttt{h1}
3 \texttt{h3} \texttt{c8} \texttt{--}.
3...\texttt{e3+} 4 \texttt{f3}
Now Black creates a deadly mating mechanism based on a discovered check:
4...\texttt{g2+!!} 0-1
Because of 5 \texttt{xg2} \texttt{xg2}+ 6 \texttt{g1} \texttt{f3+} 7 \\
\texttt{g4} \texttt{xg4\#}.

Exercises

\begin{itemize}
\item 1
White already has a battery set up, so you need only find the best way to use it.
\item 4
Everything is forced, isn’t it?
\end{itemize}
White is ready to start a decisive attack.

White loses his queen and the game. Or does?

Discover a discovered attack.

White will promote thanks to a discovered attack.
In 1958 at the Olympiad in Munich, young Mikhail Tal was approached by the world champion Mikhail Botvinnik. “Why did you sacrifice a pawn?” asked the champion. The reply: “It was getting in my way.”

Sometimes one of our pieces is standing in the way of a more important one. But spending time moving the poorly-placed piece might give the opponent time to organize his defences. That is why we may instead seek to sacrifice the piece (or a pawn) to clear an important line or square without losing any time — or, even better, with a gain of time.

Nestorović – Popchev
Stara Pazova 2008

1 e4 g6 2 d4 g7 3 c3 c6 4 e3 d5!? 5 f3 dxe4 6 xe4 h6?! 7 d5! b4 8 wd2!
A double attack.

8...a5 9 a3?
Black has not played the opening well, and White could have taken full advantage by 9 xf6 xh6 10 xh6 xc2+ 11 d2; e.g., 11...f5 12 c4 xe4 13 g7 f8 14 g5 ± with the point that 14...xd5 15 xc2! xe4? loses to 16 ad1 ±.

9...xd5! 10 axb4
10 0-0-0? fails to 10...xb2+ 11 xb2 xa2+ 12 c3 xa3+, etc.

10...xe4 11 d3 e6 12 0-0-0?
This is also a double attack. White is threatening 13 b5+, followed by mate on d8, so the h6-knight is lost. However tempting this idea may be, it is wrong. Correct is 12 0-0 xf5 13 xf5 xf5 14 d4, with approximate equality.

12...0-0! 13 xh6 (D)

13...xb4!
Line clearance. Black has given up a piece, but creates an attack on the open a-file.

14 e3
Anything else loses (for example, 14 xb4? xh6+). The queen must leave the d2-square while protecting the bishop.

W

14...c3!
Obstruction! This prevents the escape of the white king by 15 d2.

15 bxc3 bxc3 (D)

Mate looks inevitable now. But White had foreseen the idea:

16 a6!
The best defence: White employs clearance and obstruction for defensive purposes. Now the queen can remove the vital c3-pawn.

16...xe3+!
Not 16...xa6?? 17 xc3.

17 xe3?!
More resilient was 17 fxe3 xa6 18 b1 e8! (Black is at most slightly better after 18...b6+ 19 c1 e6 20 xf8 a2 21 xd2 cxd2+ 22 xd2 xf8), as analysed by Golu­bev:
a) 19 \( \text{d}5 \) is met by 19...\( \text{d}7! \), preventing White's idea of 20 \( \text{b}5 \) and 21 \( \text{c}1 \). After 20 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{ea}8 \) 21 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 22 \( \text{hd}1 \) \( \text{x}d5 \) 23 \( \text{x}d5 \) \( \text{d}6!! \) White is basically lost.

b) Also not helpful is 19 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 20 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{ea}8 \) followed by ...\( \text{c}5-\text{c}4 \).

c) 19 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}5! \) 20 \( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{ea}8 \) 21 \( \text{e}1 \) (or 21 \( \text{g}1 \)) and after the forced sequence 21...\( \text{a}1+22 \text{b}2 \) \( \text{a}2+23 \text{b}3 \) \( \text{e}6+24 \text{b}4 \) \( \text{a}4+25 \text{c}5 \) \( \text{a}5+26 \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}5+27 \text{e}4 \) (even worse for White is 27 \( \text{c}4 \), after which Black may continue 27...\( \text{d}6+28 \text{b}4 \) \( \text{b}6+29 \text{c}5 \) \( \text{a}4 \) 30 \( \text{e}5 \) \( f6 \)) 27...\( \text{a}4+28 \text{d}4 \) \( c5 \) Black emerges with two extra pawns.

17...\( \text{xa}6 \) (D)

18 \( \text{b}1 \)

It looks like Black's attack has run out of steam. White has exchanged most of the pieces, including the queens, and now the white king has covered his main weakness. However...

18...\( \text{h}3! \) (D) →

The third clearance of a line. Note that Black does it with the gain of a tempo! Now 19...\( \text{fa}8 \) is the main threat, but the double attack by 19...\( \text{xg}2 \) must also be taken into account.

19 \( \text{d}4 \)

Or 19 \( \text{g}xh3 \) \( \text{fa}8 \) 20 \( \text{d}8+ \) (deflection) 20...\( \text{xd}8 \) 21 \( \text{d}4 \) \( c5 \) 22 \( \text{b}3 \) \( c4 \) with a decisive doubling of the rooks on the a-file.

19...\( \text{b}6+ \) 20 \( \text{b}3 \) (D)

Now comes the last clearance — this time of a diagonal.

20...\( \text{xb}3+!! \) 21 \( \text{xb}3 \) \( \text{f}5+ \) 22 \( \text{c}1 \)

22 \( \text{a}2 \) \( \text{a}8+ \) 23 \( \text{a}7 \) \( \text{xa}7\#. \)

22...\( \text{a}8 \) 0-1

After 23 \( \text{d}8+ \) \( \text{xd}8 \) the black rook will return to \( a8 \).

In the following friendly blitz game I managed to perform all the ideas of a clearance:

**Bojkov — Ermenkov**

**Sofia (blitz) 2002**

1 \( e4 \) \( c5 \) 2 \( \text{f}3 \) \( d6 \) 3 \( \text{b}5+ \) \( \text{c}6 \) 4 0-0 \( \text{d}7 \) 5 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 6 \( c3 \) \( a6 \) 7 \( \text{f}1 \) \( g4 \) 8 \( d4 \) \( exd4 \) 9 \( cxd4 \)

10 \( e5 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 11 \( h3 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 12 \( \text{gx}f3 \) \( e6 \) 13 \( \text{c}3 \)

14 \( f4 \) \( g6 \) 15 \( \text{h}1 \) 0-0 (D)

Objectively, White's position is dubious. Seeking counterplay, I clear the diagonal for
my dark-squared bishop and establish a base near his king.

16 f5 gxf5 17 h6 e8? (D)
17...h8! is a good exchange sacrifice; after 18 xf8 xf8 White's pawns are rather weak.

18 xa6!
Clearing a line for my rook, while also grabbing a pawn, and threatening to take a second one with yet another double attack.

18...xa6 19 g1+ h8
Before the final blow I improve the position of the bishop.

20 g7+ g8
21 f6+ f8 (D)

And finally comes a cleaning of a square for my most powerful piece.

22 g8+ 1-0
22 xg8 23 g1+ f8 24 g7#.

Usually a clearance aims to make way for our major pieces. This is logical, since their power is more significant, and more likely to be sufficient to justify a material sacrifice.

In the following diagram, the bishop on f4 is not only hindering the queen's road to f7, but it prevents the white rook from taking part in the attack. So the bishop must vacate its post, preferably with tempo!

23 c7!
This is not only clearance, but also a decoy. If our logical analysis enables us to spot this move, then we will surely foresee the next two.

23...xc7 24 xf7+ (D)

The first acquisition.

24...h8 25 h4 1-0

The second, and decisive achievement – the rook is free to attack. Now we can fully appreciate the importance of 23 c7 – Black lacks the 25 xf6/f8 resource. After 25 h4 Black can only move the h-pawn:

a) 25...h5 26 xg6 (practical advice: when you calculated the position in advance, it would be enough to stop your calculations here: for the piece White wins three pawns and creates a strong attack) 26...f8 27 xh5+ g8 and now comes another clearance – of a diagonal:

28 d6 wd7 29 c4+

b) 25...h6 26 xh6+. This time the deflection assists the queen: 26...xh6 27 wh7#.
In the next example, we see a key diagonal being cleared, and this has a decisive impact on the position:

**Arencibia – Zapata**  
*Merida 2007*

Most of White’s pieces are pointing at his opponent’s king. However, he still needs to bring up some reinforcements before he can successfully break through. Two pieces are not involved into the assault, and we must take care of them.

20 **Qxd5!**

Clearing the long diagonal for the bishop. The fact that White will lose the knight is not that important since he will gain a great deal of attacking power.

20...**Qxd5** 21 **Qxf6** **Qxf6** 22 **Wxf5** **g6** (D)

Sometimes it is worth a large material sacrifice just to clear a single square. If your opponent’s king is obstructed by his own pieces, you must take a closer look at your pieces – any check might possibly be mate. Knights can be especially effective in such situations.

**Gongora – Blanco**  
*Cuba 2004*

White’s knight could potentially deliver mate from two squares: d8 and g5. However, d8 is well protected by the rook, and g5 is occupied by his queen. But this square can be cleared with gain of tempo:

1 **g6+!! e7**

1...hxg6 2 **g5#**.

2 **f7+!! 1-0**

Here is an example with multiple clearance sacrifices:

**Corrales – Ferragut**  
*Cuba 2004*

White first of all clears a square for his queen:

23 **Wxf6+ 1-0**

Black resigned in view of the line-clearances that will inevitably come: 23...**g8** 24 **xg6** fxg6 25 **xg6+ h7** 26 **xh6+ g8** 27 **h8#** or 23...**h7** 24 **xg6+ fxg6** 25 **xg6+ h8** 26 **xh6+ h7** 27 **xf8+ xf8** 28 **xf8+ g8** 29 **f6+ g7** 30 **xg7#**.
1 \text{ hxh7+! gxh7 2 \text{ h5+ g7}}

But now he parts with his most powerful piece:

3 \text{ h6+!! hxh6 4 f5+}

The point is that with this move he manages to open a diagonal for his bishop, the fourth rank for his rook, and last, but not least, the modest pawn on f5 will play a decisive part in the black king's execution.

4...\text{ g5}

White also wins after 4...\text{ g7 5 f6+ f8 6 h6+ g7 7 fxg7+ or} 4...\text{ h7 5 h4+ g7 6 h6++}. 

5 \text{ h4+ g7 6 f6+ f8 7 h8+ g8 8 h6+ e8 9 xg8+ d7 10 b6+ c7 11 c8+xb6 12 e3+ c5 13 xc5+ (D)}

1-0

And mate from a8. A magnificent piece of art!

But the aim is not always to give a spectacular mate. Here we see clearance ideas leading to material gains:

\begin{center}
\text{ L. Vajda – Ki. Georgiev}
\text{ Montenegro Team Ch, Herceg Novi 2008}
\end{center}

After 16 \text{ f6+? xf6 17 exf6+ e6} White is unable to prevent ...0-0-0. If 18 c4 then Black has, at least, 18...\text{ d3!}, unafraid of 19 \text{ xxe6+?! fxe6} (Golubev). Instead Vajda finds an elegant
way to bring a key additional unit into the assault:

16 \textit{\texttt{g5}}  \textit{\texttt{g5}}

Black is also suffering after 16...\textit{\texttt{xe4}} 17 \textit{\texttt{xe7}} \textit{\texttt{xe7}} (if 17...\textit{\texttt{xg2}}, then both 18 \textit{\texttt{f6}} and 18 \textit{\texttt{e6}} are good) 18 \textit{\texttt{h4+}} \textit{\texttt{g5}}, and now 19 \textit{\texttt{g5}}+!.

17 \textit{\texttt{f6+!!}} 18 \textit{\texttt{xf6+}} (D)

As Golubev points out, it turns out that without the bishop on c1, the evaluation of this position radically changes in White's favour. White has invested a bishop to gain just one tempo — but this tempo is used to bring a rook into play quickly enough to catch the enemy king in the centre. And that proves to be worth its weight in gold.

18...\textit{\texttt{e6}} 19 \textit{\texttt{ad1!}}

The point. White occupies the central files and prevents his opponent from castling and connecting his rooks.

19...\textit{\texttt{f5}}

If Black immediately gives his queen away by 19...0-0-0 20 \textit{\texttt{xd5}}, he is unlikely to survive.

20 \textit{\texttt{g7!}} (D)

But now the black forces are simply paralysed. He never can move the queen to c5 (preparing ...\textit{\texttt{d8}}) because of \textit{\texttt{exe6+}} and \textit{\texttt{d7#}}. White's task is to prepare f4 and \textit{\texttt{e5}}.

21 h3 h5 22 \textit{\texttt{d4}} h4

Otherwise 23 g4 wins.

23 f4!

Black will inevitably lose his queen after \textit{\texttt{e5}}, and White soon won.

The next example is even more impressive — or it would have been if the correct sequence had actually been played.

\textbf{W}

\textbf{B}

\textit{\texttt{Chan Weng Chee – Ly Hong Nguyen}}

\textit{\texttt{Singapore 2005}}

White could have created a piece of fine chessboard art with a series of sacrifices based on clearance ideas:

1 \textit{\texttt{d4!}}

Chasing away the queen, and bringing the rook into the attack. The game saw 1 \textit{\texttt{g6+??}} and later Black won.

1...\textit{\texttt{xe2}} 2 \textit{\texttt{g4+}} \textit{\texttt{xf8}} (D)

And now the fireworks begin:
3 $g8+!!
Not 3 $g6?? $g1 + 4 c2 $xf2+ --.
3... $xg8 4 $g7+!! $e8 5 $d6+! $xd6 6 $g6+ $e7 7 $f6+! $xf6 8 $g7+ $e8 9 $g6#

Exercises

1. Find a way to use your most powerful piece.

2. Clear a diagonal. Like a bolt from the blue came...

3. Rooks adore the seventh rank.

4. Combine clearance with decoy!

5. Black’s king has stayed too long in the centre. Find a way to attack it.
So far Black is attacking with only three pieces...

Everything looks protected in White’s camp. But that could change if lines are opened...
9 Obstruction

The term ‘obstruction’ covers a variety of situations where we seek to benefit from our opponent’s pieces being blocked in their movement by other pieces, whether they be our pieces or the opponent’s own pieces. For example, a blockade of a passed or isolated pawn is a simple way to lessen the power of this pawn by preventing it from advancing. The fact that it is fixed in place also makes it easier if we wish to attack this pawn. Furthermore, the opponent’s pieces may in turn be restricted in their movement by their own pawn; indeed, this is a factor that should be taken into account when we decide on which square to blockade such a pawn.

But this is a book about tactics, and here our main focus is on more drastic cases of obstruction. If it is the enemy king that is obstructed, then this can play a vital role in our efforts to checkmate him, while obstruction also comes into play when trapping other pieces, or in preventing them from playing a useful role in the defense of their king or in counterattacking our own sensitive spots.

In most positions it is a good idea to have plenty of pieces around the king, to provide him with a secure defense against the many types of tactical blows that we have seen in other chapters of this book. In many of the following examples we shall see the darker side of ‘defense in numbers’ as these pieces can turn out to harm the king if his best policy is to flee to another part of the battlefield.

We start off with a deceptive endgame position where obstruction plays a key role (see following position).

43...\texttt{e6}!!

This cunning move is the prelude to a wonderful blocking idea. During the game, everybody (including the online commentators, Alexei Shirov himself and even the mighty engines) was sure that 44 \texttt{h6} \texttt{xd6} 45 \texttt{h5} would now lead to a forced draw. Everyone but Levon Aronian, that is.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{Shirov – Aronian}

\textit{Tal Memorial, Moscow 2006}

44 \texttt{h6}

44 \texttt{c5} gives White some chances to save the game.

44...\texttt{xd6} 45 \texttt{h5} f5 46 \texttt{h7} \texttt{h8} 47 \texttt{g6} \texttt{e7}!!

Obviously Shirov was counting on 47...\texttt{e8} 48 \texttt{g7} \texttt{e7}+ 49 \texttt{g6} \texttt{e8} =.

48 \texttt{g7} (D)

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

48...\texttt{e8}!!

The point. This type of idea has been seen in endgame studies but is very rare in over-the-board contests. If White now takes the rook, then Black plays ...\texttt{f7} or ...\texttt{f8} and waits until White runs out of pawn moves. In the end White will have no choice but to play \texttt{b3} – Black will capture this pawn and at the same
time free its colleague on c3 (thus ruling out stalemate). Then he will promote his pawn and mate the white king in the corner.

Thus White cannot take the h8-rook, but Black is able to free himself and win:

```
49  g6  f8  50  b4  e7  51  g7  e8!  52  g6  f8  53  h5  e7  54  g7  e8  55  g6  f8
56  h6  e8  57  f6
```

Or 57  g7  e7  58  g6  f8.

```
57...hx7  58  g6  f7!  0-1
```

If 59  h7 then Black repeats the manoeuvre: 59...f8!  60  g7  h8!  61  xh8  f7.

This was a case of a long-term blockade in order to exclude White’s king from the game.

If you see that you have a chance for a mating attack but your opponent’s king always escapes via a certain square, you should seek ways to block his access to it. As we have already noted, his own pieces may do a perfect job on your behalf.

```
36...c3h3!  37  f8
```

Now 37...c3h4+ allows the white king to slip away via the third rank, while 37...c5h4+ provides the f5-square. But this square can be blocked!

```
37...f5+  0-1
```

No matter with which piece White captures, there follows 38...c5h4#.

We can cover the emergency exits using our pieces too (see following diagram):

```
21  h6!
```

This move takes away the f8-square from the king and prepares a typical mating mechanism:

```
21...c8  22  xf6+  xf6  23  xh7+  1-0
```

The next two examples feature the blocking of lines. In this way we can prevent potential defenders from frustrating our plans by denying them access to the lines they need.

```
1  xg6!  hxg6
```

Now he will move his knight to clear the h-file for his rook. But he must be very precise in his choice of square in order to deny Black the chance to control the critical h3-square.

```
2  f4!
```

The key move in the combination, blocking the vital c8-h3 diagonal. Mate is inevitable.

```
2...e6  3  xe6  1-0
```

```
```
3...\textit{\textbf{f7}} 4 \textit{\textbf{h3+ \textit{\textbf{g8}}} 5 \textit{\textbf{\text{xg6}}} followed by 6 \textit{\textbf{h8\#}}.\\

Here is an example of line-blocking in a study by a world champion.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) rectangle (2,2);
\draw (0,0) -- (2,2);
\draw (0,2) -- (2,0);
\draw (0,1) -- (1,2);
\draw (1,0) -- (2,1);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{A. Alekhine} \\
\textit{Tijdschrift v.d. KNSB, 1933}

White needs to exclude his opponent's rook if he wishes to promote his a-pawn. He manages to do so both on the vertical, and on the horizontal:

1 \textit{\textbf{a6 \textit{\textbf{h4}}} (D)}

After 1...\textit{\textbf{g1}} 2 \textit{\textbf{a7 \textit{\textbf{a1}}}}, 3 \textit{\textbf{a3!}} blocks the rook and 3...\textit{\textbf{bxa3}} 4 \textit{\textbf{a8\texttt{\textbf{\text{w}}}} axb2 5 \textit{\textbf{b7+}} is the end.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) rectangle (2,2);
\draw (0,0) -- (2,2);
\draw (0,2) -- (2,0);
\draw (0,1) -- (1,2);
\draw (1,0) -- (2,1);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

2 \textit{\textbf{d8! \texttt{\textbf{\text{w}}xd8}}}

The king has no choice but to block the back rank, with the result that the black rook cannot prevent the a-pawn from slipping through:

3 \textit{\textbf{a7}}

White wins.

The most remarkable case of obstruction is the \textbf{smothered mate}.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) rectangle (2,2);
\draw (0,0) -- (2,2);
\draw (0,2) -- (2,0);
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\draw (1,0) -- (2,1);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Now White can give mate with the standard smothered mate mechanism, but let's go over it in a little detail. First White improves the position of his knight by 29 \textit{\textbf{f7+}} (after the immediate 29 \textit{\textbf{g8+??}} Black is not obliged to take back with the rook!) 29...\textit{\textbf{g8}} 30 \textit{\textbf{h6++}} (the double check is an essential ingredient, as the knight now covers g8) 30...\textit{\textbf{h8}}. Now White decoys a piece to g8 to block its king: 31 \textit{\textbf{g8+! \texttt{\textbf{\text{w}}xg8}} (now the king cannot make the capture) and finally delivers the smothered mate: 32 \textit{\textbf{f7\#}}.

27 \textit{\textbf{d6 \texttt{\textbf{\text{w}}a5}} 28 \textit{\textbf{\text{xe8 \texttt{\textbf{\text{w}}xe8}}} 29 \textit{\textbf{b2 c5}} 30 \textit{\textbf{d2 \texttt{\textbf{\text{w}}a6}} 31 \textit{\textbf{\text{xb4 cxb4}}} 32 \textit{\textbf{c6 \texttt{\textbf{\text{f8}}}} 33 \textit{\textbf{\text{xe6 \texttt{\textbf{\text{xe6}}} 34 \textit{\textbf{\text{f6e6+ 1-0}}}}}}}}}}
Here is a more sophisticated example, with the use of two knights:

16 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xh7+}}}!}

This is an important intermezzo, which deflects the black knight from the defence of the g8-square. 16 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h6++}}}} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h8}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{g8+??}} can be met by 17 ... \texttt{\texttt{xg8}}.

\textbf{1-0}

After 16 ... \texttt{\texttt{xh7}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{h6++}} \texttt{\texttt{h8}} 18 \texttt{\texttt{g8+}} Black can only capture with the rook, leaving the f7-square ripe for invasion: 18 ... \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{xg8}} 19 \texttt{\texttt{gf7+ \texttt{\texttt{xf7}} 20 \texttt{\texttt{xf7#}}}}.

We may sacrifice material in order to block an important square or line which an enemy piece needs. In the next example, the sacrificed material is recouped with substantial interest.

\textbf{We may sacrifice material in order to block an important square or line which an enemy piece needs.}

\textbf{As mentioned earlier, obstruction may take the form of excluding pieces from the game. Here is a remarkable example:}

\textbf{Black’s queen looks vulnerable in front of its pawn-chain. However, a direct attack fails because the queen finds sanctuary on the kingside. But the emergency exit can be shut off:}

\textbf{28 \textit{\texttt{e5!}}}

The most refined approach. 28 \texttt{\texttt{xf6?!}} is another way of winning the queen, but Black earns two rooks for it: 28 ... \texttt{\texttt{g6 29 \texttt{\texttt{d5 exd5}} 30 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}}}}}.

\textbf{28...\texttt{dx}} \textbf{\texttt{e5 29 \texttt{\texttt{a3 wa5}} (D)}}

\textbf{Black has only a rook and two pawns for the queen, and later lost.}

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As mentioned earlier, obstruction may take the form of excluding pieces from the game. Here is a remarkable example:
A COURSE IN CHESS TACTICS

Not 1...\texttt{c4}?? 2 \texttt{xb3+} \texttt{b5} 3 \texttt{c4+!}, when White even wins.
\begin{align*}
2 \texttt{b3+} & \texttt{b5} 3 \texttt{c4+} \texttt{c6} 4 \texttt{d5+} \texttt{d7} 5 \texttt{e6+} \texttt{xd8} 6 \texttt{f5} \text{(D)}
\end{align*}

Black is two rooks and a bishop ahead, but nevertheless he cannot win. Rooks need open files, while the bishop is colour-blind and can only attack dark squares.

The last example was of course artificial, but related ideas can be seen in real games too:

\begin{align*}
45 & \texttt{...b6!} \\
46 & \texttt{cxb6+?}
\end{align*}

White is hypnotized by the value of a whole queen. He needed to decline the gift, keep the knight on the board and target the a5-pawn. His plan should thus be \texttt{c3} (or \texttt{d2}), \texttt{b2}, and \texttt{b3-a4}. In that case he will win only a pawn, but he will gradually make progress as the position will not be fully blocked.

\begin{align*}
46 & \texttt{cxb6} 47 \texttt{h4}
\end{align*}

Apparently opening the game, but it is illusory.
\begin{align*}
47 & \texttt{...gxh4} 48 \texttt{d2} \\
& \text{Or} 48 \texttt{c1 h3} 49 \texttt{h1 h2!}.
\end{align*}

48...\texttt{h3}

Possibly this was the idea White missed when he decided to take the queen.
\begin{align*}
49 & \texttt{gxf3 h4} \text{(D)}
\end{align*}

Interference

Before we proceed with the exercises, we should take a look at the tactical method called interference. Most writers consider it a distinct tactical method, but its essential idea is obstruction, so I have decided to include it in this chapter.

It often occurs that two of our opponent's pieces are carrying out important functions via lines that intersect at a particular square. Perhaps a bishop is protecting an important square via a diagonal, and a rook is carrying out a similar function via a file. At the point where the file and diagonal intersect, we should look for ways to interfere with their operations by putting one of our own pieces there (we might also take advantage by forcing one of our opponent's pieces to step onto this square). No matter how our opponent takes our piece, the harmony is broken, and one of these pieces will no longer be performing its defensive duty. This complicated-sounding formula is best shown by an example (see following diagram):

For the moment White's queen is protecting the knight, and the rook on d2 guards the whole
second rank. However, Black’s next move destroyed all their happiness, and led to a quick disaster for White:

33...\(\text{e}2!!\)

This desperate move gives the white king some breathing space. 34 \(\text{xe}2\) loses at once to 34...\(\text{xf}1 + \) 35 \(\text{h}4\) g5#. Other moves are no good, since Black has mating threats, and 34 \(\text{xe}2\) loses material.

34...g\(\text{x}h6\) 35 \(\text{xe}2\) \(\text{xf}1 + \) 36 \(\text{h}4\) \(\text{e}5!!\) 37 g4 \(\text{f}2 + \) 0-1

The next example is an even purer case, and a rare practical instance of a study theme known as a ‘Novotny’.

\[\text{Miles – Pritchett} \]

\[\text{Lloyds Bank Masters, London 1982}\]

White seems to be facing inevitable mate, while everything in Black’s camp looks perfect. The bishop is protecting the vital g7-square, and is untouchable, the two rooks protect each other, and the back rank looks firmly protected.

It took Tony Miles only one move to clarify the situation in his favour, but what a move that was:

34 \(\text{e}5!! \) 1-0

Interference in all its glory. From being the most modest onlooker at the party, the bishop becomes the Belle of the Ball. It attacks g7, defends h2, neutralizes its black counterpart, and cuts the communication between the rooks. What else can we ask of a single move? The lines are simple:

a) 34...\(\text{xe}5\) (now the c3-bishop does not defend g7) 35 \(\text{xg}7\#.\)

b) 34...\(\text{xe}5\) leads nowhere: 35 \(\text{xe}5\).

c) 34...\(\text{xe}5\) leaves the e8-rook undefended: 35 \(\text{xe}8 + \) \(\text{h}7\) 36 \(\text{g}6 + \) \(\text{g}8\) 37 \(\text{d}8 + \) \(\text{e}8\) 38 \(\text{xe}8\#.

Exercises

1

\[\text{B}\]

Mate in two.

2

\[\text{W}\]

Use obstruction to create a mating-net.
If Black tries to win the pinned piece immediately by 33...\textit{d}d8, he will be disappointed after 34 \textit{a}a4. So...

Black missed a golden opportunity here.

How does Black evade White's cunning attempt to secure a draw?

Should Black retreat?

Black first frees an open line, and then freezes his opponent's defences.
The idea of removing the defender is one of the most common tactical ideas in chess. We have already encountered instances where a key defender is removed by deflection, overloading, pin, or other tactical methods, but in this chapter we shall be focusing on the more direct case of the defender being physically removed by exchange or sacrifice.

When the defences are becoming stretched, there will be some relatively weak links in the defensive chain, normally in the form of key points that are defended only by one piece. Finding and destroying such pieces is then the main task for the attacker. Pawns in front of the enemy king are often a natural target for a destructive sacrifice. Once the pawn-shield is shattered, the enemy king becomes an easy target for the remaining attacking pieces.

The king is especially vulnerable to this type of sacrifice when it has remained in the centre for too long, as we see in the following example.

**Bojkov – Yasin**

*Istanbul 2006*

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 c6 4 g4 cxd4 5 e5 c5 6 g5 f6 7 gxf6 gxf6 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 dx5 d5 10 exd5 c5 11 0-0 dxc4 12 dx6+ cxd6 13 gxf6 d5 14 e5 c6 15 a4 (D)

A king in the centre should sound alarm bells, especially when the attacking forces have as much freedom as White’s do here. I did not hesitate long before sacrificing; indeed, I had this in mind when playing 12 h5. It is not so difficult to assess: Black is permanently deprived of his castling rights, and will have no meaningful pawn-cover, making him an easy prey. The attacker will always enjoy good chances in such a position, especially if there are open lines for his pieces, and they can be brought into the attack with gain of tempi.

**16...xg6!**

Due to the pin against his h8-rook, Black must surrender the e-pawn.

16...fxg6 17 xe6+ f7 (D)

17...d7 is met by 18 h3, setting up a battery, when 18...xg2 attempts to deflect the queen, but White wins in various ways. 19 d6+ c7 20 d7+ b8 21 xb6+ d6 22 xg6#. The line that I planned, but easier and better is 19 d1+ c8 20 e8#.

17...f8 18 h6+ g7 19 e5 (powerful centralization!) 19...d8 20 e1 and Black is helpless against the threats of 21 g7# and 21 xc5.

**18...e5 h8**

After 18...g8 19 e3! xe3 there comes the zwischenzug 20 e7 with mate.

18...h8 19 f6+ g8 20 e6+ g7 21 e5 h6 22 h3+ g7 and now 23 xc6+ is
the move that I foresaw, and quite sufficient of course, but the computer finds a forced mate:
23 \textit{\texttt{xf4+ \texttt{xf7}}} 24 \textit{\texttt{xf7+ \texttt{e6}}} 26 \textit{\texttt{e1+ \texttt{c4}}} 27 \textit{\texttt{fxe4+ \texttt{d6}}} 28 \textit{\texttt{e6+ \texttt{d5}}} 29 \textit{\texttt{d7+ \texttt{d6}}} 30 \textit{\texttt{e5+ \texttt{c4}}} 31 \textit{\texttt{e4+ \texttt{d4}}} 32 \textit{\texttt{b5#}}.

18...\textit{\texttt{d8}} (D) was the best defence, and it took me some time to calculate the most precise continuation.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
\textbf{W} \texttt{f4+ \texttt{f6+ \texttt{f7+ \texttt{e6}}} 26 \texttt{e1+ \texttt{c4}}} 27 \texttt{fxe4+ \texttt{d6}} 28 \texttt{e6+ \texttt{d5}} 29 \texttt{d7+ \texttt{d6}} 30 \texttt{e5+ \texttt{c4}} 31 \texttt{e4+ \texttt{d4}} 32 \texttt{b5#}.
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

At the board I saw about 90\% of the lines that I have included in the annotations. Do not be scared, or think that this is beyond your abilities: the lines were forced and involved a lot of natural and logical moves. With enough practice and concentration you will also be able to calculate long forcing lines: it is a skill that can be learnt, as long as you practice actually doing it, such as in the exercises provided in each chapter of this book.

We now take a closer look at how to recognize when a destructive sacrifice might be possible. Our \textit{\textbf{searching strategy}} could be as follows:

1. \textit{\textbf{Which pieces are under attack?}}
2. \textit{\textbf{Find the defenders of all the pieces that are under attack.}}
3. \textit{\textbf{Can you capture the defender?}}

Let's see how this works in practice:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
\textbf{B} \texttt{f6+ \texttt{g8}} 20 \texttt{e5 \texttt{f8}} 21 \texttt{h8+ \texttt{f7}} 22 \texttt{f6+ \texttt{e7}} 23 \texttt{xh7+ \texttt{d8}} 24 \texttt{d1+} (D)
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textbf{Vaznonis - Sakalauskas}

\textit{\textbf{Lithuanian Ch, Kaunas 2008}}

\textbf{Question 1:} Both queens are under attack. White's kingside is under heavy pressure, especially the knight on g3.

\textbf{Question 2:} The white queen is defended by the rook, while the g3-knight is defended by the pawns on f2 and h2.

Black has concentrated his troops on the kingside, and asking the first two questions brings us to the conclusion that White's only defender is the knight on g3. The answer to question 3 is a resounding 'yes':

26...\textit{\texttt{xe3+}}!

The f2-pawn is pinned, and thus useless for defence, while the capture with the other pawn opens the h-file:

27 \textit{\texttt{hgx3 \texttt{h1#}}} (0-1)

\textbf{1-0}

All my pieces take part in the execution of Black's king. Black is mated after 24...\textit{\texttt{c8}} 25 \textit{\texttt{h3+}}.
The next example is somewhat similar to the previous one. The solution is similar as well – annihilation of Black’s only defender:

![Diagram](image)

**Filippov – Muzammil**
*Mumbai 2008*

28 \texttt{ex}c6! bx\texttt{c}6

There is a bonus: not only has Black’s best defender been removed, but the b-file is also opened.

29 \texttt{d}d3 a5 30 \texttt{b}b3+ 1-0

In general, removing important defenders often does also open lines for our pieces.

![Diagram](image)

**Oral – Kantorik**
*Slovakian Team Ch 2000*

White now physically removes two important defenders, while opening a file for his rook, and a diagonal for the bishop:

15 \texttt{x}d5! \texttt{x}d5 16 \texttt{x}d5! 1-0

If we find a clear answer to the question as to which piece is the most important defender, the rest will often be easy:

![Diagram](image)

**Zeynelabidin – Abello**
*French Junior Ch 1999*

Black’s position is held together by his dark-squared bishop. Seek and destroy!

25 \texttt{h}6+ \texttt{g}7 26 \texttt{f}6!! \texttt{d}2+ 27 \texttt{a}1 \texttt{xb}3+ 28 \texttt{ax}b3 1-0

In practice the ‘seek and destroy’ principle is harder to achieve when the enemy king is hiding behind its pawn-cover. But then additional sacrifices might help:

![Diagram](image)

**R. Griffiths – Bokros**
*European Clubs Cup, Antalya 2007*

White’s bishop protects the b2-square, but there is a way to destroy it:

27...\texttt{xc}2! 28 \texttt{xc}2 \texttt{c}8+ 29 \texttt{b}1

If 29 \texttt{c}c4 to defend the b2-pawn with his major pieces, Black can bring another piece into the attack with decisive effect: 29...\texttt{d}5! – +.

29...\texttt{x}c1+! 30 \texttt{xc}1 \texttt{xb}2+ 31 \texttt{d}1 \texttt{c}3+ 32 \texttt{xc}3 \texttt{bxc}3 33 \texttt{xe}4 \texttt{xe}4 0-1

We usually sacrifice material to open up the position of our opponent’s king.
Here Prié could not stand the temptation, took a pawn with check by 20...\texttt{hxg5+} and eventually won after a long fight. Later he found a clear-cut solution based on destroying White's most important defender:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \texttt{20...\texttt{xd5!!}}
  \item \texttt{Enemy number one off the board!}
  \item \texttt{21 \texttt{xd5}}
  \item Now Black brings in his reserves with gain of tempo:
  \begin{itemize}
    \item \texttt{21...\texttt{d8}}!
    \item \texttt{22 \texttt{b3 d2}}
    \item Look how desperate White's pieces are! Due to the pin he cannot move.
    \item \texttt{23 \texttt{c3 f4 24 g3}} \texttt{(D)}
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{chessboard}
\caption{Boudre - Prié \newline Chamalières 2007}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{chessboard}
\caption{Bacrot - Rausis \newline European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008}
\end{figure}

Here is a simple case: Black's bishop is protecting his knight, but we can easily remove it at the price of an exchange.

35 \texttt{xf2} 1-0

White emerges with two minor pieces for a rook.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{chessboard}
\caption{Exercises}
\end{figure}

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\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{chessboard}
\caption{Exercises}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \texttt{24...h5!}
  \item The last piece joins the fray and White is helpless.
  \begin{itemize}
    \item \texttt{25 \texttt{d1 e2+ 26 g2 f3+ 27 xf3}}
    \item \texttt{\texttt{hxg5+ 28 g3 xg3}}
    \item Black wins. Simple chess, is it not?!
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

The idea of removing the defender can also be used to gain material. Most players tend to keep their pieces guarding one another whenever possible, but this may prove insufficient to keep them safe.
Black has one active piece...

Seek and destroy!

Three in a row.

Note the importance of a diagonal.

The fianchetto has weakened Black's dark squares.
Pawns in front of the king are his best shield.
The pawn is the least powerful piece on the chessboard, but since there are eight of them in each army, these modest footsoldiers define the character of the fight. Pawn-chains provide the strategic outline of the struggle, and the quality of the pawn-cover enjoyed by each king is a major tactical factor. Pawns are great defenders when they remain united and intact on their starting positions, especially as their choice of moving one or two squares gives them extra possibilities if they come under attack.

Pawns can also be used in an attack, as their small value means they can be sacrificed to open lines or force weaknesses without this constituting a major loss of attacking firepower. They can also act as advanced outposts, like thorns in the flesh of your enemy, staking out territory and supporting possible sallies by the more powerful pieces.

But every pawn has a special gift: whenever it reaches the final rank it can turn into a new piece, much stronger than before. It is this special power on which we shall focus in this chapter. We should also note that one must always think carefully before rejecting a pawn sacrifice; it is remarkable how often it happens that a pawn which has been spurned goes on later to wreak havoc with its further advance towards promotion.

I personally witnessed the following game in which the power of a pawn duo was demonstrated.

Khalifman – Ermenkov
Burgas 1994

1 d4 3f6 2 3f3 c5 3 d5 g6 4 3c3 3g7 5 e4
d6 6 3e2 0-0 7 0-0 3a6 8 3f4 3c7 9 a4 b6 10
3e1 a6 11 b3 3d7 12 3c4 3b8 13 3d3 f6 14
3ab1 3e5 15 3xe5 fxe5 16 3e3 3d7
Black attempts a simplifying combination to free his position.
17 3xa6 3xa6 18 3xa6 (D)

18...3b5 19 3xb5 3xb5 20 axb5
Having sacrificed two pawns to close off the white queen’s road back home, Ermenkov was expecting that the perpetual attack on the queen would assure him a draw. However, there was a surprise in store for him.
20...3a8 21 3b7 3b8 22 3a6 3a8 23 3c6
3e8 (D)

After prolonged thought, Khalifman intuitively sacrificed his queen. Obviously he could not calculate all the possible lines here, but he felt that his passed pawns supported by his pieces should net him the full point.

24 b4!! 3xc6 25 dxc6
White has a rook and a passed pawn duo in return for the queen. His plan should be to assure promotion for at least one of them. Like in a game of curling, White’s pieces must now clear the road for the stones (pawns).
25...e6
Black had at his disposal two other attempts to blockade the white pawns.

Stohl gave simply 25...cxb4 26 b6 as winning for White, but while this assessment seems to be correct, the line should be analysed further: 26...\textit{c8}! (Black should block the pawns at any rate) 27 c7 \textit{b7} 28 \textit{xb4 a8} (D).

Black has created a solid defensive set-up, but White needs just one more open file to break it: 29 c4! \textit{f8} 30 \textit{d1 e6} 31 \textit{c5! dxc5} 32 \textit{bb1 e7} 33 \textit{xc5! h4} (33...\textit{xc5} 34 \textit{d8+ g7} 35 \textit{xa8 xa8} 36 \textit{b7 wa2} 37 b6) 34 \textit{a1 e8} 35 \textit{a7 w6} 36 \textit{e3 f8} 37 \textit{h2!} +-. White doesn't need to hurry; \textit{c1} is inevitable.

Another attempt to blockade the pawns starts with 25...\textit{b6}. The following instructive line is also given by Stohl: 26 c4! \textit{a8} (D).

Now take care, as the path for the stones must be cleared carefully: 27 \textit{a1!!} (an important move: White must penetrate via the open file; in addition, he swaps one of the defenders) 27...\textit{xa1} 28 \textit{xa1 e6} 29 \textit{a6! c7} 30 bxc5 \textit{dxc5} 31 \textit{a8+ f7} 32 \textit{xc5 f6} 33 \textit{a7 wc8}

34 \textit{e7+ f7} 35 b6 \textit{xc6} 36 \textit{g5+ e8} 37 \textit{b7 promoting}.

26 \textit{ed1!}
White can also play 26 bxc5, but after 26...d5 he will have to contend with Black’s ideas of ...d4.

26...\textit{b8}
Or: 26...d5 27 \textit{xc5 d4} 28 b6 +-. 26...\textit{h4} 27 bxc5 \textit{dxc5} 28 b6 \textit{xe4} 29 \textit{xc5 +--}.

27 bxc5 d5 28 edx5 edx5 29 \textit{xd5 e8} 30 \textit{c7 f7} 31 b6 \textit{xd5} 32 b7 (D)

1-0
Black is a whole queen up, but has no defence.

Oddly enough, some years later I applied the same winning idea, of creating two connected passed pawns, in the Bulgarian Championship:

25 b6! \textit{ab8}
In case of 25...\textit{xc6} 26 dxc6 \textit{f8} 27 b7 \textit{a5} 28 \textit{ec1} the pawns are supported by all White's remaining pieces, and are obviously impossible
to stop. 28...c7 29 \texttt{b6} b8 30 \texttt{d8} xd8 31 c7 (D) could be a pretty finish:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image1}
\end{center}

33 \texttt{xb8}! 1-0
Black decided to call it a day due to 33...\texttt{xb8} 34 \texttt{a2} with \texttt{a8} and \texttt{b8} to follow.

As we have already seen, it can cost a great deal of material to neutralize a well-supported passed pawn. The following example is even more drastic:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image2}
\end{center}

Unfortunately, not all of my experiences with passed-pawn duos are pleasant. In this game I had a lesson – luckily, for free. I had just exchanged knights on d5, and was highly optimistic: I am a pawn ahead, and a second one is coming on the next move. I did not consider seriously the knight sacrifice, but this was exactly what my opponent did!

22...e4!!
Now White is in danger too!
23 dxc6 e3 24 \texttt{fc4} \texttt{c5} 25 \texttt{h1} \texttt{f6} 26 \texttt{e4}?
Following a passive plan of exchanging rooks that leaves my back rank weak. White should seek counterplay with 26 \texttt{b3}!, the main point being 26...\texttt{e7} 27 \texttt{d4} with complications.
26...\texttt{xe4} 27 \texttt{xe4} e2 28 \texttt{d2}? \texttt{f2} 29 \texttt{g1} \texttt{e8} 30 c7
Having played brilliantly to achieve a won game, Black now blundered in time-trouble:
30...\texttt{h7}??
Instead he could have created a true masterpiece by letting me promote: 30...\texttt{xe4}!! 31 \texttt{c8} (with check!) 31...\texttt{g7} 32 \texttt{h3} (D).

An amazing position! Black’s pawn duo will cost White both his queens. We already know the method; the road should be cleared:
32...\textbf{\textit{W}}xg1+!! 33 \textbf{\textit{W}}xg1 \textbf{\textit{e}1}+ 34 \textbf{\textit{W}}xe1 \textbf{\textit{A}}xe1+ 35 \textbf{\textit{W}}f2 d2 = + and there is nothing more for me to do than congratulate my opponent on his excellent play.

30...\textbf{\textit{A}}g7?! is also better than the move played, and should lead to a draw.

In the game Black managed to win only one queen for his mighty passed pawns, while I made the maximum of my advanced pawn.

I knew that my position was lost, and that I could only hope for a perpetual check somehow. But when we reached this position, I suddenly realized that the power of the pawn duo gave Black the opportunity to liquidate to a won endgame. My experienced opponent also realized this:

48...\textbf{\textit{A}}d4!!

The best practical decision. Murrey does not give me any chances for random combinations and blocks the open d-file.

49 \textbf{\textit{A}}b1

After this move I lost silently, but the line 49 \textbf{\textit{W}}xd4+ \textbf{\textit{W}}xd4 50 \textbf{\textit{W}}xd4 b4 leads to an easy win; for instance, 51 \textbf{\textit{A}}d6+ \textbf{\textit{A}}c5 52 \textbf{\textit{W}}xh6 b3 53 \textbf{\textit{A}}h7 a4 54 \textbf{\textit{A}}b7 \textbf{\textit{A}}c4 and a pawn marches through.

49...a4 50 g3 \textbf{\textit{A}}a5 51 \textbf{\textit{A}}g2 b4 52 \textbf{\textit{A}}c1 g4 53 \textbf{\textit{A}}c6 \textbf{\textit{A}}b6 54 \textbf{\textit{A}}c8 gxf3+ 55 \textbf{\textit{A}}xf3 b3 56 \textbf{\textit{A}}c4 \textbf{\textit{A}}e3+ 57 \textbf{\textit{A}}xe3 \textbf{\textit{A}}xe3 58 \textbf{\textit{A}}xe3 b2 59 \textbf{\textit{A}}c8 a3 60 \textbf{\textit{A}}d4 \textbf{\textit{A}}a6 61 \textbf{\textit{A}}b8 a2 0-1

A single passed pawn generally needs more piece support if it is to make its way to promotion past hostile forces. The supporting pieces may clear the way for the pawn by using various tactical ideas that we have seen in earlier chapters. Particularly common themes in this respect are removing the defender and deflection:

An important general principle is that the power of the pawns increases in the endgame. If there are no other pieces on the board, even a single pawn can become a queen and win the game. As a general rule, two connected passed pawns on the sixth rank overpower a rook if no other pieces can intervene.

I knew that my position was lost, and that I could only hope for a perpetual check somehow. But when we reached this position, I suddenly realized that the power of the pawn duo gave Black the opportunity to liquidate to a won endgame. My experienced opponent also realized this:

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49...a4 50 g3 \textbf{\textit{A}}a5 51 \textbf{\textit{A}}g2 b4 52 \textbf{\textit{A}}c1 g4 53 \textbf{\textit{A}}c6 \textbf{\textit{A}}b6 54 \textbf{\textit{A}}c8 gxf3+ 55 \textbf{\textit{A}}xf3 b3 56 \textbf{\textit{A}}c4 \textbf{\textit{A}}e3+ 57 \textbf{\textit{A}}xe3 \textbf{\textit{A}}xe3 58 \textbf{\textit{A}}xe3 b2 59 \textbf{\textit{A}}c8 a3 60 \textbf{\textit{A}}d4 \textbf{\textit{A}}a6 61 \textbf{\textit{A}}b8 a2 0-1

A single passed pawn generally needs more piece support if it is to make its way to promotion past hostile forces. The supporting pieces may clear the way for the pawn by using various tactical ideas that we have seen in earlier chapters. Particularly common themes in this respect are removing the defender and deflection:

Black's pawns are blockaded, but Black finds a way to set them in motion:

51...b3+!

White must capture with the king, since his knight is pinned.

52 \textbf{\textit{A}}xb3 \textbf{\textit{c}2}

Black soon won.
Here is an example of multiple deflections combined with a mating threat:

1...d4+! 2 Nxd4 Qxf2+! 3 Qxf2 Qh1+!! 4 Qh1 gxh2 0-1

Khenkin – Postny
Maalot-Tarshiha 2008

A decoy helps White to promote his pawn:

53 d8†+! Qxd8 54 e7 1-0

Like in all combinations, time is important when we promote our pawns. Sometimes our own pieces are in the way of our pawns, and we need to find ways to get rid of them with tempo (see following diagram).

1 Qxf7!
White first clears the road for the passed pawn.

1...Qxh6+
Or: 1...Qxf7 2 g6 d1Q 3 gxf7 +–; 1...d1Q 2 Qg7+ Qxg7 3 fxg7#.

2 gxh6 d1Q
Now the bishop is in the pawn’s way. It steps aside while also cutting off the black rook’s protection of the back rank:

3 e8!! Qg8
3...Qxe8 4 f7+ Qxe5 5 f8#; 3...h5+ 4 Qxh5 Qg8 5 f7+ Qf8 6 Qg7+ Qe7 7 f5 +–.

4 f7+ Qf8 5 Qg7+ Qe7 6 f8# 1-0

So far we have only seen examples of the successful promotion of passed pawns. But we have not seen how these pawns are created. Our most faithful friend in this endeavour is a method called breakthrough:

40 Qxb5 cxb5 41 c6 1-0

White creates a passed pawn with a simple exchange:

The lone passed pawn can be stopped by the king by playing 41...Qe8, but the main problem comes from the other side: 42 g5! is a standard
breakthrough, clearing the way for the h-pawn. After 42...hxg5 43 h6, Black’s king is incapable of stopping two passed pawns that are so far apart, while the knight on a4 is too far away to have any impact on events.

When the passed pawn is solidly blockaded by the opponent’s king, it may be worth major sacrifices to bring the pawn to a different file, especially as this will tend to gain time with a discovered check in cases where the pawn is supported from behind.

Now let’s take a look at a case where several threats were combined:

![Chess Diagram](image)

Sada – Y. Rodriguez
Cuba 2000

White first cleared a path for his queen to support the passed pawn:

1 e5! dxe5
2 dxe6! fxe6 3 g6+ h8 (D)

Now the pawn can be switched to a different file. This costs a whole queen, but the investment is recouped with a lot of interest:

4 g7+!! xg7 5 hgx7++ g8 6 h8+ f7 7 xf8+ xf8 8 h7+ 1-0

![Chess Diagram](image)

Kotanjian – Zysk
Athens 2006

42 g8+ h7
Black rejected the mass exchanges of the major pieces by 42...xg8 43 xg8+ xg8 44 xg8+ h7 because White promotes and wins by 45 b8w. Unfortunately for him, the move 42 g8+ also cleared a line for the queen:

43 g6+! 1-0
43...xg6 44 fxg6#.

In some special cases the pawn can transform into a piece other than the queen – which is called an underpromotion. The most common case by far is underpromotion to a knight, as this may mean that the promotion comes with check, or creates a knight fork.

![Chess Diagram](image)

Dubinsky – Lapshun
New York 2000

White’s position looks dubious but he finds a good move:
THE POWER OF THE PAWN

1...ac1!!
1...c1?? d4 is better for Black.
Now it is Black’s turn to make a crucial decision and he passes the test:
1...a1??
And not 1...a1?? 2 c2+ b1 3 g1#.
2 h1! b3+ 3 e2 1/2-1/2

Underpromotion to a rook or bishop is very uncommon in practice, since these pieces have no additional powers compared to a queen. Therefore the only reason to choose a bishop or rook is to avoid stalemate ideas, or else to stalemate oneself, and these themes are normally restricted to composed positions.

E. Pogosiants
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981

White first blocks in all of Black’s pieces:
1 g5+!
Not 1 f8?? g5! = (1...f5+? 2 f4 g5+ 3 xg5+ h5 4 c8+ g6 5 e2#).
1...fxg5 (D)

Passed pawns must be pushed!

2 f8!! (D)
This underpromotion is the only way to win.
2 f8?? is only enough for a draw after 2...g8
3 xg8 stalemate.

Exercises

White must now be careful, since he has left Black with very few legal moves.

Time is money.
Support the modest footsoldier.

The theme here is breakthrough.

Find a way for Black to win. Greed will be punished!

Pawn power increases into the...?

Passed pawns don’t have to be promoted in order to be useful.

Pawns have a lust to expand, as Nimzowitsch reminded us.
In most chess games it is a good idea to castle early in the game. This is because we need to bring our rooks harmoniously into the game and find a safe haven for our king behind a strong pawn-shield. We generally avoid moving the pawns in front of the king so as not to create weaknesses. If we advance the rook's pawn, then this can invite a sacrifice, while moving the knight's pawn can leave us open to an invasion on the complex of squares this move weakens. Meanwhile, advancing the bishop's pawn leaves the king exposed to checks on the diagonal, and overall loosens our position.

However, sometimes the lack of luft – an escape-hatch for the king – might allow another evil: a mate on the bank rank. If we spot that our opponent's king does not have any escape-squares on its second rank, we should be alert to ideas by which we might mate him on his back rank with a queen or a rook (or a promoting pawn). Since we are dealing with mate here, a very large sacrifice may be justified to bring this about by removing defenders or deflecting them. Before moving on to specific examples, we should note that a weak back rank often plays a role in chess strategy. Sometimes the battle for the centre hinges upon ideas that are based on an exploitation of a back-rank weakness at the end of a lengthy tactical sequence. In a battle arising from a well-played opening, neither side can necessarily afford to spend a tempo giving their king a flight-square, so this shouldn't be looked upon as just a fluke, but rather as an organic feature of the chessboard struggle.

In the following diagram, Black's king has no flight-squares on its second rank. The d5-rook protects the back rank, but this piece must also protect its colleague on d5. Thus the rook is overloaded, and we immediately see the solution:

25 \textit{\texttt{Qxd5}}! 1-0

Mate follows after 25...\textit{\texttt{Qxd5}} 26 \textit{\texttt{Qc8+ Qd8}} 27 \textit{\texttt{Qxd8#}}.

Timoshenko – C. Foisor
Cappelle la Grande 2008

In the next position, Black's king again lacks luft, which White exploits by a deflection.

C. Bauer – Renet
French Ch, Aix-les-Bains 2007

White's doubled rooks on the d-file are obviously well-placed, but his most powerful piece, his queen, appears to be out of the game. It would be nice if we could use it to help in the attack...

28 \textit{\texttt{Qb7}}! 1-0

White exploits the fact that the defender is overloaded: 28...\textit{\texttt{Qf8}} loses a piece after 29 \textit{\texttt{Qxc7}}, while 28...\textit{\texttt{Qxb7}} allows mate by 29 \textit{\texttt{Qd8+ Qxd8}} 30 \textit{\texttt{Qxd8+ Qe8}} 31 \textit{\texttt{Qxe8#}}.
The next example is far from obvious. If you spend a lot of time tackling tactical exercises, then you start to find it easier and easier to spot possibilities like this. Hint: consider which are the critical squares on the back rank.

The first precondition is met: Black’s king has no flight-squares. But how on earth can we possibly exploit this fact?! The rook on c8 (first critical square) is well protected, and our rook is blocked by no fewer than three pieces on its way to the e8-square (second critical square). Still, knowing that the back-rank defenders must be destroyed or deflected, we might try the following:

1.\( \text{Qx}f5!! \) 1-0

The black knight must defend the rook, so 1...exf5 is forced, but now we almost have access to the back rank for our rook. We need to hit the first critical square with 2 \( \text{Qxc8}+! \) and enjoy the second one by 3 \( \text{Qxe8#} \).

Controlling a critical square can have a decisive importance, and often it is not just a simple matter of counting how many times each side is covering a critical square. We also need to consider potential attacks and X-rays, and calculate the concrete variations with care.

In the following diagram, Black has an excellent concentration of forces on the c-file: the queen is also eyeing c1. This is clearly a critical square, since if Black could put a queen or rook on this square it will be mate. However, it looks like the knight is well protected on c6 (attacked twice but defended three times) and that access to White’s back rank is therefore firmly closed off. However, it is not the number of attacks on c6 that is decisive here.

Let us see what will happen if we destroy the knight. We immediately see that taking back with the queen loses material (two rooks for a queen and a knight). But what if he takes back with the rook?

White will win an exchange, but in the process will lose control over the truly critical square, c1. He is only defending it once, while Black is hitting it twice – directly from the queen from g5, and a second one from the X-raying c8-rook.

24...\( \text{Qxc6} \) 0-1

25 \( \text{Qxc6} \) 26 \( \text{Qxc6} \) h6 costs White material, while the main idea is 25 \( \text{Qxc6} \) \( \text{Qxc1}+! \) 26 \( \text{Qxc1} \) \( \text{Qxc1}+ \) 27 \( \text{Qxe1}# \).

We should also calculate if our opponent can cover the check on the critical square with some of his pieces.
The critical square here is e8. It is well protected by a knight and a rook. But we can easily remove the knight:

35 $\text{Bxd6}!$ 1-0

Black has two options. After 35... $\text{Bxd6}$ he can no longer cover his king: 36 $\text{Be8+ Bxe8}$ 37 $\text{Bxe8#}$. A more resilient line is 35... $\text{Bxd6}$ 36 $\text{Be8+ Be8}$ (36... $\text{Bf8}$ loses material after the simple 37 $\text{Bxf8+}$) 37 $\text{Bxe8+}$ and now Black can cover his king by 37... $\text{Bf8}$ but this should not worry us, since White wins in two ways: directly with 38 $\text{Bxf7+ Bh8}$ 39 $\text{Bxf8#}$ or prosaically by 38 $\text{Bxc6}$.

Escape-squares might be covered by our pieces:

Rohit - Nadig
Commonwealth Ch, Nagpur 2008

White would like to destroy the rook on f8 and deliver mate on the bank rank. However, Black will then have an escape-route via e7. This window should be slammed shut!

25 $\text{Df5!}$ 1-0

Simultaneously attacking the rook and taking away the important escape-square on e7. Black resigned due to 25... $\text{Bxf5}$ 26 $\text{Bxf8+ Bh8}$ 27 $\text{Bd8#}$ or 25... $\text{Bh5}$ 26 $\text{Bxf8+ Bh8}$ 27 $\text{Bd8#}$.

A check on the bank rank does not always promise mate, especially when our opponent can interpose and open an escape-square for his king. But this rescue effort may cost significant material (see following diagram).

23 $\text{Bxd7!}$ 1-0

By 23... $\text{Bxd7}$ 24 $\text{Bb8+ Bh8}$ Black manages to escape the back-rank mate, but after 25 $\text{Bxf8+}$ $\text{g7}$ 26 $\text{Bxf7+}$ and 27 $\text{Bxd7}$ White will gain a rook and two bishops for the queen. One important detail is that the counterattack against White’s own back rank is harmless: 26... $\text{Bh6}$ 27 $\text{Bxd7 We1+}$ 28 $\text{f1}$ covers the king.

We have so far been discussing back-rank mates by rooks and queens. But there is a third piece that can help us exploit a weak back rank – a pawn.

M. Gurevich – Pavasović
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Black’s position looks critical but it is his move and he is a piece ahead, and has a powerful passed pawn. Additionally, White’s king is in danger of a back-rank mate. For the moment the critical d1-square is covered, but this will not last long:

34... $\text{Bd1!!}$

Black destroys the main defender of the back rank – the rook.

35 $\text{Bxd1 Bxd1+}$ 36 $\text{Bxd1}$
And now comes the finest hour of the brave infantryman.

**36...b2! 0-1**

White is either mated after 37 \(\texttt{Wxa4 b1W}+\) 38 \(\texttt{Wxd1 Wxd1#}\) or loses material after 37 \(\texttt{Wf1 Wxa1}\), when Black promotes a second pawn.

There are plenty of typical mating patterns that are closely related to the back-rank mate:

![Diagram 1](image1)

**Vasiukov – J. Howell**

*Yaroslavl 1990*

The d4-bishop is controlling the h8- and g7-squares, which makes Black’s king vulnerable on the back rank.

**21 \(\texttt{Whxh7+!} 1-0\)**

21...\(\texttt{gxh7} 22 \texttt{Wh3+} \texttt{Kxh3} 23 \texttt{Wh3+} \texttt{Kg8} 24 \texttt{Wh8#}.**

A vulnerable back rank can be combined with other tactical ideas:

![Diagram 2](image2)

**I. Marks – H. Mortensen**

*Gibraltar 2008*

Black first chases his enemy into the corner.

**20...\(\texttt{We3+!} 21 \texttt{Kh1}\)**

Then he deflects his only protection on the h-file.

**21...\(\texttt{Qg3+!} 22 \texttt{hxg3}\)**

And finally he brings in decisive reinforcements:

**22...\(\texttt{We6} 0-1\)**

**Exercises**

![Diagram 3](image3)

**S. Bjerke – C. Andersson**

*Oslo 2008*

28 \(\texttt{Kh6!}\)

A knight fork will help you mate on the back rank.
Black has just played 23...a6-a5. Is this move positionally sound, and good for Black, or is it a terrible blunder?

Black's bank rank is hopelessly weak...

You are about to discover a typical mating pattern all by yourself!

The critical squares here are c1 and ... ?

35 \textit{h7}\# and 35 \textit{g6}+ are White's threats. Is it time for Black to resign?

Black's bishop looks locked in forever and White has enough compensation for his pawn weaknesses. True or false?
White had played excellently, winning an exchange. However, his last move was a terrible blunder, which Black punished instantly. Can you spot what was coming?
Stalemate

Sometimes things go wrong and we find ourselves in a difficult position. In this situation one should never give up hope and should fight to the very end. Chess is a sport like many others, and resourcefulness and fighting spirit might be well rewarded. In this chapter and the next, we look at some tactical methods that can be used to save difficult positions.

Stalemate is one of the more cunning ways to achieve a draw. It is one of the little quirks of chess that the game is drawn if a player has no legal moves and his king is not under attack, no matter how large his opponent’s material advantage might be; there is no reason why we should not seek to take advantage of this. It is important to understand that stalemate ideas don’t just happen by accident: we should be thinking about immobilizing our pawns, and be looking for ways to force the opponent to take any remaining pieces. We should also note that many players with a large advantage fail to think about their opponent’s stalemate ideas until it is too late...

Bojkov - Borisek
European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005

The scoring in this event was based on match points and after the other three games finished peacefully, my game was left to decide the match. I had played very badly in the middlegame and my opponent was gradually increasing his advantage. A move ago he had sacrificed his queen to penetrate onto my first rank, and now threatens an unstoppable mate. With less than a minute I had to find something, and fortunately I spotted that my king lacks moves. The decision: I need to get rid of all my unnecessary pieces!

67 \textit{Qxg5+}!

First the minor one that he could easily neglect to take if I left it until last.

67...fxg5

Not, of course, 67...\textit{h6??} 68 \textit{Qxe4}.

68 \textit{c7+} \textit{g8} 69 \textit{c8+} \textit{f7} (D)

He has to step onto the f-file; otherwise I will keep on checking: 69...\textit{g7} 70 \textit{c7+} \textit{g6} 71 \textit{c6+}.

70 \textit{f8+}!

The time for a second sacrifice has come! 70...\textit{xf8}

After 70...\textit{e7} 71 \textit{f7+} (or 71 \textit{f1} \textit{c1} and now 72 \textit{f7+} or 72 \textit{xc1}, both based on the same stalemate ideas) 71...\textit{d6}? (not a good way to avoid the draw, which Black can settle for by 71...\textit{xf7} or 71...\textit{e6}) White can insist on a repetition by 72 \textit{f6+} (when 72...\textit{c5?} fails to 73 \textit{f1}), but after 72 \textit{f1}!! he is probably winning (72...\textit{c1} 73 \textit{f6+}).

71 \textit{f3+}!!

The only move, but good enough. It is also a double attack with my undefended queen. 71 \textit{f3+?} allows the bishop to move, when I will
have an additional pawn move: 71...\( \text{xf3} \) 72 e4 \( \text{h1#} \). 71 \( \text{f2+?} \) fails to 71...\( \text{f4!} \).

71...\( \text{xf1} \) \( \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \)
Stalemate!

The most important condition before you perform a stalemate idea is to have your king in a ‘safety box’. This means a place from where it can neither move, nor be checked. In the previous case (and the next), this is already the case – the king has no squares to move to. Then you must take care of your pawns – are they blockaded, or can they move? Unlike a rook or especially a queen, pawns are hard to sacrifice in such a way that the opponent is forced to take them.

**Ormos – Betotsky**

*Budapest 1951*

Here Black’s pawns are blocked, so he just needs to sacrifice his remaining pieces in a way that doesn’t lift the stalemate. The best order is usually minor pieces first, major pieces last. But the vital thing is to sacrifice them in a way that doesn’t allow any of them to be ignored, so be sure, as always, to analyse carefully.

1...\( \text{bl1+} \) 2 \( \text{h2} \) \( \text{h1+} \)

Black sacrifices his rook first, since he is sure that his knight must be taken on the next move.

3 \( \text{hxh1} \) \( \text{g3+} \) 4 \( \text{fxg3} \) \( \text{xg2+} \) 5 \( \text{gxg2} \) \( \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \)
Stalemate!

If the king is not already stalemated, the ‘safety box’ must be constructed. Some cunning may be required for this, and a consideration of what moves the opponent needs to play if he is to make progress. Once this is achieved, the standard task of sacrificing the remaining army is all that stands between you and a very satisfying half-point.

![Diagram](image)

**Navara – Svidler**

*FIDE Grand Prix, Sochi 2008*

43 \( \text{h4} \)
White keeps his king active.
43...\( \text{b3} \) 44 \( \text{b6} \) \( \text{g6} \)
It is hard to gain ground otherwise, since 44...\( \text{g8} \) 45 \( \text{b7} \) keeps the king cut off from the action.

45 \( \text{b7+} \) \( \text{g8} \) 46 \( \text{g4!} \) ? \( \text{f8} \) 47 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{h5} \) (D)

![Diagram](image)

48 \( \text{h3!} \)
Suddenly everything is ready for a stalemate – the white king has created its own safety box.

48...\( \text{e8} \) 49 \( \text{xb3} \) \( \text{xb3} \) \( \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \)

If we can’t sacrifice all our pieces to force an actual stalemate, we can in some cases nevertheless use stalemate ideas to save a difficult position. In the situation called the **rampant rook**, a rook repeatedly sacrifices itself, giving the opponent a choice between stalemate or perpetual check.
This is an example of this most famous of stalemate suicide ideas.

49...h5!
First Black exhausts all his pawn moves.
50 c6 f8 51 xch3 a2 52 b2 b8+ (D)

53 a1 h4 ½-½
After 54 e8 b1+ 55 xa2 Black keeps offering the sacrifice of his rampant rook. These sacrifices take place on doubly-attacked squares, but this does not matter, as White has no way to capture the rook that avoids the draw: after 55...b2+ 56 a3 b3+ 57 a4 b4+ 58 a5 b5+, both 59 xb5 and 59 xb5 are stalemate.

Other pieces may also become rampant under certain circumstances, but a rook is the most common. Normally a ‘rampant queen’ will need to be taken quite soon, while the minor pieces can only give a perpetual sacrifice when there is some help from the structure or other pieces.

Rook endgames feature a lot of stalemate ideas. You just need to be aware of them.

Black is a solid pawn up, and if everything proceeds normally should have every chance to win. This is why it is well worth White's while playing for a trap.

63 d4!? With this innocent-looking move, Navara sets a devilish trap.

63 a3!
Black is alert and sidesteps it. In event of 63...b2+ 64 e2 xg3? 65 xg3 xxe2 (D) it looks like Black should win easily.

However, there now follows 66 xg4+! fxg4 with a typical stalemate pattern for rook endgames. Declining the sacrifice is no use, as the b+Δ vs b ending would be a simple draw.

64 d8 a2+
Grishchuk went on to win on move 86, but your opponent might not be that alert. In any case, setting a trap in a lost position can only increase one's chances for a draw.

Stalemate is most common when the king is near the corners or edges of the board, where it
has fewer squares to move to. However, you should not assume that mid-board stalemates are impossible:

A. Khachikov  
*Shakhmaty (Riga)*, 1973

1  

White’s king is already in a safety box. What is next?

Exercises

1 Choose between 58 ♗xe3 and 58 ♔e7+.

2 Should White take the pawn?

3 How should the game end?
White’s bishop is the ‘right’ one for his rook’s pawn, and it seems that Black cannot build a fortress. Time to resign?

Can the knight deal with both the passed pawns?

Discover a safety box.

White will inevitably lose his rook. Is this the end of the story?
Another useful method for saving a draw is threefold repetition of position. When this is forced by chasing the king, we call it perpetual check. This can occur either because the king cannot avoid the checks at all, or because avoiding them leads to unpleasant consequences. The king is not the only piece that can be disturbed for eternity; this can happen to any other piece, such as a queen that has strayed too far into enemy territory. In that case we speak about perpetual attack, or a positional draw.

Perpetual check can be the logical result of an attack on the king in an equal position, but it is also a useful idea for saving a dubious or lost position:

38...\textit{W}xe2 39 \textit{W}xf5+ \textit{B}g6 40 \textit{B}c1

By now White has a choice: 40 \textit{B}d7+ \textit{B}xd7 41 \textit{W}xd7+ \textit{B}g7 (41...\textit{B}g8 42 \textit{W}e8+ \textit{B}g7 43 \textit{W}e7+) 42 \textit{W}f5+ \textit{B}g8 43 \textit{B}c8+ \textit{B}f7 44 \textit{W}d7+ is another way to force a draw.

40...\textit{B}c6

After 40...\textit{B}f3+ White only needs to avoid one final trap. After 41 \textit{W}h1 \textit{B}a2 42 \textit{B}c7+ \textit{B}h8, 43 \textit{W}g6?? loses to 43...\textit{W}b1+ 44 \textit{B}g2 \textit{B}f1+ 45 \textit{B}h3 \textit{W}h2+ 46 \textit{B}g4 \textit{B}e5+, but 43 \textit{B}c8+ \textit{B}h7 44 \textit{B}c7+ is a safe draw.

41 \textit{W}f7+ \textit{B}g7 42 \textit{W}f5+ \textit{B}g8 43 \textit{B}c8+ \textit{B}f7

44...\textit{B}f6 45 \textit{W}d6+ doesn’t change anything.

45 \textit{W}e6+ \textit{B}h7 ½-½

This example is more complicated. It looks as if Black is facing inevitable mate. The queen and bishop are lined up on the long diagonal, and if 1...\textit{W}g4+ White can simply answer 2 \textit{B}f2 and the checks are over. If Black wants to do something, he must first disrupt the threat against his king.

\textbf{Conquest – Edouard}

\textit{European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008}

White’s position looks dreadful: his pieces seem uncoordinated, while Black already has serious threats against the white king, including 38...\textit{B}xg3+. However, Conquest found a way to force a perpetual:

38 \textit{W}e2!

The only way – White deflects Black’s queen from its defence of the f5-pawn. White would lose material after 38 \textit{W}e8? e3 39 fxe3 \textit{W}xe3+ 40 \textit{B}h1 \textit{W}f3+ 41 \textit{B}g1 \textit{W}xd1, when it is already too late for a perpetual: 42 \textit{W}e7+ \textit{B}g6 43 \textit{W}e6+ \textit{B}h5 44 \textit{W}xe5 \textit{W}d4+ 45 \textit{W}xd4 \textit{B}xd4 and Black wins.

\textbf{Valdes – H. Gonzalez}

\textit{Cuba 2001}
1...\textit{e}5!
Deflection and interference. This subtle move breaks White's perfect coordination.

2 fxe5
White sacrifices his queen, but this is only sufficient for a draw. Other moves:

a) 2 \textit{x}e5 allows an immediate perpetual by 2...\textit{xe}3+ 3 \textit{g}2 \textit{e}2+.

b) 2 \textit{c}6 leads to a drawn rook endgame after 2...\textit{xc}6 3 \textit{xc}6 \textit{xd}4 4 exd4 \textit{e}2.

c) White's best practical chance is 2 \textit{xa}6!? \textit{xe}3+ 3 \textit{g}2 \textit{e}2+ (7 \textit{c}4 should also end peacefully after 7...\textit{b}3! =) 7...\textit{h}3 8 \textit{g}2 \textit{d}3 9 \textit{c}2 \textit{b}3, but this is a draw.

2...\textit{g}4+ 3 \textit{f}2
3 \textit{h}1 \textit{e}4+ =.

3...\textit{f}8 4 \textit{c}7 \textit{xf}6+ 5 \textit{ex}f6
Black has won the white queen thanks to the pin, but is still the weaker side. Therefore he forces a draw:

5...\textit{h}4+ 6 \textit{f}1 \textit{h}3+ 7 \textit{e}1 \textit{h}4+ 8 \textit{d}1 \textit{g}4+ 9 \textit{e}2
9 \textit{d}2 \textit{g}2+ 10 \textit{d}3 \textit{f}1+ =.
9...\textit{e}2+ ½-½

It is naturally possible to use several saving ideas together:

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{figure1}
\caption{Otero – Rivera \newline \textit{Cuba 2002}}
\end{figure}

\textit{Otero} – \textit{Rivera} \newline \textit{Cuba 2002}

White needs to sacrifice something or throw in the towel:

1 \textit{xf}4!
Not 1 \textit{e}1? \textit{xe}1 2 \textit{h}2 \textit{h}3 3 \textit{c}2 \textit{g}3+ 4 \textit{h}1 \textit{xf}3+ 5 \textit{h}2 \textit{g}3+ 6 \textit{h}1 \textit{e}1+ 7 \textit{h}2 \textit{f}3, which is hopeless for White, while 1 \textit{g}8+?

\textit{xe}8 2 \textit{xf}4 gives Black the additional option 2...\textit{g}7, which, in fact, wins.

1...\textit{ex}f4 2 \textit{g}8+! \textit{xe}8 3 \textit{g}6+ \textit{f}8
3...\textit{h}8? may even lose after 4 \textit{e}8+ \textit{g}7 5 \textit{xe}7+ \textit{g}8 6 \textit{g}5+ \textit{f}8 7 \textit{xf}4+.

4 \textit{f}5+ (D)

4...\textit{g}7
In case of 4...\textit{e}8 White gives perpetual check on the light squares – the opposite colour from Black's bishop. 5 \textit{c}8+ \textit{f}7 (5...\textit{d}8 6 \textit{e}6+ \textit{f}8 7 \textit{f}5+ =) 6 \textit{f}5+ \textit{e}8 7 \textit{c}8+ =.

After the text-move, it looks as if White's defensive resources are exhausted. However, he has one final idea:

5 \textit{g}5+!! \textit{f}7
Since 5...\textit{hxg}5 is stalemate!
6 \textit{h}5+ \textit{f}8 7 \textit{f}5+ ½-½

The queen is such a powerful piece that in many cases it can deliver perpetual check all on its own, without the support of any other pieces. But other pieces can sometimes perform the same feat with only a little assistance:

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{figure2}
\caption{G. Zakhodiakin \newline \textit{Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981}}
\end{figure}
1 \( \text{d6} \)

Black will queen, but White saves himself with a remarkably simple and effective construction:

1...\( e2 \) 2 \( \text{f7}+ \text{h5} \) 3 \( \text{e5} \) 4 \( g4+ \text{h6} \)

Both 4...\( \text{h4} \) 5 \( \text{f3}+ \) and 4...\( \text{g5} \) 5 \( \text{f3}+ \) lose the queen to a fork.

5 \( \text{f7}+ \text{h7} \) 6 \( \text{g5}+ \)

With a draw.

A rook and a knight may also create a drawing mechanism if they are well coordinated. This was well explained by Nimzowitsch:

\[ \text{A. Nimzowitsch (version)} \]

\[ \text{Rigaer Nachrichten, 1923} \]

1 \( \text{e6}+ \text{b6} \)

1...\( \text{xb8} \) 2 \( \text{g1 e1} \) 3 \( \text{g8}+ \text{c7} \) 4 \( \text{g7}+ \text{c6} \) 5 \( \text{d7} = \).

2 \( \text{g1 e1} 3 \text{g4! d1} \)

Now that Black has promoted, White must act with checks.

4 \( \text{b4}+ \text{a5} \)

Now the classical drawing mechanism is created. The excellent position of White’s king helps him use the same motifs on the c-file:

4...\( \text{c5} \) 5 \( \text{a6}+ \text{c6} \) 6 \( \text{b8}+ \text{c7} \) 7 \( \text{a6}+ = \text{c8?? 8} \text{b8#}. \)

5 \( \text{c6}+ \text{a6} \) 6 \( \text{b8}+ \)

Remember this pattern. It may help you save a lot of points. I myself saved half a point by using the mechanism in a game against GM Atanas Kolev (La Roda rapid 2001).

Sometimes there is nothing objectively better than taking a draw by perpetual check. But if we have the draw ‘in hand’, so to speak, then there is no harm in trying a final winning chance. If the opponent sees through the idea, then so be it, we must then take the draw.

The position is double-edged and Black defends excellently:

24...\( \text{xa2}! \)

24...\( \text{a7} \) loses to 25 \( \text{c4} \) 26 \( \text{exd5} \text{c5} \) 27 \( \text{g5} \) with the idea 28 \( \text{xh7+}. \)

25 \( \text{xa2} \)

White could have forced a perpetual by 25 \( \text{g8}+ \text{xg8} \) 26 \( \text{xg8}+ \text{xg8} \) 27 \( \text{g5}+ \text{h8} \) 28 \( \text{f6+}, \) but he takes his chance.

25...\( \text{a7}+ \) 26 \( \text{xb2} \text{a3}+ \) 27 \( \text{b1 a8} \) 28 \( \text{a6!} \)

28...\( \text{xa6}! \)

28...\( \text{xa6}! \)

Guseinov is alert. The innocuous-looking bishop on \( a6 \) was heavily laced with poison:

28...\( \text{xa6? 29} \text{g8+} \text{yg8} \) 30 \( \text{yg8+} \text{xg8} \) 31 \( \text{g5+} \text{h8} \) and now White triumphs using the blocking/deflection idea 32 \( \text{g7+}! \text{yg7} \) (or 32...\( \text{g8} \) 33 \( \text{f6+} \) 33 \( \text{d8}+ = \)).
29 \texttt{g8+} \texttt{xg8} 30 \texttt{hxg8+} \texttt{hxg8} 31 \texttt{g5+} 1/2-1/2

Having avoided the trap, Black had earned his half-point.

### Fortresses and Insufficient Material

Another important defensive theme is liquidation to a position where one can easily defend by passive means despite a large material disadvantage. There are two distinct cases: 'fortress' positions, where the opponent cannot improve his position due to a blockade or other positional factors, and the simpler case of the opponent being left without sufficient material to force checkmate.

**Galojan - Tsiganova**

*European Women's Ch, Plovdiv 2008*

Pawn exchanges can be very effective in endgames. Pawns may become queens, so they are especially dangerous and should sometimes be destroyed even at the cost of a piece. In the diagram, the lazy option for Black would be to retreat her knight, but this would most probably lead to defeat (White has two connected, well-advanced and well-supported passed pawns). It is far better to play actively, and seize the opportunity to destroy White's pawns.

63...\texttt{xf4}!

A subtle move. Worse is 63...\texttt{g5}?! 64 \texttt{fxg5} \texttt{d6} 65 \texttt{d1}. This will lead to the rook vs rook + bishop ending, which in theory is drawn with precise defence, but Black will at least need to suffer for fifty more moves, being very careful the whole time to avoid blundering into one of the many lost positions. The text-move has the idea of exchanging rooks too.

64 \texttt{xf4} \texttt{h4}! 65 \texttt{xb4} \texttt{cxb4+} 66 \texttt{xb4} \texttt{g6} 1/2-1/2

White has a bishop more, but the pawns have left the board.

There are many possible fortresses in our game, but I would like to show you one that is not very common.

**Vasilev - Todorov**

*Bulgarian Team Ch, Sunny Beach 2007*

White was aiming for this position, and hoped to exchange all the pieces after 54 \texttt{a7} (followed by 55 \texttt{d5}). However, when this position actually arose, he realized what Black had in store for him: 54...\texttt{e4}!! with the idea 55 \texttt{xc7} \texttt{xc7} 56 \texttt{xe4} and Black's king goes to \texttt{f8}: 56...\texttt{d6} 57 \texttt{d4} \texttt{e7} 58 \texttt{c5} \texttt{f8} 59 \texttt{d6} \texttt{e8} (D).

63...\texttt{xf4}!

White has an extra bishop, but cannot break the fortress. Black simply plays \texttt{f8-e8-f8}, and holds the draw.
In the game he proceeded with 54 Na2 xe4, but without his extra pawn could not make progress and the game was later drawn.

Some ways in which games can be saved are truly miraculous, and it is no surprise that fortresses and positional draws are very popular amongst endgame study composers.

G. Zakhodiakin
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1982

White is an exchange up, but his rook is impotent to stop the black h-pawn, which will clearly promote well before White’s g-pawn. Normal means will not suffice to save White.

1 g6 h2 2 Nh4!
Not 2 g7? h1=+ 3 c2 h7+ 4 d2 g8 =+. The text-move appears only to delay the h-pawn’s promotion by one move, but there is a cunning point behind luring the bishop to h4.

2...xh4 3 g7 h1=+ 4 c2 (D)
The king must move to precisely this square, where neither black piece can check it.

2...

White is a queen and bishop ahead, and is to move, but cannot avoid a draw.

How can White annihilate Black’s dangerous pawns?
White is a pawn down, and needs to hurry before his opponent consolidates.

Be very precise when giving perpetual check!

A rook is also capable of glorious deeds.

Black will queen, but two knights are not sufficient to give mate. So...

Black is three pawns down, but is very active...
Part 2: Advanced Tactics

The second part of the book features the most typical ways to attack a castled king. A king is well protected in its castled position, with a row of pawns in front and normally with some pieces close at hand (normally a rook and a knight, and often a bishop). However, there are also many possible plans for attacking this set-up. If you study these plans carefully, and assess at the board which one is most appropriate under the specific circumstances, you will often be able to carry out successful attacks.

The most sensitive points in the castled position are those which are only covered by the king, or perhaps only by one other piece. These points might be blown apart with the help of various sacrifices, or targeted by a variety of other attacking manoeuvres and mechanisms.

Never forget that we need to have a local superiority of forces if we want to succeed in our mating plans. And as always, control of the centre is important if we are to supply additional forces and prevent our opponent from bringing over defensive forces to guard the king. But most of all, we need to be quick, and to use every move efficiently and to gain time whenever possible.

We shall be taking a particularly close look at attacks with opposite-coloured bishops. While pure opposite-bishop endings tend to be drawish, in an attack and defence situation, the difference in the value of these minor pieces can prove decisive. The better bishop often wins since the attack can be conducted on the squares of its colour, on which its counterpart is impotent.

Open files are another key ingredient. Rooks are the only pieces that do not need to be centralized to show their full potential; all they need are open files. These chess highways provide good communication between the attacking forces, and assure the success of many tactical operations.

Last, but not least – the trapping of pieces, both physical and virtual (i.e. the excluding of a piece) may also bring us the necessary superiority of forces. A piece that is shut out of play can be compared to a pinned, overloaded, or blocked piece. None of these pieces can act with their full potential, and so may become vulnerable and be lost themselves, or may cause other misfortunes thanks to their passivity.

In the last three chapters, strategy and tactics become merged into one intertwined whole, and this is very normal for such a complicated game as chess.
When we observe the initial position of a chess game, one thing inevitably makes an impression. There is one square that is protected only by the king, a square so vulnerable that even novices notice that it is possible to give mate on this square after just a few moves. We are of course talking about the f7-square.

We shall consider several typical situations in which an attack against this fragile point may be feasible:
1) An explosive early sacrifice before castling.
2) After castling, with no rook on f8.
3) After castling, with the f7-pawn protected by the rook.
4) Step-by-step attack against the weak f7-square.

Explosive early sacrifice before castling
As we have already noted, f7 is the most vulnerable square in the initial position, so there is ample scope for early sacrifices on this square. Whole opening plans are based on an early sacrifice on f7, such as the Petroff Defence line 1 e4 e5 2 d4 exd4 3 Qxd4 Qf6 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bc4 c6 6 Qe2 Bb4+ 7 d2 Qa5 8 Oxe7 dxe7 9 Bb5+ Qd7 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 0-0 Bxd4 12 Be2 Qe5 13 Bf3 Qf7 14 Bxg7 Qxg7 15 Qxh7 Qxe5 16 Bxe5 Qf7 17 Bf4 Qg8 18 Qd2 Be7 19 Be3 Qh8 20 Qc3 Qf6 21 Oxe7, when for the sacrificed knight White gets two pawns, and a long-term attack based on the exposed position of the black king. This was seen, for instance, in the game Topalov – Kramnik, Linares 1999. In general one of the best players in our time, Veselin Topalov is a great advocate of early sacrifices on f7. Using the same method he managed to defeat his old adversary Kramnik in one of the best games of the last decade:

Topalov – Kramnik
Wijk aan Zee 2008

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Qf3 Qf6 4 c3 e5 5 g5 h6 6 h4 dxc4 7 e4 g5 8 Bg3 b5 9 a2 Bb7 10 0-0 Bd7 11 c5 Bg7 (D)

12 Qxf7!??
The second exclamation mark is for the courage to give up a piece against a world-class player at such an early stage of the game. This was Ivan Cheparinov’s deep novelty, prepared in 2005 for possible use in the 2006 world championship match. White gets only one pawn for the piece, but develops a strong initiative against the opponent’s king. Topalov went on to win a flashy game, and the reader can find annotations in many sources in case he is not already familiar with this game.

Topalov – Anand
Sofia 2005

1 d4 d6 2 c4 e6 3 Qf3 f5 4 g3 a6 5 b3 Bb4+ 6 d2 Qa5 7 ac3 e5 8 dxe5 Qxe5 9 0-0 Qe4 10 Qxe4 Bb7 11 Qe5 c5

---

1 Or the f2-square in White’s position. For ease of reference, we shall in our general discussions refer to the f7-square, but naturally the reader should not assume that White’s f2-square is any safer against the ideas we shall present!
After 11...h6 both 12  ♔xf7 and 12  □xe6 blow Black’s position apart in a similar way to the game continuation.

11...0-0 was given by Topalov as safer, when White can reply 12 0-0-0 with the idea 13  ♖d3.

12 d5 exd5 13 cxd5 h6 (D)

14  ♔xf7!  ♔xf7 15 0-0-0

White has a strong initiative against Black’s king. He has at his disposal various threats, such as 16  ♖c5+ and 16 d6 followed by  ♖c4+, and can use both his rooks in the attack. One very important feature of the position is that after the demolition of the black pawn on f7, a whole complex of light squares has become desperately weak.

15...  ♖d6 16  ♖h4  ♖c8 17  ♖e1  ♖a6 18  ♖e6  ♖b4

18...  ♖c7 19  ♖g6+  ♖g8 20  ♖f5  ♖f8 21  ♖c4 underlines the light-square weaknesses in Black’s camp.

19  ♖xb4 cxb4 20  ♖c4 b5

Black had other possible defences, such as 20...  ♖f8 and 20...  ♖g8, which is aimed against 21  ♖g6, which will be met by 21...b5! However, the evaluation of the position remains the same: White has a strong attack and any mistake from Black’s side will be cruelly punished.

21  ♖xb5  ♖e7?

And here it comes. Better was 21...  ♖g8!?, meeting 22  ♖g6 with 22...h5!? Topalov proposed 22  ♖c4 or 22  ♖d1 in reply.

22  ♖g6!?  ♖xd5

22...  ♖xe6 23 dxe6+  ♖g8 24  ♖d1  ♖d5 25  ♖c4 ++

23  ♖xe7+?!

This was White’s only flaw in his superb attack. Although he nevertheless won later, we shall leave the game at this point, as it would distract from the main focus of our discussion here. The subtle 23  ♖e5  ♖b7 24  ♖f5+  ♖g8 25  ♖c4 would have led to an instant win, and is an ideal illustration of the ideas behind the assault on f7.

A COURSE IN CHESS TACTICS

Alsina Leal – Fluvia Poyatos

Barcelona 2008

The weakness of the light squares can also be highlighted by a sacrifice on a square other than f7. In this case White deflects the f7-pawn, and can destroy it later.

17  ♖g6!

This is practically the same idea as the sacrifice on f7: White just captures the pawn in an unusual way.

17...fxg6 18  ♖xg6+  ♖e7 19  ♖e5  ♖c7 20  ♖f7  ♖g8 21  ♖e5  ♖c6 22 0-0-0

As a result of the sacrifice, Black’s king has had to stay in the centre under threats from all the white pieces. It is no wonder that it did not survive for too long.

22...  ♖d5 23  ♖xd5  ♖xd5 24  ♖d1  ♖b7 25  ♖xd5 ♖xd5 26  ♖xh6  ♖h8 27  ♖f7+  ♖d8 28  ♖c7+  ♖e8 29  ♖f7 1-0

After castling, with no rook on f8

When Black castles kingside, his rook immediately covers the f7-pawn. However, for various reasons the rook may move from f8, possibly to contest an open file, or with some other strategic aim in mind, such as freeing f8 for a knight or bishop. However well motivated this may be, it does leave f7 highly sensitive once again, and various mating mechanisms may then work.
One typical idea is to play $\text{Wh7+}$ followed by the $\text{Bxf7}$ sacrifice. The attacker first cuts off the king’s way back to his safe squares g8 and h8, and attacks it on the f- and e-files. Naturally, this is most likely to be effective when the e- and f-files are open and in your control.

$\text{Wh7+} \text{Bf8}$

Since $\text{Wh8} 22 \text{Bxf7#}$ is instant mate.

$\text{Bxf7} \text{Wh7} 17 \text{Bxe7} \text{Bxe7}$

$\text{Bxf6} \text{gxf6} 26 \text{g8#}$ (1-0)

The dark-squared bishop can also be used in the action.

$\text{Wh7+} \text{Bf8}$

Since the capture on g6 leads to forced mate, and $\text{Wh7} 19 \text{Bxf7!! $\text{Bxf7}$ 20 $\text{Bxf7}$+ $\text{Bxf7}$ 21 $\text{Wh6+}$ $\text{Bf8}$ 22 $\text{Bh5}$ $\text{Bf6}$ (D)

As in the case of a sacrifice on f7 against an uncastled king, the attacker can enter on other squares around the king in order to reach f7:
The next example is a famous one, where a series of sacrifices drags the king out into the centre.

24...\texttt{x}f2! 25 \texttt{x}f2 \texttt{x}e3! 26 \texttt{x}e3
26 \texttt{x}e3 \texttt{g}4+ 27 \texttt{d}2 \texttt{x}h6 gives Black a pawn for an exchange and an overwhelming advantage on the dark squares. Therefore, White might as well try keeping the sacrificed rook, even though his king will now be in great danger.

26...\texttt{g}4+ 27 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{x}h2+ 28 \texttt{f}2 \texttt{g}4+ 29 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{e}6! (D)

Black's attack is unstoppable.

30 \texttt{f}4
Everything else is equally hopeless: 30 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{xe}4+ 31 \texttt{xe}4 \texttt{e}8+; 30 \texttt{d}2? \texttt{e}8; 30 \texttt{c}1 \texttt{h}5! (threatening ...\texttt{xd}5+ and ...\texttt{e}8) 31 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{xf}4 32 \texttt{xf}4 (or 32 \texttt{xf}4 \texttt{xd}5, mating) 32...\texttt{xd}5 33 \texttt{g}3 \texttt{h}4+ 34 \texttt{h}4 \texttt{e}3, mating.

30...\texttt{e}8
30...\texttt{xf}4 31 \texttt{c}4!.
31 \texttt{c}4 \texttt{e}3+ 32 \texttt{xe}3 \texttt{xe}3+ 33 \texttt{g}4 \texttt{c}8+ 34 \texttt{g}5 \texttt{h}6+! 35 \texttt{xh}6 \texttt{e}5 0-1

The sacrifice on \texttt{f}7 can be a prelude of a total annihilation of the pawns in front of the king:

23 \texttt{xf}7! \texttt{xf}7 24 \texttt{h}5+ \texttt{g}6 25 \texttt{xe}4 \texttt{f}8
26 \texttt{e}4 1-0

Or it might clear the road for all the attacking pieces:

27...\texttt{xf}2+! 28 \texttt{xf}2 \texttt{e}2+ 29 \texttt{g}1
29 \texttt{f}1 \texttt{g}2+ 30 \texttt{g}1 \texttt{xd}2 --.
29...\texttt{g}2+?!
29...\texttt{xd}2! 30 \texttt{e}1 \texttt{g}6! 31 \texttt{e}6 \texttt{g}2+ 32 \texttt{f}1 \texttt{g}3! (Ftačnik) favours Black.
30 \texttt{f}1 \texttt{xd}2 31 \texttt{g}8?
After 31 h4! Black has no more than a draw.
31...g2+ 32 e1 e2+ 33 d1 f3 34 h7+ g5 35 a2
35 xg7+ h4 36 f6+ xh3 37 c1 e1+ 38 d2 xal --.
35...h2+ 36 e1
36 c1 xdx3+ (36...e2+ 37 d2 d4+ 38 e3 e5 --) 37 cxd3 f4+ 38 bl h1+ 39 c2 c1+ 40 b3 d1#.
36...xd3+! 0-1

After castling, with the f7-pawn protected by the rook

The sacrifice is often made when the attacker has a bishop trained on the e6-square. In this case, the defender’s extra option of recapturing with his rook may not be a good solution, since the rook is liable to be pinned:

22 xf7! xf7
In this case, there is no choice, and Black must take with the rook.
23 xe6 ed5 (D)

Black opens a line for his queen’s rook to defend its colleague on f7.
24 e5 a7 25 xc6
White already has two pawns for a piece, and he will certainly gain at least an exchange. In addition he is not in a hurry and may choose the best moment to recoup his material investment.
25...f4 26 xa6 xa6 27 xf7+ h8 28 f3 1-0

The typical sacrifice can be very effective in conjunction with a weak back rank:
first, he needed to crack the f7-point, and he found an original way to do so.

Maksimenko – Komandini  
Italy 2003

1...\texttt{e}8! \texttt{c}5 (D)

1...\texttt{xe}8 does not work due to the drastic 2 \texttt{g}6+!! \texttt{xf}6 3 \texttt{f}7+.

1...\texttt{h}8 allows a decisive attack on the vulnerable square: 2 \texttt{e}7 \texttt{bxa}3 (2...\texttt{xe}8 3 \texttt{xf}7 \texttt{xa}8 3...\texttt{e}4) 3 \texttt{xf}7 \texttt{xb}2+(3...\texttt{a}2 4 \texttt{d}2++) 4 \texttt{b}1++.  

\textit{Informator} gives in addition the line 1...\texttt{xe}8 2 \texttt{xe}8 \texttt{xe}8 3 \texttt{a}4 \texttt{e}4 4 \texttt{d}7, where White also breaks through to the f7-square thanks to the manoeuvre \texttt{c}8+ and \texttt{f}8.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{Maksimenko_Komandini.png}
\end{center}

17 \texttt{f}3!

White first opens a line of attack for his rooks against f7.

17...\texttt{xf}3 18 \texttt{xf}3 \texttt{f}6

The knight is a temporary obstacle, and can be easily removed:

19 \texttt{e}4! \texttt{g}4 20 \texttt{g}3 \texttt{h}5

Black has managed to bring a bishop over to protect f7. However, he lacks space, and as a result will not be able to involve all his forces in the defence. Meanwhile, White can use every single unit in his army.

21 \texttt{e}5 \texttt{d}7 22 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{g}6 23 \texttt{g}5

Almost all the white troops have amassed in their siege of the weak point.

23...\texttt{f}8 24 \texttt{e}6 \texttt{e}5

24...\texttt{f}6 is better, but still insufficient: 25 \texttt{xf}7 \texttt{xf}7 26 \texttt{xf}7+ \texttt{h}8 27 \texttt{ae}1 wins for White.

25 \texttt{xf}7+ \texttt{xf}7 26 \texttt{ae}1 \texttt{d}7 27 \texttt{h}4 \texttt{be}8 (D)

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{Moiseev_Luchinkin.png}
\end{center}

And after pinning down Black’s forces, White delivers the final blow:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{Step_by_step_attack.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Step-by-step attack against the weak f7-square}

If we lack a suitable way to smash through with a direct attack, we need to bring up reinforcements first. The most conventional way is to open a file for the rooks.
Black has just played 20...e6-e5?, afraid that his bishop on g6 will be excluded from the game. However, this was the lesser evil, since after his actual move, Black has greater problems with f7-square.

21 \( \text{N} \times g6 \)

A decision based on concrete considerations. Although the bishop was passive, it was an important defender of f7.

21...hxg6 (D)

Black is counting on 13 \( \text{W} \times g7 \text{g} 8 \). Does White have anything better?

22 f4

White clears the road for his major pieces. The f1-rook is ready to attack the f7-square.

22...exd4 23 \( \text{N} \times d4 \) b6?

23...f8 or 23...f8 is more resilient. The line 23...c5 24 \( \text{N} \times f7+ \) xf7 25 \( \text{N} \times c5 \) xc5 26 \( \text{N} \times c5 \) shows an additional danger from the f7-point. Also bad is 23...f6 24 e5 f8 25 \( \text{W} \times d3 \) ad8 26 exf6 c5 27 b5 and White wins.

24 f5 g5

Black tries to keep the f-file closed at any rate. However, the white queen now has free access to h5, and thus the f7-square.

25 \( \text{W} \times h5 \) f6

Or 25...e5 26 f6 g6 27 \( \text{W} \times h6 \) f8 28 \( \text{N} \times e5 \) followed by \( \text{W} \times g6+ \).

26 \( \text{N} \times f6 \) gxf6 27 \( \text{W} \times g6+ \) f8 28 \( \text{W} \times f6 \) e5 29 \( \text{W} \times g5 \) e7 30 f6 \( \text{N} \times d4+ \) 31 \( \text{N} \times f1 \) 1-0
White’s passed pawn looks doomed. Is it? How can White burn down his opponent’s house?

This combination often occurs in positions with an isolated queen’s pawn. Drag the king out!

Our focus should be on one particular pawn... The rook will be sorry for leaving f8 so early.
Once the king has castled on the kingside, the most vulnerable spot in his camp becomes the rook’s pawn on h7 (or h2 in the case of White). It is the furthest from the rest of the forces, and the hardest to protect. The rook has abandoned it, and in many cases it is only the king who keeps an eye on this pawn. Often it is also guarded by the knight on f6, but this piece is more exposed to attack. It can frequently be removed by an attack by a pawn, or else pinned, exchanged, or even annihilated by a sacrifice.

The attacker has at his disposal various attacking mechanisms. **Queen and knight** can form a highly potent attacking team, and there are a variety of ways by which they can drag a king out from behind its pawn-shield:

Now White has a forced mate. A critical line runs 21...\(\text{c}\)c4 22 \(\text{e}\)f1 \(\text{h}\)8 23 \(\text{d}\)3 f6 24 g4 \(\text{h}\)6 25 \(\text{e}\)6+ \(\text{h}\)7 26 exf6 \(\text{x}\)xf6 27 \(\text{c}\)7 \(\text{a}\)e8 28 \(\text{f}\)3 \(\text{x}\)e6 29 \(\text{x}\)xf6 \(\text{x}\)e1+ 30 \(\text{g}\)2 \(\text{a}\)8 31 \(\text{f}\)7, when the mate threat forces Black to give up material. He is fighting for a draw after 31...d4+ 32 f3 \(\text{x}\)f3+ 33 \(\text{x}\)f3 \(\text{e}\)5 34 \(\text{h}\)5+ \(\text{g}\)8 35 \(\text{f}\)8+ \(\text{f}\)8 36 \(\text{x}\)h8+ \(\text{f}\)7.

22 \(\text{h}\)5+ \(\text{h}\)6 23 \(\text{f}\)5
Dragging the king out into the open.

23...\(\text{w}\)e8 24 \(\text{h}\)7+ \(\text{x}\)g5 25 f4+ \(\text{g}\)4 26 \(\text{x}\)g7+ \(\text{f}\)5 27 g4+ 1-0

---

1...\(\text{c}\)c2!
Black needs to annihilate the knight on f3 and he opens a pathway for the demolition crew (in the form of the f8-rook) with gain of tempo.

2 \(\text{w}\)xc2
Or: 2 \(\text{b}\)5 \(\text{x}\)d1 3 \(\text{x}\)d6 \(\text{x}\)e2--; 2 \(\text{w}\)el is similar: 2...d4+ 3 \(\text{h}\)1 \(\text{x}\)f3 --.

2...\(\text{x}\)f3! 3 g3
3 \(\text{x}\)f3 \(\text{x}\)h2+ 4 \(\text{f}\)1 \(\text{h}\)1#.

3...\(\text{x}\)xg3+!

The rook is intent on demolishing White’s defences and securing its queen’s access to deliver mate on h2.

4 \(\text{h}\)1 \(\text{g}\)1+! 0-1
Lining up the **queen and bishop** to attack the rook's pawn is especially attractive when the opponent's king is in the corner square:

18...\textit{Qf}3! 19 \textit{Wxc}6
19 \textit{gx}f3 \textit{gx}f3 20 \textit{xf}3 \textit{e}5 is Black's main point, when mate is inevitable. Note that his opponent cannot hinder or block the key diagonal.

19...\textit{e}5 (D)

20 \textit{Wxd}6
20 \textit{g}3 does not suffice, since the queen finds a good location by 20...\textit{Wh}5. After 21 \textit{xf}3 \textit{gx}f3, the f6-knight can come into play by ...\textit{g}4, and when White meets this threat with h4, Black will secure victory by ...\textit{e}7. The same motifs occurs in other lines too.

20...\textit{Wxd}6 21 \textit{gxf}3
White has only two minor pieces for the queen, and went on to lose.

From what we have already seen, one might think that the simplest solution is to advance the pawn one square by playing ...h6. In some situations this is indeed essential, and a good way to sidestep the most dangerous threats. But it is certainly no panacea, and in many cases the pawn is exposed to a sacrifice, or leaves a very sore point on g6. Here is a model example of how the g6-square can be exploited:

28 \textit{f}4 \textit{g}4 0-1

**Queen and rook** constitute a lot of firepower that works well on the rook's file. If the attacking side has not yet castled, or has castled on the opposite wing, then it may be quite straightforward to bring a rook into the assault.
V. Georgiev – Kurajica
Solin 2007

The vulnerable rook’s pawn

1 d4 ∅f6 2 c4 e6 3 ∅f3 ∅b4+ 4 ∅bd2 d5 5 a3 ∅e7 6 ∅c2 dxc4 7 ∅xc4 c5 8 dxc5 ∅xe5 9 b4 ∅e7 10 ∅b2 0-0 11 ∅d1 ∅d7 (D)

White has a decisive advantage of forces on the kingside. The position must be opened now:

15 ∅xh7! ∅xh7 16 hxg6 ∅f6 17 g7 ∅f5 18 gxf8+ ∅xf8 19 ∅xf5 exf5 20 ∅h8+ ∅g8 21 e3 ∅e6 22 ∅e5 a6 23 ∅c4 ∅xc4 24 ∅xc4 b5 25 ∅b6 1-0

Black has not handled the opening very successfully, and White now starts an attack against h7.

12 ∅g5!

For the moment the threat is to exchange the knight, so Black’s next move is forced:

12...g6

However, this advance provides a point of contact which allows White to open the h-file.

13 h4!

Sometimes it is useful to postpone castling!

13...∅c7 14 h5 ∅f4 (D)

15 ∅xh7! ∅xh7

White has a decisive advantage of forces on the kingside. The position must be opened now:

15 ∅xh7! ∅xh7 16 hxg6 ∅f6 17 g7 ∅f5 18 gxf8+ ∅xf8 19 ∅xf5 exf5 20 ∅h8+ ∅g8 21 e3 ∅e6 22 ∅e5 a6 23 ∅c4 ∅xc4 24 ∅xc4 b5 25 ∅b6 1-0

The ♦+∞ mechanism can also be used after same-side castling with the help of the rook-lift:

Keres – Fine
Ostend 1937

The ♦+∞ mechanism can also be used after same-side castling with the help of the rook-lift:

24 ∅xh7! ∅xh7 25 ∅h3 ♦e1

A desperate attempt to deflect White’s forces. However, White has achieved enough already.

26 ♦xh7+ ♦f8 27 ♦e3 (D)

27...d4 28 ♦h8+ ♦e7 29 ♦xg7 ♦f8 30 ♦f6+ ♦e8 31 e6 1-0

The double bishop sacrifice is one of the best-known ways to demolish a castled position. Although it is quite rare for the double sacrifice to occur in practice, it is an important method that is in the background in many types of position – one must be familiar with the idea to attack or defend these positions successfully.

The first example of it was created by Emanuel Lasker. It has features in common with the ♦+∞ attacks we have just seen, but the difference is
that the stronger side sacrifices two bishops first, in order to open both the g- and the h-files for the major pieces. Here is a recent example:

![Chess Board Illustration]

**Sutovsky – Vavrak**  
*European Ch, Plovdiv 2008*

20 $\textit{\&}xh7+$!  
White begins destroying the black king’s fortifications.

20...$\textit{\&}xh7$ 21 $\textit{\&}h5+$ $\textit{\&}g8$ 22 $\textit{\&}xe5$ $\textit{\&}xb5$

(\textit{D})  
Or 22...$\textit{\&}c2$ 23 $\textit{\&}fc1$ $\textit{\&}f2$ 24 $\textit{\&}xg7$ $\textit{\&}xg7$ 25 $\textit{\&}g5+$ $\textit{\&}h8$ 26 $\textit{\&}c3$ e5 27 g4 $\textit{\&}e3$ 28 $\textit{\&}xe3$ $\textit{\&}xg4$ 29 $\textit{\&}h6+$ $\textit{\&}g8$ 30 $\textit{\&}g1$.

23 $\textit{\&}xg7$!  
The second sacrifice, which cannot be accepted due to $\textit{\&}g5+$ followed by a rook-lift on third, fourth or sixth rank.

23...f5 24 $\textit{\&}e5$ $\textit{\&}d8$ 25 $\textit{\&}f3$ $\textit{\&}f8$ 26 $\textit{\&}g3$ 1-0  
With or without the bishop, White will decisively use the open file.

In the following example White uses the b7-rook as a decisive reinforcement:

20 $\textit{\&}xh7+$! $\textit{\&}f8$

![Chess Board Illustration]

**Miroshnichenko – Gunnarsson**  
*European Ch, Ohrid 2001*

20...$\textit{\&}xh7$ 21 $\textit{\&}h5+$ $\textit{\&}g8$ 22 $\textit{\&}h3$ $\textit{\&}xf2+$ 23 $\textit{\&}h1+$.

21 $\textit{\&}xg7+$! $\textit{\&}xg7$ 22 $\textit{\&}e5+$ 1-0

In view of 22...$\textit{\&}h6$ 23 $\textit{\&}f6+$ $\textit{\&}xh7$ 24 $\textit{\&}h3+$ $\textit{\&}xh3$ 25 $\textit{\&}xf7+$ or 22...$\textit{\&}xh7$ 23 $\textit{\&}h5+$ $\textit{\&}g7$ 24 $\textit{\&}g3+$, when again the rook takes part in the assault since it prevents the ...$\textit{\&}g4$ covering resource.

And here is an example by Garry Kasparov himself on a closely related theme:

![Chess Board Illustration]

**Kasparov – Portisch**  
*Nikšić 1983*

19 $\textit{\&}xh7+$ $\textit{\&}xh7$ 20 $\textit{\&}d5$ $\textit{\&}g8$ 21 $\textit{\&}xg7+$! $\textit{\&}xg7$ 22 $\textit{\&}e5+$!  
The point. White reaches the g- and h-files in an unconventional way. In some lines, the rook might be used via the seventh rank.

22...$\textit{\&}fd8$

Or:

a) 22...f5 23 $\textit{\&}d7$ $\textit{\&}c5$ 24 $\textit{\&}d3$ and Black’s bishop is lost.
b) 22...\(\text{h8}\) 23 \(\text{g4+ c6}\) 24 \(\text{f5}\) \(\text{f6}\) 25 \(\text{e1}\) \\
\(\text{e7}\) (25...\(\text{c1}\) 26 \(\text{f3}\) ++) 26 \(\text{d7+ f7}\) 27 \\
\(\text{e7+}++\).

c) 22...\(\text{c2}\) 23 \(\text{g4+ h7}\) 24 \(\text{d3 c3}\) 25 \\
\(\text{h3+}\) and 26 \(\text{xc3}\).

23 \(\text{g4+ f8}\) 24 \(\text{f5}\) \(\text{f6}\) (D)

25 \(\text{d7+}\)!

After 25 \(\text{g6+}\), Black must avoid 25...
\(\text{e8}\)? 26 \(\text{h5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 27 \(\text{e5+}++\), while 25...
\(\text{g7}\) 26 \\
\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 27 \(\text{exd5}\) (27 \(\text{g6+}\) \(\text{h8}\) 28 \(\text{e6}\) \\
\(\text{g5}\)) 27...
\(\text{c5}\) 28 \(\text{xe7}\) leaves White a pawn \\
up. The best defence is 25...
\(\text{f7}\), when 26 \(\text{e5+}+\) \\
\(\text{f8}\) returns to the game position, when White \\
should continue 27 \(\text{d7+}\)!

25...\(\text{xd7}\) 26 \(\text{xd7 c5}\) 27 \(\text{h7 c7}\) 28 \\
\(\text{h8+}\)!

White has to be precise if he is to keep his 
raging attack going. Here 28 \(\text{d3}\)? allows 
28...
\(\text{xf2+}!!\) 29 \(\text{xf2}\) (not 29 \(\text{xf2}\)? \(\text{c1+}\)) \\
29...
\(\text{c5+}\) 30 \(\text{g3}\) \(\text{h7}\), with approximate 
equality.

28...
\(\text{f7}\) 29 \(\text{d3 c4}\) 30 \(\text{f1!}\) (D)

32 \(\text{h4}\) may give White some advantage, while 31 \\
\(\text{h3}\) also makes life very difficult for Black. 
However, this is far from being lost by force 
for Black, which is the case after his actual choice.

31 \(\text{h7+}\) \(\text{e6}\) 32 \(\text{g8+ f5}\) 33 \(\text{g4+ f4}\) 34 \\
\(\text{d4+}\) \(\text{f3}\) 35 \(\text{b3+}\) 1-0

The pairing of \textit{rook and bishop} can be very 
effective if the bishop is supporting a back-rank 
mate. In that case it makes sense to sacrifice on 
h7 in order to open the h-file.

26 \(\text{d7+}\)!! \(\text{h7}\)

26...
\(\text{xc5}\) 27 \(\text{xf8 c7}\) 28 \(\text{f5}++\) and white 
pieces reach the h-file as well.

27 \(\text{e3 g8}\) (D)

Black may also try to distract some of the 
white troops, but they will not be interested: 
27...
\(\text{c5}\) 28 \(\text{h3+}\) \(\text{h6}\) 29 \(\text{f5}\) \(\text{e2}\) (29...
\(\text{g8}\) \\
30 \(\text{h6+}\) ++) 30 \(\text{f2}\) \(\text{f4}\) 31 \(\text{h6+}\) \(\text{h6}\) \\
32 \(\text{c5}++\).
30 \texttt{W}xh6+! \texttt{Q}xh6 31 \texttt{g}5 1-0
31...\texttt{Q}e2+ 32 \texttt{Q}h1 +–.

Three minor pieces can successfully mate if they control the important diagonals:

![Diagram](image)

Bojkov – Berend
Differdange 2007

18 \texttt{Q}h5!
A decisive way to bring the most powerful piece into the attack. The queen is poisoned due to a well-known mating pattern called Blackburne’s Mate.
18...\texttt{h}6
18...\texttt{g}xh5 19 \texttt{Q}xh7#.
19 \texttt{Q}xg6
The rest is easy, as White has decisive superiority of force.
19...\texttt{Q}xd4 20 \texttt{Q}xf7+ \texttt{Q}h8 21 \texttt{Q}xe8 \texttt{Q}f6 22 \texttt{Q}f7+ \texttt{Q}g7 1-0

Exercises

1
![Diagram](image)

h7 is protected only by the king, but the rook will soon support it unless White acts now.

2
![Diagram](image)

White is attacking h7 twice. Make it thrice.

3
![Diagram](image)

a2 can be just as vulnerable as h7.

4
![Diagram](image)

There’s no need for a double bishop sacrifice here.
How should White crown his massive attack?

Two silent subtleties decide the game.

Break through to the most vulnerable square.

A disaster should befall Black here.
The fianchetto is a very common structure in chess. Many openings are based on it, such as the Dragon, Pirc, King's and Queen's Indian and Grünfeld Defences, Réti and Catalan Openings, etc. From its comfortable position on the long diagonal, the bishop exerts a great influence upon the centre. At the same time, the pawn-shield in front of the king looks stable, with the bishop neatly plugging the gaps left by the knight's pawn. However, if we manage to exchange the bishop, the whole complex of squares that it defends will become vulnerable.

We have two standard plans to shatter the fianchetto:

1. Exchange the fianchettoed bishop and attack the weak squares around it.
2. Advance the rook's pawn in order to open the h-file (or a-file), and use the open file to bring in the major pieces.

Exchange the Fianchettoed Bishop

Pogonina – Biriukov
Russian Under-26 Ch, Novokuznetsk 2007

1 e4 d6 2 d4 g6 3 c3 g7 4 e3 c6 5 d2 b5 6 d3 a6 7 a4 b7 8 f3 f6?! (D)

9 h6

This is a standard plan for these positions. White seeks to exploit the squares left weakened by the fianchetto.

9...0-0 10 0-0 b4 11 e2

The knight is heading for g3 and the kingside.

11...c5 12 g3 xh6?

A bad decision, since the white queen is now too close to the enemy king. Sometimes it is the right decision to draw the queen to the edge of the board in this way in order to strike back in the centre, but this must always be judged very carefully. Here White's attack is too strong. Black should wait for White to exchange on g7.

13 xh6 cxd4 (D)

14 g5!

White continues aggressively. She ties the f6-knight to the defence of the h7-pawn, and prepares an advance of her f-pawn to open the way for the rook to annihilate this knight. The queen feels more than comfortable on h6.

14...e5

In case of 14...bd7 White plays 15 f4! with the threat of e5. The main defender is obviously the f6-knight, and it is supported by its colleague from d7. They both need to be removed! Now:

a) 15 a5 16 a1 c5 17 fxe5 xex5 18 f5! gxf5 (after 18...e7 19 ef1 both knights will soon be destroyed) 19 xf5 and due to the threat 20 g7#, Black needs to part with his queen.

b) 15 c7 16 a1 (with the idea 17 e5) 16...c6 (hitting g2) 17 f2! (protecting g2,
and preparing to double rooks on the f-file) 17...e5 18 fxe5 dxe5 19 £f1 (White is ready to annihilate the knights) 19...£c8 (D).

White now has a pleasant choice:

b1) 20 £c4 (deflecting the strongest piece away from the king) 20...£xc4 21 £xf6 £xf6 22 £xf6 £c7. The point is that after 23 b3! Black's queen is finally deflected from the f7-square and Black is mated: 23...£c3 24 £xh7+ £f8 25 £xf7+ £f7 26 £xh7#.

b2) 20 £xf6 is a straightforward approach. 20...£xf6 21 £h5! (it is important that White clears the sixth rank, so that the rook is defended) 21...gxh5 22 £xf6 £xf6 23 £xf6 winning a piece.

14...£a5 (D) is another defensive try.

However, it fails to 15 £h5!!, opening the bl-h7 diagonal with decisive effect. 15...gxh5 16 e5! £bd7 17 exf6 £xf6 18 £xh7+ £h8 19 £d3+ (19 £e4+ is also good enough to win) 19...£g8 20 £ae1 and Black is totally helpless.

15 f4 £bd7 16 fxe5 £xe5 (D)

17 £xf6!

17 £f3 is also good, but when you have identified the most important defenders and have a chance to destroy them, there is rarely any need to hesitate!

17...£xf6 18 £f1 £e8 19 £h5!

We have already seen this method in the previous notes.

19...gxh5 20 £xf6 £xf6 21 £xf6 £f8 22 £h6 1-0

White conducted the attack flawlessly, but her opponent allowed her too much leeway.

Here is a similar case but with a different attacking formation, which is characteristic of the Sicilian Grand Prix Attack:

11 £h6!

White is ready to build the winning construction with his knight on g5, like in the previous example.

11...£e5 12 £g5 £d7

12...£f6 13 £xf8 £xg5 14 £xg5 £xf8 is a little better, although White wins by 15 £xf6.

13 £xg7 £xg7 14 £xh7+ £f6 15 £xf5 £xf5 16 £d5+ £xg5 17 £xf5+ £xf5 18 £h4+ £g4 19 £xc7 £h8 20 £g7 1-0

Rogovsky – Tukhaev
Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2002
Here is a similar attack with additional support from an open e-file:

![Diagram](image)

**Gongora – Guerrero**  
*Cuba 2003*

1 \( \text{h}5!! \)

This forces a swift mate. White is really spoilt for choice here, as 1 \( \text{g}5 \) followed by \( \text{h}5!! \) is another quick way to achieve victory – the same idea as we saw in Pogonina-Biriukov above.

1...\( \text{gxh}5 \)  
2 \( \text{xe}8+! \text{xe}8 3 \text{h}8+ \text{g}8 4 \text{g}6+ 1-0

Defenders are rarely naïve enough to exchange off their own fianchettoed bishop and invite a devastating attack. That is why in many cases we need to sacrifice material to achieve this aim.

![Diagram](image)

**Ni Hua – Malakhatko**  
*Gibraltar 2008*

30 \( \text{xg}7+! \text{xe}7 31 \text{e}7+ \text{g}8 32 \text{h}6 \text{f}7 33 \text{e}5! 1-0

The dark squares have been cracked open.

![Diagram](image)

**Freidles – Ben-Pinchas**  
*Israel 2002*

White needs to get rid of his opponent’s bishop and finds an original way to do so:

1 \( \text{xe}7+! \text{xe}7 \)

Or 1...\( \text{xe}7 2 \text{f}6 \text{e}6 3 \text{xe}8 \text{xe}8 \text{xe}7 5 \text{f}6+ \text{g}8 6 \text{c}5 \) and White wins.

2 \( \text{f}6!! \)

The point. White exchanges the most important defender, and Black’s pieces start to hang. He will now have problems with the dark squares in all lines.

2...\( \text{b}3 \) (D)

Black seeks counterplay with his passed pawn. Blocking the bishop with 2...\( \text{f}5 \) does not save him: 3 \( \text{h}8 \text{b}3 \) (3...\( \text{xh}8 4 \text{exf}5 \text{xe}1+ 5 \text{xe}1 \text{b}3 \text{f}6 \text{xd}6! \text{xe}1+ 7 \text{g}2 +=) 4 \text{axb}3 \text{xe}8 5 \text{f}1 +-

2...\( \text{d}5 \) is also insufficient: 3 \text{exd}5 \text{xe}1+ 4 \text{xe}1 \text{b}3 5 \text{e}3 \text{xe}1+ 6 \text{xe}1 \text{bxc}2 7 \text{g}5 \text{xd}3 8 \text{e}7 +-

3 \( \text{h}8 \text{d}5 4 \text{c}1?!

A reasonable practical choice, but missing 4 \( \text{exd}5! \text{xe}1+ 5 \text{g}2 \), when White wins due to his mating ideas.
4...bxa2
4...bxc2 is more resilient, but 5 \text{\textit{xb}2} \text{\textit{xb}8} 6 \text{\textit{xc}2} \text{\textit{b}4} 7 \text{\textit{a}1}+ \text{\textit{e}5} 8 \text{\textit{b}2} is still grim for Black.

\textbf{5 \text{\textit{xb}2} \text{\textit{xb}8} 6 \text{\textit{xb}8} \text{\textit{xb}8} 7 \text{\textit{ex}d}5 (D)}

\textbf{Advance the Rook's Pawn}

\textbf{Riazantsev – Yandemirov}

\textit{Moscow 2008}

1 \text{d}4 \text{\textit{f}6} 2 \text{c}4 \text{g}6 3 \text{\textit{c}3} \text{d}5 4 \text{\textit{cxd}5} \text{\textit{d}5} 5 \text{e}4 \text{\textit{xc}3} 6 \text{\textit{b}xc}3 \text{\textit{g}7} 7 \text{\textit{c}e}4 0-0 8 \text{\textit{e}2} \text{\textit{c}6} 9 0-0 \text{\textit{a}5} 10 \text{\textit{d}3} \text{b}6 11 \text{\textit{e}3} \text{\textit{w}d}7 12 \text{\textit{c}1} \text{\textit{b}7} 13 \text{\textit{wd}2} \text{\textit{fe}8} 14 \text{\textit{h}6} \text{\textit{h}8} 15 \text{e}5 \text{c}5 16 \text{\textit{g}5} \text{\textit{ex}d}4 17 \text{\textit{ex}d}4 \text{e}6 (D)

White has tried to weaken the fianchetto, but his opponent did not allow the exchange of bishops. White now turns to the second plan we described at the start of the chapter. He can afford to advance his h-pawn thanks to his space advantage and the stable central structure.

\textbf{18 \text{h}4! \text{\textit{c}6} 19 \text{\textit{f}d}1 \text{\textit{e}7} 20 \text{h}5 \text{\textit{ac}8} 21 \text{\textit{xc}8} \text{\textit{xc}8} 22 \text{\textit{f}4}! \pm}

White hits the sore point \textit{g}6 with more pieces.

\textbf{22...\text{\textit{xd}4} 23 \text{\textit{c}2} \text{\textit{e}5}}

And not 23...\text{\textit{xe}5} 24 \text{\textit{xe}7}! \text{\textit{xe}7} 25 \text{\textit{d}8}+.

\textbf{24 \text{hx}g6}

Finally breaking in, even with the bishops on the board.

\textbf{24...\text{\textit{xc}2}}

24...\text{\textit{hxg}6} 25 \text{\textit{ax}e}5 \text{\textit{fx}g}6 26 \text{\textit{xe}5} \text{\textit{h}7} 27 \text{\textit{h}8} \text{\textit{e}8}+.

Riazantsev now concluded the game in style:

\textbf{25 \text{\textit{dd}8}! \text{\textit{xd}8} 26 \text{g}7 \text{\textit{d}1}+?}

26...\text{\textit{g}6} allows 27 \text{\textit{xd}8}+. Black's only attempt to prolong the game was 26...\text{\textit{d}1}+ 27 \text{\textit{h}2} \text{\textit{f}5} 28 \text{\textit{gx}h}8\text{\textit{w}+}+ \text{\textit{h}8} 29 \text{\textit{h}5} \text{\textit{w}h}5+ (29...\text{\textit{f}6} fails to 30 \text{\textit{xf}6}+ \text{\textit{g}8} 31 \text{\textit{g}4} \text{\textit{d}4} 32 \text{\textit{e}3}) 30 \text{\textit{h}5} but it is understandable that Yandemirov chose not to bother with this.

\textbf{27 \text{\textit{h}h}2 \text{\textit{f}5} 28 \text{\textit{gx}h}8\text{\textit{w}++} \text{\textit{h}8} 29 \text{\textit{h}5} \text{\textit{f}6} 30 \text{\textit{xf}6}+ \text{\textit{g}8} 31 \text{\textit{f}8}\# (1-0)

The rook's pawn advance is especially effective if the attacker can use the open lines for his rooks:

\textbf{This position arose from the Slav Defence. Although technically speaking Black does not have a fianchettoed bishop, his position is weakened with the move ...\textit{g}6 and is similar.}
26 h4! \text{\textsuperscript{B}e4}

26...\textit{d}8? 27 h5 \textit{e}7 28 \textit{h}4 \textit{g}7 29 f5! \textit{x}h4 30 f6 wins for White.

27 h5 \textit{b}5

At this stage most people who were analysing with their computers and not their brains thought Kramnik was clearly better. However, Topalov had a clear idea that he soon revealed:

28 \textit{c}2! \textit{x}b2

28...\textit{b}3 is answered similarly.

29 hxg6!! (D)

29...\textit{h}5

It suddenly becomes apparent that after 29...\textit{xc}2? 30 gxh7++ \textit{x}h7 31 \textit{g}7+ \textit{h}6 32 f5+ \textit{h}5 33 \textit{g}7\textit{g}3?? (or 33 f6) 33...\textit{g}6 34 \textit{x}g6 \textit{h}8 35 f6!! Black is getting mated.

30 g7! \textit{hxg}4

30...\textit{h}7 fails to 31 \textit{g}6 \textit{hxg}4 32 \textit{xe}6+ \textit{g}7 33 \textit{x}g4.\textit{g}.

31 \textit{xf}8+ \textit{x}f8??

Black's only option was 31...\textit{x}f8 32 \textit{wh}7 \textit{we}2 33 \textit{wh}8+ \textit{f}7 34 \textit{h}5+ \textit{f}8 35 \textit{wh}4 and now 35...\textit{g}5! keeps the game going. After 36 \textit{e}1! (not 36 \textit{fx}g5? \textit{xe}3) 36...\textit{xe}2 37 \textit{fx}g5 (37 \textit{wh}5 \textit{e}7 37...\textit{f}e7! Black heads for the hills and prepares...\textit{h}8+. This looks quite unclear.

32 \textit{g}6+??

An incredible case of mutual chess blindness – we wonder what Kasparov must have thought of this!

White had a trivial win by 32 \textit{gx}g4+ \textit{g}7 (32...\textit{f}7 33 \textit{wh}7+; 32...\textit{h}8 33 \textit{h}4+ \textit{g}8 34 \textit{h}7#) 33 \textit{c}7 \textit{f}1+, when 34 \textit{g}1! covers all the checks. This is an important pattern – with the interposing knight protecting against queen checks – to commit to memory.

After this mistake, Topalov continued to go astray and even lost in the end.

After the opening of the h-file, the fianchettoed bishop remains the key piece to eliminate. Once the bishop is gone, the attacker's major pieces will have more entry points.

\textbf{Exercises}

1 \textit{dh}1!!

White triples his major pieces, creating a mating threat.

1...\textit{e}6

A desperate attempt to escape. 1...\textit{xd}4 allows an instant mate by 2 \textit{h}8+! \textit{x}h8 3 \textit{h}8+ \textit{g}7 4 \textit{h}7#.

2 \textit{xe}6+!

But now White clears the seventh rank, and performs the same operation.

2...\textit{fxe}6 3 \textit{h}8+!! \textit{f}7 4 \textit{g}7+! \textit{g}7 5 \textit{h}7+ \textit{f}8 6 \textit{h}8+ 1-0

\textit{h}1# follows. Both rooks did a great job!

White's fianchetto structure lacks its bishop. Conclude the attack.
Although not too far away, Black’s main defender is missing from his post.

Create and exploit a double check.

White has an ideal situation with his monster on f6.

This is a hard exercise. Remember the standard plans, and it will be easier.

Enemy number one is ... ?

Play like a world champion!
Is everything rock solid in the white position?
In endgames, the presence of opposite-coloured bishops can increase the defender’s chances to hold a draw, but in the middlegame they tend to strengthen the attacker’s chances. The reason is that the attacker can play mainly on the squares of the colour of his bishop, which the defender’s bishop cannot challenge.

Here are some principles to bear in mind in this scenario:
1. The correct strategy is to attack the king. A material or positional advantage is not so important if the king is in danger.
2. Try to conduct the game on the colour of your own bishop.
3. The more major pieces you have on the board, the better are your chances for a successful attack.
4. The presence of knights usually helps the defender, since they may protect squares of both colours and be exchanged for a bishop.
5. Make sure that your bishop is active, even at the cost of a pawn or more.

Let’s take a look at an example where the king comes under attack in the centre when there are opposite-coloured bishops.

Macieja – Vescovi
Bermuda 2004

1 e4 e5 2 d4 f6 3 c4 c6 4 c3 e4 5 d4 exd4 6 e5 d5 7 b5 e7 8 cxd4 b6 9 c3 0-0 10 cxd6 bxc6 11 e3 f5 12 exf6 xf6 13 xe4?

Black takes a firm grip of the game now. 13 h3? a6 is also bad, but White should play 13 wb3, which is best met by 13...g6!, as in Rowson-I.Sokolov, Selfoss 2003, and not 13...h3 14 xe4 w7 15 e5 xg2 16 g3 a5+ 17 d1 xh1 18 xh1 ±, when Black has no compensation for the lost material.

13...dxe4 14 d2 (D)

14...a6!
Black sacrifices a pawn in order to keep his opponent’s king in the centre. This is in accordance with the principle ‘initiative over material’. 14...g6 15 c2 f5 is too passive.

15 xe4
After 15 g4 ae8 Black holds the initiative.

15...a5+
Black’s position now looks very harmonious. A sense of aesthetics can be quite a useful guide in judging such positions.

16 c3 (D)
16 d2 loses instantly to 16 xf2+ followed by ...ae8+.
16...\texttt{xc3}+!

As the old saying goes, one of the greatest advantages of having the bishop-pair is that you can choose the best moment to give it up! Now we have a position with opposite-coloured bishops, where Black has a winning attack.

17 bxc3 \texttt{g6}

Black strikes on the light squares, where his opponent is weak. 17...c5?! also deserves attention.

18 \texttt{b1}?!

Eventually White will lose the b-file, which is not a surprise, because his king hinders the connection of the rooks. He had to play passively by 18 \texttt{g1 ab8}, since 18 \texttt{b3}+?! \texttt{h8} 19 c4 \texttt{xg2} is also bad for White.

18...\texttt{d3} 19 \texttt{b7}

There is no defence against the penetration on the b-file. In addition to his problems on the light squares, White is playing practically without his h1-rook.

20 \texttt{c4+ h8} 21 \texttt{xb8} \texttt{xb8}

There is no defence against the penetration on the b-file. In addition to his problems on the light squares, White is playing practically without his h1-rook.

23 \texttt{e2} \texttt{b2} 24 \texttt{c5} \texttt{b3}+ 25 \texttt{f3} \texttt{d5}+ 26 \texttt{f4} \texttt{e4}+ 27 \texttt{g3} \texttt{xg2}+ 28 \texttt{h4} \texttt{xh1} 0-1

As noted above, the initiative is everything in some opposite-bishop positions.

15...\texttt{b5}?

The wrong decision. Black is going for opposite-coloured bishops but this will favour White!

16 \texttt{xb5} \texttt{xe5} 17 \texttt{fex5} \texttt{xe5} 18 \texttt{dxe5} \texttt{b6}+ 19 \texttt{h1} \texttt{xb5} (D)

20 \texttt{g4}! ±

The target now is g7.

20...\texttt{h5} 21 \texttt{h5} \texttt{a8} 22 \texttt{a4} \texttt{d5} 23 \texttt{f1} \texttt{a5} 24 \texttt{b4} \texttt{b6} 25 \texttt{c4}+

White sacrifices a pawn – we know that when we have opposite-coloured bishops, material is less important than the attack. Thus White gains time for his a1-rook to perform a rook-lift and join the attack without delay.

25...\texttt{xb4} 26 \texttt{ab1} \texttt{e7} (D)

27 \texttt{b3}! --

The idea is \texttt{h3}.

27...\texttt{c8}

Black intends ...\texttt{e6} to blockade the pawn on e5 and thus shut off the d4-bishop.

28 \texttt{e6}!!

White opens a line for his d4-bishop. Remember that the initiative is more important than material with opposite bishops!

28...\texttt{f6} 29 \texttt{h3} \texttt{xe6} 30 \texttt{h7+ f7} 31 \texttt{g3} \texttt{g8} 32 \texttt{xe4}?

White fails to follow our principles! 32 \texttt{f1} wins cleanly: 32...\texttt{f8} (32...\texttt{c4} 33 \texttt{xf6}+...
\textit{The Mystery of the Opposite-Coloured Bishops}

{\textit{\textbf{18 a3! c7 19 d6+}}}

There is another way to deliver mate: 19 c4+ d7 20 a4+ c7 21 d6+ b7 22 b4+ c6 23 c4+ b6 24 c7+ b7 25 d6#. But we are more interested in a pure opposite-coloured-bishops attack.

{\textit{19...b7 20 e7+ c6 21 c5+ b7 22 d6+ b8 23 b5 axb5 24 xb5+ c7 25 d6+ d8 26 c6 (D)}}

Black is two rooks ahead, but cannot prevent the inevitable mate.

{\textit{26 d7}}

Black is trying to cover his king with the bishop, but White transfers the attack to the colour of his bishop after capturing the rook.

{\textit{27 xa8+ c8 28 xa7 d7 29 h8+ c8 30 c7+ e8 31 e7#}}

When you have an overwhelming advantage on the squares of your bishop, your opponent's only chance might be to surrender an exchange to eliminate the bishop.

{\textit{Seirawan – Leenhouts}}

\textit{Dutch Team Ch 2008}

White creates a dark-squared mating-net:

\begin{align*}
54 h8+! g8 & 55 f6+ f7 56 d8+ e8 57 g7+! 1-0 \\
57...f7 & 58 f6+ g8 59 h6 f7 60 d8+.
\end{align*}

Some time ago when analysing a sharp Sicilian line with a student of mine, I (DB) discovered the following position, which convinced me that initiative is everything when attacking with opposite-coloured bishops:

{\textit{(This position occurs in analysis by Euwe of a sharp line in the Pin Variation.)}}

\begin{minipage}{\textwidth}

\begin{verbatim}
\textbf{W} \\
\hline
\textbf{B} \\
\hline
\textbf{W}
\end{verbatim}

\textit{Kamsky – Kasparov}

\textit{Manila Olympiad 1992}

{\textit{\textbf{18 a3! c7 19 d6+}}}

There is another way to deliver mate: 19 c4+ d7 20 a4+ c7 21 d6+ b7 22 b4+ c6 23 c4+ b6 24 c7+ b7 25 d6#. But we are more interested in a pure opposite-coloured-bishops attack.

{\textit{19...b7 20 e7+ c6 21 c5+ b7 22 d6+ b8 23 b5 axb5 24 xb5+ c7 25 d6+ d8 26 c6 (D)}}

Black is two rooks ahead, but cannot prevent the inevitable mate.

{\textit{26 d7}}

Black is trying to cover his king with the bishop, but White transfers the attack to the colour of his bishop after capturing the rook.

{\textit{27 xa8+ c8 28 xa7 d7 29 h8+ c8 30 c7+ e8 31 e7#}}

When you have an overwhelming advantage on the squares of your bishop, your opponent's only chance might be to surrender an exchange to eliminate the bishop.
31 \textit{We2}  
31 b3 loses on the spot to 31...\textit{Cc8} 32 \textit{Cc2} \textit{Xc4+} 33 \textit{bxc4} \textit{Cb2+}.

\textit{31...Wa7 32 Cc1}

White places his rooks on the diagonal of the black bishop, desperately trying to attract its attention.

\textit{32...a8 (D)}

Kasparov is not interested, and rightly plays for the attack. The unopposed bishop is worth more than a mere rook!

\textit{33 b3}

Now the dark squares in White's camp become hopelessly weak, but Kasparov was already threatening mate: 33 h4 \textit{Wa1+} 34 \textit{Cc2} \textit{xb2+} 35 \textit{d1} \textit{Cc1+} 36 \textit{xc1} \textit{a1#}.

\textit{33...f4 34 Cc2 Ce7 35 Cc3 Cc5 36 Cc1 Cc3 37 Cc4 Cc2+ 38 Cc1 (D)}

Or 38 \textit{Cc2} \textit{Cc2+} 39 \textit{Cc2} \textit{Cc5} 40 \textit{Cc2} \textit{Cc3+} and Black mates.

\textit{38...xf3 39 xf4 xf4 40 Cx2 Cg1+ 41 Ce2 Cxh2+} 0-1

Clearance ideas are especially effective when there are opposite-coloured bishops. We use them mainly to open space for our bishop. Here is an example in which a file is opened so a rook can combine its power with that of the bishop.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

\textit{Ki. Georgiev – Macieja}
\textit{Calvia Olympiad 2004}

White's bishop is great, but not his rook. This, however, is subject to change:

\textit{49 b6+!! Wa6+ 50 Cb2 Cc6 51 xf4 1-0}

We can also annihilate the opponent's bishop if it is too good in its defensive role:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board2.png}
\end{center}

\textit{Yakubovich – Simagin}
\textit{Moscow 1936}

With his last move, ...f4!, Black started a decisive attack. He will now clear all files, ranks and diagonals you may think of!

\textit{1 xf4 g5!! 2 hxg6 xg6+!}

The bishop was doing a really good job. Instead of continuing the attack on light squares, Black drags his opponent's king into his camp.

\textit{3 xf4 Cc6+ 4 gg3 Cxg6+ 5 ff3 gg4+ 6 gg3 Ce2+ 7 h4 Cb7 8 xe2 Ce7+} 0-1
Here is an example of my own, where I temporarily sacrificed a pawn in order to achieve a favourable opposite-coloured-bishops position:

![Chess Diagram]

V. Georgiev – Paragua
Turin 2000

25 \textcolor[rgb]{1,0,0}{\textsf{\textsf{e}}6! \textsf{\textsf{xe}}6 26 \textsf{dxe}6 \textsf{\textsf{exe}}6 27 \textsf{\textsf{xf}}5 \textsf{\textsf{f}}6
27...\textsf{\textsf{xf}}5 28 \textsf{\textsf{xf}}5 \textsf{\textsf{xf}}5 29 \textsf{\textsf{xb}}2+ \textsf{\textsf{g}}7 30 \textsf{\textsf{xb}}7 \textsf{\textsf{d}}3 31 \textsf{\textsf{e}}1.

28 \textsf{\textsf{e}}4 \textsf{\textsf{e}}7 29 \textsf{\textsf{d}}3 \textsf{\textsf{g}}5 30 \textsf{\textsf{hx}}7+ \textsf{\textsf{h}}7
31 \textsf{\textsf{h}}7 \textsf{\textsf{d}}4 32 \textsf{\textsf{b}}1 \textsf{\textsf{b}}6?
Black had to try 32...\textsf{\textsf{xc}}4.

33 \textsf{\textsf{e}}4?
33 \textsf{\textsf{f}}4 followed by \textsf{\textsf{e}}1 is a more incisive continuation.

33...\textsf{\textsf{c}}3 34 \textsf{\textsf{d}}5 \textsf{\textsf{c}}6 35 \textsf{\textsf{xc}}6 \textsf{\textsf{xc}}4 36 \textsf{\textsf{g}}2
\textsf{\textsf{g}}7 37 \textsf{\textsf{c}}1 \textsf{\textsf{g}}8 38 \textsf{\textsf{d}}1 1-0

Even in simple-looking endgames, mating attacks involving opposite-coloured bishops can prove devastating, especially when the defender’s king is short of space:

![Chess Diagram]

E. Pogosiant
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981

In this study Black will have to part with his bishop if he does not want to allow mate.

1 \textsf{\textsf{f}}6
White intends \textsf{\textsf{h}}6, \textsf{\textsf{e}}7+ and \textsf{\textsf{g}}7#.

1...\textsf{\textsf{f}}8
1...\textsf{\textsf{g}}6 2 \textsf{\textsf{d}}6 \textsf{\textsf{h}}5 3 \textsf{\textsf{h}}6 \textsf{\textsf{g}}6 (3...\textsf{\textsf{g}}4 4 \textsf{\textsf{e}}7 and the knight lands on f6) 4 \textsf{\textsf{c}}8 and mate.

2 \textsf{\textsf{h}}6+ \textsf{\textsf{e}}8 3 \textsf{\textsf{d}}6+
White wins.

Exercises

1

![Chess Diagram]

Make use of your ‘extra’ piece.

2

![Chess Diagram]

The beast is asleep...
Find a way to break in.

White has not yet castled...

Find a vigorous way for White to press home his attack on the light squares.

Black must find a favourable transformation to an opposite-bishops situation.

White needs to win the black pawn, or else must play for mate.

Remember the principles and find the best way for White to smash through.
Pawns shape the chessboard struggle and dictate the natural plans for both sides, so their mere absence from a file marks it out as an important chess highway. An ‘open file’ is one with no pawns on it, while if it contains only an enemy pawn, then we call it a ‘semi-open file’. There is a huge difference between the two, as a semi-open file is a one-way street, while an open file can be used by both players. Open files should in most cases be controlled by major pieces, preferably rooks. Via the open files one can invade the enemy position. You should seek to control open files, and this will often give you a significant advantage. As always there are some exceptions, as a file may have little value if there are no possible entry-squares on it, while contesting an open file over which you will ultimately lose control may only serve to aggravate your problems. And in yet other cases, occupying an open file might only lead to mass exchanges, and a dissipation of your advantage.

We should note that the rook is the only piece that does not need to be centralized to show its full potential. The only thing that it needs is open space.

From here it can penetrate the opponent’s camp. The seventh rank is an especially juicy target, as there are several enemy pawns on this rank. A further typical benefit of putting a rook on the seventh rank is that this tends to restrict the enemy king.

Here is a summary of some useful general pointers for play with open files:
1. Get control over the open file.
2. Double rooks.
3. The best place for a rook is on the seventh rank.
4. Penetrate the enemy position and destroy it.

15 \textit{\texttt{W}}d4
With this move White fights for the only open file.
15...\textit{\texttt{W}}h5 16 f3 \textit{\texttt{R}}h3?
Better is 16...\textit{\texttt{R}}e6 17 e4 \textit{\texttt{W}}a5 intending \textit{\texttt{W}}fd8.
17 e4 \textit{\texttt{R}}xg2 18 \textit{\texttt{W}}xg2 \textit{\texttt{R}}fe8 19 \textit{\texttt{R}}d2!
A typical idea to double rooks on the open file.
19...\textit{\texttt{W}}a5 20 \textit{\texttt{R}}d1 \textit{\texttt{R}}e7 21 \textit{\texttt{W}}c4 \textit{\texttt{R}}ae8 22 \textit{\texttt{R}}d6 \textit{\texttt{W}}b6
White has gained full control over the only open file. What will be his plan to convert the
advantage? First he needs to advance his pawns, taking out more space.

23 b4 $e_6 24 $d_6d_4!

The side with a dynamic advantage should normally try to avoid exchanges, especially of his most active pieces.

24...$e_6e_7 25 $e_4 $c_7 26 $c_5 $e_8 27 $d_1d_2 $h_7 28 $h_4 $f_8 29 $d_6 $e_6 30 $d_xe_6 $x_e_6 31 $x_e_6 $x_e_6 32 $d_4 $f_8 33 $f_4 $e_8 34 $e_5 $e_7 35 $a_3 $a_6 36 $h_5 $e_6 37 $d_7 $e_7 38 $x_e_6!

A good decision: White liquidates to an easily winning ending. This is the simplest way to realize the advantage.

38...$x_e_6 39 $f_3 $c_7 40 $e_4 $f_7 41 $d_6 $e_7 42 $f_5!

In order to create a passed pawn.

42...$x_f_5+ 43 $x_f_5 $e_5 44 $b_5 $x_c_5 45 $b_6 $c_7 46 $g_4 $f_7 47 $a_4 $e_7 48 $a_5 $f_7 49 $e_4 $e_7 50 $d_5 $d_7+ 51 $d_6 $c_7 52 $e_6 $e_8 53 $b_6 $e_8 54 $b_1 $e_8 55 $b_4 $c_1 56 $x_b_7 $d_1+ 57 $e_4 $e_1+ 58 $f_5 $f_1+ 59 $g_6 $f_4 60 $g_5 $g_4 61 $x_g_7 $x_g_7+ 62 $f_6 1-0

A very instructive game. White demonstrated a typical plan for making the most of his advantages in this kind of position. The overall plan can be summarized as follows:

1. First win the only open file.
2. Then push pawns to get a space advantage.
3. Finally liquidate to a winning rook ending.

20...$e_6

White now gains control over the d-file using line-clearance and a zwischenzug:

21 $c_4! $x_c_4 22 $x_c_4 $f_7 23 $d_7

The best move! Rooks love the seventh rank.

23...$x_c_4 24 $b_c_4 $a_b_8 25 $f_d_1

White is clearly better thanks to his control of the open file, via which he can invade the enemy position.

25...$f_8 26 $f_2 $e_7 27 $d_8+ $e_8 28 $d_6 $f_7 29 $e_3 $c_7

As we know, White should push the pawns first and then create a passed pawn to win the game.

30 $c_5 $e_8 31 $b_1 $c_7 32 $a_4 $a_5 33 $g_4 $x_g_4 34 $f_5 $e_7 35 $f_4 $f_8 36 $x_g_4 $b_8 37 $h_4 $f_7 38 $h_5 $e_8 39 $f_4 $c_e_7 40 $e_1 $h_6 41 $e_6+ 1-0

18...$g_4!

Black takes control of the open d-file by attacking the d1-square. White will never get the chance to double rooks on the d-file.

19 $e_1

Or 19 $d_2 $a_d_8 20 $d_3 $d_4 21 $e_5 $f_d_8 22 $h_7+ $h_8 23 $x_d_4 $x_d_4 24 $c_3 $f_5+ 25 $x_f_5 $x_f_5+ 26 $a_1 $e_4 and Black breaks through.

19...$a_d_8 20 $e_2 $d_4!

Preparing to double rooks on the open file.

21 $x_g_4 $x_g_4 22 $e_5

Or 22 $d_1 $f_d_8 23 $x_d_4 $x_d_4 24 $e_1 $a_5 25 $c_3 $d_7.

22...$f_d_8

Now Black is getting a firm grip over the d-file.

20 $d_1!

The best place for the rook is the open file.

Wojtaszek – Bobras
Polish Ch, Lublin 2008

B

Mamedyarov – Svidler
European Team Ch, Khersonisos 2007
23 e2 g6 24 c1 d3 25 a3 e6 26 c4 d8 d5 27 a1 (D)

It is time for stage two of our procedure.
27...a5
As Black’s control over the d-file is absolute, he now advances his pawns to start an attack.
28 c2 h5 29 d1 b5 30 e2 f5 31 e1
31 xc6 d1+ 32 xd1 xd1+ 33 a2 b1+ 34 b3 d3+.
31...c5 32 c4 fx e6 33 xe2 d6 34 c1 d5 35 e5 b3 0-1

Before we open the position, our rooks sit modestly behind the pawn-chains. We may use the pawn-shelter to establish control over a file before we open it. To do this, we double rooks behind our pawn before exchanging it. This is especially effective if the pawn-tension is in our favour (i.e. our opponent does not have a good way to resolve the tension):

14 c2!
White wants to double rooks first, before the c-file is opened. If White captures on d5 first, Black will take back with his e-pawn, keeping the c-file semi-closed. Note that Black cannot exchange by 14...dxc4 as this destroys his structure; nor can he just sit and wait, as he needs to develop his queenside.
14...d7 15 cxd5
Right on time. Now Black has no choice, since the c6-pawn is unprotected.
15...cxd5 16 a1 ±
White has complete control over the c-file and threatens a6.
16...a6
Black parries White’s threat, but the pawns on their third rank are now rather vulnerable.
17 a4 f7 18 b6
The second step is to enter the enemy position.
18...b8 19 c2 (D)

19...h6?!
Black takes measures against White’s g4 idea, but this leaves more squares on Black’s
third rank unprotected and so allows another potent attacking idea.

20 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xf5?}
20 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c7} is met by 20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e8.

20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xf5 21 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xf5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e8 22 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xd5+?! \\
While this move was enough for a win later on, White could have won immediately by 22 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}e6+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f7 23 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xc8 24 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xc8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xc8 25 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e5+-.
Therefore the rest of the game is not so relevant to our discussion.

An alternative method to gain control over an open file is to install one of our pieces on the file and then to double rooks behind it:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textit{Bojkov - Van den Doel}
\textit{Zwolle 2007}

Although analysis engines tend to be lukewarm about White's chances (and some even evaluate this position in Black's favour!), I am inclined to think that White is strategically winning. The plan is simple: install the knight on b6, which gives Black a difficult choice: allow White to exchange on b4 and later win this pawn, or make the exchange on c3, after which White will double rooks on the b-file in the shadow of the knight and then penetrate with them at the right moment.

25...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b5?!

This loses some time and only helps White's plans.

26 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}e2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f6 27 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}eb1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b7 28 \textit{\textcolor{red}{B}}b6 bxc3 29 bxc3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}bf7 30 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}hf1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{B}}h4 31 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g5 32 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}d7 33 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}ab1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}d8 34 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b8 h5

I started to feel quite nervous in my opponent's time-trouble, and missed the clear win 35 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}fb1!; e.g., 35...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xf2 36 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xf2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xf2 37 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xf2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}h6 38 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}ib7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c7 39 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}h8+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g7 (39...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g5 40 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}h4+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g4 41 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g2) 40 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}a8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f6 41 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}h4+-. For some reason I thought that somewhere in these lines he could bring his queen to a4 and achieve perpetual check.

Instead 35 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g2?! was played in the game and White won later with some difficulties.

We already know the importance of an open file, and how effective its use can be. Under certain circumstances it can be well worth sacrificing material to gain complete control over a vital highway.
rank. One bonus idea is that two rooks on the seventh rank are capable of delivering mate on their own:

Y. Averbakh

1 \( \text{Wh7} + ! \) \( \text{Fh7} \) 2 \( \text{Xg7} + \) \( \text{Fh8} \) 3 \( \text{Xh7} + \) \( \text{Fg8} \) 4 \( \text{Bh7} \)

The rooks managed to deliver mate due to the poor position of Black's rook on f8, where it obstructed his own king.

We should note that two rooks supported by a single pawn can give mate without any such assistance from the enemy pieces. Here is an example where White makes use of this fact.

Krasenkow – Kveinys

Polish Team Ch, Lubniewice 2002

Krasenkow first occupies the open c-file with his rooks:

21 \( \text{Ec1!} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 22 \( \text{Ec7} + \) \( \text{Fg8} \) 23 \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{Fad8} \)
24 \( \text{Ec1!} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 25 \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{Ffd7} \)

Then he uses the power of his pawn to secure absolute control over the seventh rank.

26 \( \text{Ec7!} \) \( \text{xd6} \) (D)

The harvest starts now.

27 \( \text{Xg7} + \) \( \text{Fh8} \) 28 \( \text{Xh7} + \) \( \text{Fg8} \) 29 \( \text{Cc7} + \) \( \text{Ff8} \) 30 \( \text{Xa7} \) \( \text{Fg8} \)

White now wraps up the game by advancing his h-pawn.

31 \( \text{h4!} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 32 \( \text{h5!} \) \( \text{C6} \) 33 \( \text{Fag7} + \) \( \text{Ff8} \) 34 \( \text{h6!} \) 1–0

The pawn is protecting the g7-rook, and its colleague is free to finish Black off.

Topalov – Anand

Bilbao 2008

1 \( d4 \) \( \text{f6} \) 2 \( c4 \) \( e6 \) 3 \( \text{Cc3} \) \( b6 \) 4 \( g3 \) \( \text{a6} \) 5 \( \text{Cc2} \) \( \text{wb7} \) 6 \( \text{g2} \) \( e5 \) 7 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 8 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{f6} \) 9 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 10 \( \text{Fg5} \) 11 \( \text{xf6} \) 12 \( \text{C3} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 13 \( \text{Cxc3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 14 \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{Fxe6} \) 15 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{h4} \) 16 \( \text{h5} \) 17 \( \text{Cf3} \) \( \text{Fxe5} \) 18 \( \text{Cxe5} \) (D)

As a result of his accurate play, Topalov has won the only open file.

18... \( \text{Cc7} \) 19 \( \text{Ad1} \)

Doubling rooks, which will help White invade the seventh rank.

19... \( \text{Cc7} \) 20 \( \text{Cd7} \) \( \text{C6} \) 21 \( \text{Ee4} \) \( \text{Ee8} \) (D)
22  \( \text{e}f3! \)

With this move, White starts a decisive attack against Black’s king thanks to the dominant position of the rook on the seventh rank and the fact that Black’s kingside contains weaknesses.

22...c4

Or:

a) 22...\( \text{d}4 \) 23 \( \text{e}e5 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 24 \( f4 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 25 \( fxe5 \) \( \text{We}6 \) 26 \( \text{d}d6 \) \( \text{Wh}3 \) 27 \( \text{e}7 \) ± with the idea of doubling rooks on the seventh rank while Black lacks any real counterplay.

b) 22...\( \text{d}8 \) again allows White to double his major pieces on the seventh rank: 23 \( \text{b}7! \) (winning a pawn) 23...\( \text{xd}7 \) 24 \( \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{w}a8 \) 25 \( \text{xf}7 \) ±.

23 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 24 \( \text{e}7 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 25 \( \text{f}1 \) 1-0

Doubled rooks on the seventh rank may be very potent in the endgame too. Here is one more example from Topalov:

Finally doubling rooks on the seventh rank. The a8-rook will be out of play for a long time, and Topalov was able to prove his advantage.

30...\( \text{xf}6 \) 31 \( \text{xb}7+ \) \( \text{c}8 \) 32 \( \text{ec}7+ \) \( \text{d}8 \) 33 \( \text{g}7 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 34 \( \text{x}b6 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 35 \( c4 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 36 \( \text{e}6+ \) \( \text{d}8 \) 37 \( \text{g}g8+ \) \( \text{e}8 \) 38 \( c5 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 39 \( \text{c}7+ \) \( \text{d}8 \) 40 \( \text{h}7 \) \( \text{dxc}5 \) 41 \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{xd}6 \) 42 \( \text{xe}8+ \) \( \text{xe}8 \) 43 \( \text{h}8+ \) \( \text{d}7 \) 44 \( \text{xa}8 \) \( \text{d}1+ \) 45 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{d}2+ \) 46 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{d}3+ \) 47 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{b}3 \) 48 \( \text{xa}5 \) \( \text{xb}2 \) 49 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 50 \( \text{a}8 \) \( c4 \) 51 \( \text{e}8 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 52 \( h4 \) \( \text{a}2 \) 53 \( h5 \) \( \text{xa}4 \) 54 \( h6 \) \( \text{a}7 \) 55 \( g4 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 56 \( g5 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 57 \( \text{c}5+ \) 58 \( \text{g}6 \) 59 \( \text{g}4 \) 60 \( \text{e}c6+ \) \( \text{h}7 \) 61 \( \text{h}5 \) \( c3 \) 62 \( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 1-0

Early in the game, it is common for pawn-tension to be created in the centre of the board. Usually both players will fight for the centre in some manner, as no one is willing to surrender his centre without a fight. At some point, one player may find it necessary or beneficial to exchange pawns, so the central files are often the first to open. If this happens when one of the kings is still uncastled, it can easily become a target for the rooks on the open central files.

\[
\begin{align*}
27 \text{e}1! \text{wx}e7 & \ 28 \text{c}4+ \text{b}8 \ 29 \text{xe}7 \text{f}5 \\
30 \text{cc}7! & \ (D)
\end{align*}
\]

E. Espinosa – Miranda

Cuba 2004
Black’s king has lingered too long in the centre and White proves the folly of such an approach with energetic play.

1 \( \text{Q}x\text{f}6+!! \) \( \text{W}x\text{f}6 \) 2 \( \text{g}5! \)

White sacrifices a second piece to clear both central files for his rooks. We have seen this method in the Clearance chapter.

2...\( \text{W}x\text{g}5 \)
2...\( \text{W}x\text{f}3 \) 3 \( \text{A}d8\#. \)
3 \( \text{W}x\text{c}6+ \) \( \text{e}7 \) 4 \( \text{A}d5 \)

Another subtle move. White clears the way for the other rook to occupy the e-file with gain of tempo.

4...\( \text{W}f6 \)

Or:

a) 4...\( \text{W}f4 \) 5 \( \text{e}1+ \) \( \text{e}6 \) 6 \( \text{A}d7+ \) \( \text{f}6 \) 7 \( \text{xf}7+! \) and White wins.

b) 4...\( \text{W}h6 \) 5 \( \text{W}x\text{a}8 \) \( \text{W}a6 \) (5...\( \text{W}e6 \) 6 \( \text{A}d1 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 7 \( \text{d}8 \) \( \text{+-} \) ) 6 \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 7 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 8 \( \text{f}3+ \) \( \text{e}7 \) 9 \( \text{c}7+ \) \( +. \)

5 \( \text{e}1+ \) \( \text{e}6 \) 6 \( \text{W}d7\# (D) \)

Open files can also be used against the castled position. Here White has already managed to open the h-file for his rook, and has activated the other one thanks to a rook-lift.

1 \( \text{A}x\text{g}7+! \)

White sacrifices both rooks in order to annihilate the last defenders of Black’s king. The queen and bishop will do the rest.

1...\( \text{W}x\text{g}7 \) 2 \( \text{g}5+ \) \( \text{h}8 \)
2...\( \text{f}7 \) also allows a forced mate after 3 \( \text{A}x\text{h}7+ \) \( \text{e}6 \) 4 \( \text{e}7+ \) \( \text{f}5 \) 5 \( \text{h}5+ \) \( \text{g}6 \) (5...\( \text{f}4 \) 6 \( \text{e}5\# ) 6 \( \text{g}5+ \) \( \text{h}6 \) 7 \( \text{g}7\#. \)

3 \( \text{A}x\text{h}7+! \) 1-0

Black resigned due to 3...\( \text{W}x\text{h}7 \) 4 \( \text{d}3+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 5 \( \text{h}6+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 6 \( \text{W}h7\#.

We have seen that rooks work together very well on the seventh rank. They can also coordinate well on the edges of the board, especially if the enemy king has been denuded.

---

First White smashes through on the half-open h-file:

1 \( \text{W}x\text{h}7+! \)
1 \( \text{Q}f6! \) is also effective.

1...\( \text{W}x\text{h}7 \) 2 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{fd}8 \)

Or:

a) 2...\( \text{g}6 \) 3 \( \text{Q}f6 \) and \( \text{A}x\text{h}7\#. \)

b) 2...\( \text{g}8 \) 3 \( \text{A}x\text{h}7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 4 \( \text{h}4 \) and mate will follow.

c) 2...\( \text{f}5 \) was the best practical chance, although it fails after 3 \( \text{exf}6 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 4 \( \text{h}7+ \) \( \text{f}7 \) 5 \( \text{g}6+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) (5...\( \text{x}g6 \) 6 \( \text{e}5+ \) \( \text{f}5 \) 7 \( \text{f}3 \) ! followed by \( \text{g}4\# ) 6 \( \text{f}7+ \) \( \text{f}7 \) 7 \( \text{h}8+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 8 \( \text{x}f7 \) and Black is mated on the h-file with \( \text{h}1\#. \)
3 f6! gxf6 4 Nh7+ Kg8 5 gxf6
The threat is simple: Nh1.
5...d3 6 Nh1 Ke1+ 7 Nxe1 1-0

If the kings have castled on the same wing, it is normally too risky to attack the enemy king with a pawn-storm, as this exposes one's own king to a counterattack. In this case we transfer our rooks in front of our pawn-chain. This method is called the rook-lift.

Now the rook joins the fray.
3 d3!
This is the right rook; the other should control e5.
3...exe5 4 exe5 exe5 5 Nh3
Black is helpless.

One open file can be sufficient for a rook to do its evil work:

\[ \text{White first detonates the position of his opponent's king:} \]

1 Nh6! gxh6 2 Nh6 Nh8 (D)
2...Nf7 does not prevent the rook-lift: 3 Ne3 exe5 4 dxe5 Nh8 5 Nh3. The rook's mission is accomplished, and Black now has no choice but to open up his king: 5...f5 6 dxe6 Ned8 7 Nh7! Nxd7 8 Nh8#.

2...exe5 only helps yet another rook-lift, this time along the fifth rank: 3 exe5 Nh7 4 Nh5 f5 5 exe6 Ng8 6 Nh8 Nh8 7 Nh8! with the idea 7...Nh8 8 Nh7+ Nh8 9 Nh7+ Nh7 10 Nh7+ and White wins.

In the following example Black could not deliver mate, but the energy of his pieces on the h-file was sufficient to win material by chasing the white king into forks.
32...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}xf1!! 33 \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}xf1
33 \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}xf1 \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}xh2+ 34 \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}g1 \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}h1#.
33...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}xh2+ 34 \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}g1 \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}h1+ 0-1

White resigned in view of 35 \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}f2 \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}xf1+ 36
\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{W}}}}}}}d3+.

**Exercises**

1. \textbf{W}  
   Should White double his rooks on the open file?

2. \textbf{W}  
   White’s major pieces look impressive. Make use of them.

3. \textbf{W}  
   Exploit the open e-file.

4. \textbf{B}  
   Black can win by a blitzkrieg.

5. \textbf{W}  
   Both rooks are needed here!
Find a tactical way to occupy an important file.

Both kings are in danger, and it is Black to move.

Black has already lifted his rook...
We can trap a piece in two ways. The first is the more straightforward: we attack a piece that has no escape-squares, and then capture it. The second method is shutting a piece out of the battle. In this case our opponent still has his piece on the board, but it is so limited (by our dominant pieces or his own troops) that it is practically useless.

Both methods are very common; mate for instance is limitation of the opponent’s king, followed by trapping it. A strategy for trapping starts with the restriction of the opponent’s pieces, which makes them vulnerable because they lack good squares. Once we have brought up reinforcements, we can start harvesting the fruit of our strategy.

Here is a famous example where Kasparov paralyses most of Karpov’s army thanks to the supreme coordination of his pieces, and one very well-placed knight in particular.

Karpov – Kasparov
World Ch match (game 16), Moscow 1985

1 e4 c5 2 d4 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 cx5 d6 5 dxc5 dxc5 6 e5 0-0 7 0-0 c6 8 a3 d7 9 c4 dxc5 10 exd5 exd5 11 e2 e6 12 c3 e5? 13 f3 f5 14 g5 e8! (D)

Karpov does not feel the danger, and decides to keep the pawn. More advisable is 15 c4 d3 16 a3 xxc4 (16...xf1? 17 dxc5 xxc4 18 bxc5 ±) 17 axb4 xxb4 18 e1, by which White relieves his defence and obtains an equal game.

15...b5!

This move takes away the c4-square from the a3-knight and forces it to endure a miserable existence. Pawns are very well suited to the task of restricting enemy pieces.

16 ad1 d3!

A knight could not dream of a better career. From this excellent outpost, it denies White’s rooks access to both open files, and will play the dominant role for the rest of the game. The principle is the same as for the pawns: it is most effective to restrict enemy pieces with less valuable ones of our own.

17 ab1?

17 d6 is better, and leads to complications.

17...h6! 18 h4 b4! 19 c4

19 e2 g5! 20 xg5 xf2 and Black is on top.

19...d6 (D)

Kasparov had this position on his analysis board before the game – an impressive piece of preparation, and a demonstration of how well he understood his opponent and could anticipate his choices.

A mere glance at the position now will convince us that Black has achieved everything
that he could hope for by using the limitation principle. Both white knights lack prospects (and any moves at all), while the same goes for his rooks, and even the white queen has few prospects. At the same time, the black pieces that are restricting them possess great energy. The white pieces are in constant danger of being trapped.

20.\texttt{g3}

20 \texttt{wc2? ec8 21 wb3 df4} (Black already threatens to trap the queen with 22...\texttt{c2}) 22 \texttt{c1 xc1 23 xcl g5 24 g3 g4} suddenly traps the bishop. This should not astonish you; many similar lines will follow, in which White’s pieces suffer.

20...\texttt{c8}

Thanks to the monster on d3, Black has occupied both open files (remember what we said about bringing up reinforcements!).

21 b3

Karpov wants to bring his knight back into the game via b2.

21...g5!! (D)

This excellent move is still based on the idea of restricting White’s pieces: by means of a highly concrete idea, Kasparov prevents his opponent from freeing his position. The loosening of Black’s kingside is of no consequence, as long as White lacks active pieces to exploit it.

22 \texttt{xd6}

The point of Black’s ...g5 idea is seen in the line 22 \texttt{b2? xb2 23 xb2 g4}, where the white bishop is lost, while after 22 \texttt{e2? e4 23 xd3 xg3} White loses material. 22 h4 is a weakening move, since White’s inability to manoeuvre his pieces makes it hard for him to defend, whereas Black possesses more space and both open files and can easily supply more troops: 22...\texttt{e4 23 xe4 xe4 24 hxg5 xg3 25 fxg3 wxd5 26 gxf6 xe6!} and White will not survive the attack.

22...\texttt{xd6 23 g3}

Or 23 \texttt{e2 f4 24 c4 g4 25 g3 xc4! 26 bxc4 e2 27 c5} (27 \texttt{wd4 e4 28 gxf4 xf4 leads to mate}, while 27 \texttt{wc1} gives Black a choice between 27...\texttt{c2}, nicely trapping the queen, and 27...\texttt{h3+}, followed by 28...\texttt{e4+}, mating) 27...\texttt{g6} (27...\texttt{h3+ 28 h1 gxf2+ mates}) 28 gxf4 \texttt{h5} and the queen moves in to give mate.

23...\texttt{d7!} 24 \texttt{g2}

24 \texttt{b2} \texttt{f6!!} may lead to another physical trapping after 25 \texttt{xd3 xd3 26 xd3 e5} (D).

A fork on f3 will follow.

24...\texttt{f6!} 25 a3 a5 26 axb4 axb4 27 \texttt{a2 g6 28 d6}

Or: 28 \texttt{d2 e2 --}; 28 h3 \texttt{e1!? 29 dxe1 xe1 30 xe1 c2.} 28...g4! 29 \texttt{d2 g7 30 f3} 30 f4 \texttt{d4+ 31 h1 f5.}

30...\texttt{xd6} (D)
31 \( \text{Qxb2} \text{ gxf3} \text{ 32 Qxf3} \text{ Qxe5} \text{ 33 Qxd3} \text{ Qb6+} \text{ 34 Qf2} \text{ Qxf3+} \text{ 35 Qg2} \text{ Qe3} \) is yet another line where Black has total domination.

The rest of the game was played by Kasparov with his usual energy. He first won material and then organized the decisive assault.

31... \( \text{Qd4+} \text{ 32 Kh1} \text{ Qf6} \text{ 33 Qf4} \)
33 h3 Qe3! 34 Qf4 We5 --.
33... \( \text{Qe4} \text{ 34 Qxd3} \text{ Qf2+} \text{ 35 Qxf2} \text{ Qxd3} \text{ 36 Qfd2} \text{ Qe3!} \text{ 37 Qxd3} \text{ Qc1!!} \text{ 38 Qb2} \)

Finally the poor knight joins the game, only to discover that it is all over.

38... \( \text{Qf2!} \text{ 39 Qd2} \text{ Qxd1+} \text{ 39...Qe2!} \text{ mates.} \)
40 \( \text{Qxd1} \text{ Qe1+} \text{ 0-1} \)

Here is a well-known example, by another of the great champions, on the theme of shutting a piece out of play. In this case, a single piece is targeted, and the restriction is made possible by the pawn-structure.

**Winter – Capablanca**
**Hastings 1919**

1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{Qf3} \text{ Qc6} \text{ 3 Qc3} \text{ Qf6} \text{ 4 b5} \text{ a6} \text{ 5 d3} \text{ c6} \text{ 6 dxc6} \text{ dxc6} \text{ 7 g4} \text{ d6} \text{ 8 Qg5} \text{ h6} \text{ 9 Qh4} \text{ c5} \text{ 10 Qd5} \text{ g5!!} \) (D)

Black is playing against the bishop.

Knowing the basic principles will help you score a lot of points, and enjoy your chess more. I can now exclude White’s dark-squared bishop, just as in the classical example we saw above.

11... \( \text{Qxf3+} \text{ 12 gxf3} \text{ g5} \text{ 13 Qg3} \) (D)

**Trapping the Bishop**

The easiest way to exclude or trap a bishop is to build a pawn-barrier in its way. Do not forget that bishops are ‘colour-blind’. Do not be afraid that the pawns might be on the same colour squares as your own bishop. This bishop will still prosper if its main antagonist is neutralized.
13...\texttt{\textbf{W}e7}

In order to exclude the bishop, Black needs to protect the e5-pawn in advance, and not to allow a freeing pawn-break by d4.

14 \texttt{\textbf{W}d2 \textbf{B}b6!}

The idea is to protect the e5-pawn with the bishop if necessary.

15 \texttt{\textbf{h}4 \textbf{g}8 16 hxg5 hxg5 17 d4 \textbf{B}b7 18 0-0-0}

After 18 dxe5 dxe5 19 0-0-0 \texttt{\textbf{W}d8 20 \textbf{W}c3 \textbf{xd}1+ 21 \textbf{xd}1 \textbf{c}d7} the idea will be \texttt{...h8} and \texttt{...f6} in order to entrap the bishop on g3 forever.

18...0-0-0 19 \texttt{\textbf{W}c3 \textbf{c}7 20 a4 c5 21 dxe5 dxe5 22 axb5 axb5 23 \textbf{d}d5?}

White realizes that he is strategically lost and commits a tactical blunder.

23...\texttt{\textbf{W}xd5 24 exd5 \textbf{d}d5 25 \textbf{h}h7 \textbf{c}4 26 \textbf{xd}8+ \textbf{xd}8 27 \texttt{\textbf{W}e3 \textbf{d}6 28 b3 \textbf{d}d1+ 0-1}

The same method can be successfully applied when actually trapping a piece:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{Malakhov – Jobava}

\textit{European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008}

52 e6 f6 53 \texttt{\textbf{W}xc8 \textbf{xc}8 54 g6 1-0}

\section*{Trapping the Knight}

Tarrasch claimed that a knight near the corner is always a disgrace. While this is not always so, and indeed modern players are increasingly willing to put their knights on the edge and even near corners, care is needed, as such a knight lacks mobility and can quite easily become shut out of play or trapped.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{V. Georgiev – Wornath}

\textit{Bundesliga 2000/1}

Black’s knight is already in danger of exclusion. I just need to keep it in the corner with a simple tactical trick:

20 \texttt{\textbf{a}a7! \textbf{W}d7}

The pawn of e7 was hanging.

21 \texttt{\textbf{x}xb7 \textbf{wb}7 22 \textbf{a}a4 (D)}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Having fixed Black’s knight on a ridiculous square, I turn my eyes to the other side of the board.

22...\texttt{\textbf{x}b8 23 \textbf{w}c4 \textbf{d}d4 24 h3 f6 25 \textbf{d}d2 \textbf{g}7 26 \texttt{\textbf{W}c3 \textbf{xc}3 27 bxc3 \textbf{w}e8 28 \textbf{wb}5 \textbf{b}7 29 \textbf{W}c6 \textbf{w}b8 30 c4 \textbf{f}7 31 f4 h5 32 e5 h4 33 exd6 exd6 34 \textbf{e}e3 g5 35 f5 1-0}
Knights need stable positions, and advanced posts ideally. Without security they may become an easy prey for practically any piece.

```
Leko – Ivanchuk
Dortmund 2008
```

Ivanchuk did not sense the danger and proceeded with his general plan:

```
23...d5?
```

The only move was 23...c4, to bring the knight back into its camp.

```
24.exd5
```

White cuts off the knight’s flight-squares, and will round it up later.

```
25...b6 26.eae1!
26.d5 is premature: 26...xc5 27.xc5 h6 28.xd5 g5 wins back the piece. White need not hurry, as the knight is frozen in place on g5.
26...d4 27.d1 d3+ 28.h1 dxc2 29.f2 e3 30.d3 e3 31.xg5 1-0
```

**Trapping the King**

Excluding the king is an especially effective strategy in an endgame, since the king usually needs to become an active piece and play a full role in the battle.

```
Tan Zhongyi – Stefanova
FIDE Knockout (Women), Elista 2004
```

```
33...a3+! 34.a1
```

The king has to retreat into the corner, leaving Black practically a piece ahead in the endgame.

```
34...h8 35.g5 b4 36.e2 c8 37.d2 xc4
```

This exchange sacrifice is possible thanks to Black’s dynamic advantage. The combined efforts of a king, knight and passed pawn easily overpower a single rook.

```
38.bxc4 xc4 39.h4 d3 40.f5 e4 41.fxg6 fxg6 42.c2+ d4 43.d2 e3 44.d1 e2 0-1
```

```
S. Pereira – El Debs
São Paulo 2000
```

White forces Black’s king to the edge, where it is permanently exposed to a discovered check:

```
31.h3+! xh3 32.gxh3 h8
```
32...b5 33 g2+ hxh3 34 g8+ h2 35 hxh8 gxh2 36 gxh4+ g1 37 e2 +--.
33 g2+ hxh3 34 fxh2 1-0
\[\text{g3++ and h3# is inevitable.}\]

Trapping the Rook

Rooks love open spaces, and this is a good reason to keep the enemy rooks behind their own pawns.

Stefanova - Dworakowska
Tromsø 2007

25 \[\text{c4!}\]
The knight is heading for b6, where it will shut in the rook forever.
25...a7 26 h6 (D)

The knight on b6 will cost Black at least a rook, one way or another, so White is effectively an exchange ahead.
26...d7 27 d1 c6 28 b4 e4 29 f3 c6 30 a5 +-- c2 31 fxe4 xxe2 32 b8 g5 33 c8 g6 34 h1 e5 35 xac7 g4 36 c1 xe3 37 bxh7 g6 38 c6 xg2 39 c5+ f6 40 g4+ g7 41 xc7 1-0

Rooks can be slain in their beds by a queen, especially if it has solid pawn support.

De Vreugt - Groffen
Dutch Team Ch 2007/8

23 g7! a4 24 h2 1-0
Black is actually exchanging his rook for the f6-pawn.

Trapping the Queen

The queen may become very vulnerable if it joins the play too early. Due to its high value it cannot be exchanged for other pieces, and must flee whenever attacked. That's why as novices we are advised to develop our other pieces first.

Black had spent too many moves in the opening moving her queen, and now it becomes a target.

14 h3
White is developing his pieces with gain of tempi.
14...g6
14...f7 15 g5 g6 (15...g8 16 xf5)
16 h4 h5 the queen is trapped.
15 f4 g8 16 xd5! xd5 17 c4
The queen is trapped in mid-board. This often happens if there are many pieces left on the board. White comfortably won later.

Queens also hate closed spaces, since they cannot show their full potential and are easy prey for the lower-rated pieces.

21 d2!
Now Black loses material.
21...e5? 22 b1 1-0
22...a4 23 xc5!.

36 a1!
White takes the dark squares away from the black queen, and will now trap it.
36 d5 37 b2 f7
If 37...b3 38 xb3 xb3 39 e4 h7 40 e2 d5 (40...c2 41 c4 +- 41 d3 f8 42 c4 +- White also wins.
38 d3!
The queen is successfully surrounded, and the last finesse will be to attack it with the knight.
38...d7
38...g4 39 c3 gxf3 40 g4 +- with the idea d1.
39 c3 e7 40 g4 1-0

Exercises

1

2

Doettling – D. Gross
Bundesliga 2007/8

Black has just played 35...d5-b3?, closing off his queen’s emergency exit, and this will cost him dear.

Trap an enemy piece!

Limitation followed by trapping.
A piece has strayed too far from its own camp.

This is similar to the previous one.

There’s no need for a hint here!

Decoy in order to block.

Cut off the black queen’s way out.

Simple chess is the best.
As we said at the beginning of the book, nothing can substitute for your own work on tactics. Regularly solving tactical positions will help you to understand the mechanisms described in the book, and assist the subconscious mind in absorbing many patterns and themes. It will also keep you in good shape for your competitive games. Before a tournament, we recommend you double the time you spend tackling tactical exercises in order to get into your optimal chess form.

Every time when you see a diagram on a sheet of paper, spend some time to find the solution; let this become a useful habit of yours. Another useful method for tactical improvement is to follow the games of the great tacticians, such as Mikhail Tal, Garry Kasparov, Veselin Topalov, Alexander Morozevich, Alexei Shirov, Emil Sutovsky amongst many others. This will help you discover new horizons in tactical art, and fully appreciate the beauty in chess.

A final tip: do not be afraid to sacrifice material. You will learn more from losing a chess game with honour than you will from gaining a couple of Elo points with a chicken-hearted draw offer. Remember, we are not slaves of our ratings.

In the following fifty exercises, you are told only who is to move. You must decide for yourself if you should be looking for a win or a draw, or just trying to secure a useful advantage. Like in a real game, there are also no clues about what tactical themes the position may feature. By this stage of the book you now have all the tools you need to work that out for yourself!
Chapter 1

1) Nevanlinna – Sepp
Jyväskylä 1993

16...d4!
Black forces his opponent into a dreadful pin.
17 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♗xd4 (D)

18...♗g4!
Precisely here, this move creates an additional pin, puts more pressure on the pinned bishop and prevents ♗d1 ideas. What more could one ask of a single move?
19 ♗ad1 ♗xd1 20 ♗xd1 ♗xd4+ 21 ♗xd4 ♗fd8!
Black has won an exchange, and with precise play converts it into a full point.
22 ♗f2 ♗xf2+ 23 ♗xf2 ♗xd1 24 ♗xd1 ♗d8 25 ♗e2 ♗d4 26 ♗g3 ♗a4 27 ♗d3 ♗a1 28 ♗d2 ♗f8 29 ♗g4 ♗a4 30 ♗e3 ♗c4 31 ♗c3 ♗g5 32 ♗xg5 ♗xg5 33 ♗xh6 ♗h4 34 ♗b3 ♗c5 35 ♗b2 ♗c4 36 ♗xc4 ♗a4 37 ♗d3 ♗xb3 38 ♗a5 ♗h3+ 39 ♗d2 ♗xh2+ 40 ♗c1 ♗c2+ 0-1

2) Nguyen Huynh Minh – Macak
Budapest 2008

18 ♗xe5
This is easy. White wins a pawn due to the pin.
18...♗f6

You had to foresee this counterpin, and see what follows:
19 ♗xf7! ♗xf7 20 ♗e6+ ♗f8 21 ♗ac1 1-0
Black is completely tied up, ♗c7 is coming, and 21...♕d7 is simply bad due to 22 ♗xd6+. This is why he decided to throw in the towel.

3) Narančić – Bistrić
Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008

No.
18...♕xa4?
Greed is usually punished, especially in chess. The knight walks into a pin, which White can exploit by simple means. He piles on as much pressure as he can, and at some point Black’s defence will crack, since his queen is in front of his army (minor forces should protect first, remember?), which leaves him no chances in further exchanges.

19 ♗f1
20 ♗c4 followed by 21 ♗xa4 is the threat.
19...♕xb5 20 ♗xb5 ♗c6 21 ♗a3
Adding a rook to the attack.

21...♕c8
The knight will provide support.
22 ♗ba1 ♗cb6 23 ♗c4
With two decisive ideas to break the defence: to add the knight by ♗d2-b1-c3, or the bishop via ♗c2-d1. Black is helpless.
23...♕a6 24 ♗d2 ♗f8 25 ♗c3 ♗d7 26 ♗xa4 1-0

4) Kurnosov – Dzhumaev
Agzamov Memorial, Tashkent 2008

13 ♗xe6+! fxe6
13...♗e7 14 ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 15 ♗xa8+.
14 ♗xe6! ♗g7
Unfortunately Black has no time to capture the queen: 14...♗xe6 15 ♗f7#.
15 ♗xd7+ 1-0

5) Tatai – Vancini
Italian Ch, Chianciano 1989

19 ♗xg7! ♗xg7 20 ♗c3! ♗g4
The bishop defends the h5-square, but after White's reply, the black position collapses.

21 h3 \(\text{w}_7\) 22 h\(\text{x}_4\) \(\text{g}_8\) 23 f5 1-0

6) Wade – Short
Staunton Memorial, London 2008

39...\(\text{x}_c3\)! 40 \(\text{x}_c3\) bc8 41 a3 (D)

W

B

So far it was easy, but Black had to foresee how he could attack the pinned knight once more.

41...\(\text{b}_6\)!

Such backward moves are notoriously hard to spot, especially in advance. But if we are looking for ways to put additional pressure on the pinned piece, the solution should come relatively easily.

42 \(\text{a}_1\)

The point is that after 42 \(\text{b}_3\) \(\text{b}_4\)! White loses both his knights due to a double attack: 43 \(\text{b}_4\) \(\text{c}_3+\) 44 \(\text{d}_2\) \(\text{f}_3\) -+

42...\(\text{b}_4\)! -+

Anyway! Naturally, Black prefers to win a whole knight rather than an exchange.

43 \(\text{d}_3\) \(\text{c}_3+\) 44 \(\text{c}_3\) \(\text{c}_3+\) 45 \(\text{e}_2\)

Black is winning. The rest is pure technique.

45...\(\text{d}_6\) 46 \(\text{a}_2\) \(\text{f}_4\) 47 \(\text{b}_2\) \(\text{g}_6\) 48 \(\text{a}_2\) \(\text{e}_3+\) 49 \(\text{f}_2\) \(\text{e}_4\) 50 \(\text{a}_4\) \(\text{c}_7\) 51 \(\text{g}_5\) \(\text{f}_4\) 52 \(\text{a}_7\) \(\text{e}_3+\) 53 \(\text{g}_3\) \(\text{d}_4\) 0-1

7) Sitnikov – An. Bykhovsky
Elkana 2007

41...\(\text{x}_d5\)!

Active defence is the only chance. Black abandons the rook, even though he loses it with check, but creates a drawing mechanism. Passive defence is doomed: 41...\(\text{e}_8\) does not work, since White has an additional attacker: 42 b5 +–.

42 \(\text{c}_7+\) \(\text{c}_7\) 43 \(\text{c}_7+\) \(\text{g}_6\) 44 \(\text{e}_5\) (D)

Black has lost a rook, but activated his queen to the maximum.

44...\(\text{e}_4\)! 45 \(\text{c}_1\)

Or 45 \(\text{f}_2\) \(\text{b}_1+\) 46 \(\text{g}_1\) \(\text{e}_4\) =, but not 45 h3?? \(\text{f}_2+\) 46 \(\text{g}_2\) \(\text{f}_1\) + 47 \(\text{h}_2\) \(\text{x}_e2\)!

Here the players agreed a draw, with 45...\(\text{f}_2+\) 46 \(\text{g}_2\) \(\text{e}_1+\) 47 \(\text{f}_1\) \(\text{e}_4+\) as a possible finish.

8) Pruess – Ippolito
USA Ch, Tulsa 2008

20 \(\text{x}_f7\)!

Excellent. White will coordinate his rooks and bishops and develop his initiative without any risk.

20...\(\text{x}_f7\) 21 \(\text{h}_4!\) \(\text{g}_5\) (D)

W

The only move. After 21...\(\text{b}_6\) 22 \(\text{x}_f7+\) \(\text{f}_7\) 23 \(\text{g}_5\) \(\text{+}\) White emerges an exchange up.

22 h\(\text{x}_g5\)!

22 \(\text{x}_f6\) is another way to continue the attack. White gets rid of the defender, and substitutes his attacking rook with the one from al. After 22...\(\text{x}_f6\) 23 \(\text{f}_1\) he wins at least a pawn.
A COURSE IN CHESS TACTICS

20. \(bS\) 

21. \(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{xe}5\) 22 \(\text{xf}7\) \(\text{xf}7\) 23 \(\text{xf}7\) \(\text{xf}7\) Still, the method he chooses is preferable, since it is much harder for his opponent to defend with more pieces left on the board.

22...\(\text{hxg}5\) 23 \(\text{f}5\)!

More pressure on the pinned piece! 23...\(\text{a}5\)?! Black crumbles under the pressure. But even after 23...\(\text{f}8\)! (relatively best) 24 \(\text{xf}7\) (24 \(\text{xf}7\) \(\text{xe}6\) 25 \(\text{f}5\) \(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{g}6\) 29 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}7\) 30 \(\text{e}8\)! (D).)

Chapter 2

1) Brkić – Andonov

Porto San Giorgio 2007

34 \(\text{d}7\)! 1-0

34...\(\text{w}x\text{d}7\) 35 \(\text{w}f8\)#

2) Olszewski – S. Savchenko

Cappelle la Grande 2008

21...\(\text{d}1\)! 22 \(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{e}2\)!

22...\(\text{f}1\) (0-1)

3) Delgado – Llorente

Bayamo 2000

1 \(\text{h}6\)!

This excellent move deflects the pawn, and in addition opens the g-file for the rook.

1...\(\text{xh}6\)

1...\(\text{xg}7\) 2 \(\text{c}3\) \(\text{xf}7\)++ \(\text{g}8\) 4 \(\text{g}4\)!

2 \(\text{wh}5\)!! \(\text{xe}5\) 3 \(\text{d}7\) (1-0)

4) Inants – Batsanin

Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008

22...\(\text{d}5\)!

Black exploits both factors and creates unbearable pressure on White’s position. The knight is untouchable, so White has no good options.

23 \(\text{d}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 24 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xe}4\) 0-1

5) Tiviakov – Le Quang

Moscow 2008

False! This is what White was aiming for, but he missed that Black’s queen can deflect a rook before making its exit from the board.

22...\(\text{w}e5\)! 23 \(\text{w}e1\)

The point is that after 23 \(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{d}1\)+ 24 \(\text{f}1\) \(\text{xh}6\) both White’s rook and knight are hanging: 25 \(\text{xf}8\) \(\text{xe}5\) 26 \(\text{xa}7\) \(\text{d}5\)+. 23 \(\text{g}7\) is a nice try, but also fails: 23...\(\text{xg}7\) 24 \(\text{xg}7\) \(\text{xe}5\) 25 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{ce}5\) 26 \(\text{xa}8\) \(\text{c}5\) and Black wins.

23...\(\text{wh}8\)!

The queen retreats with gain of tempo, creating a double attack. It is all over for White now.

24 \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{f}x\text{d}6\) 25 \(\text{xe}6\)

After 25 \(\text{hxg}4\), Black can choose between 25...\(\text{xe}5\) and 25...\(\text{xf}2\) 26 \(\text{xf}2\) \(\text{h}2\), winning in both cases.

25...\(\text{xf}2\) 26 \(\text{g}6\)+ \(\text{f}7\) 27 \(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{xe}2\) 28 \(\text{xf}1\) \(\text{e}8\) 0-1

6) Markus – Bologan

Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008

By deflecting the main defender:

44 \(\text{a}8\)!! \(\text{xa}8\) 45 \(\text{xd}7\)

White’s queen enters the battle, and now either \(f7\) is doomed, or the queen will reach \(g7\) via \(f5\). Note that the black queen is too far away from the main theatre, and White’s pieces are all superior to their black counterparts.

45...\(\text{e}3\)+
Chapter 3

1)  G. Jones – Hasan  
Hastings 2007/8  
32 \textsf{a}3+! 0-1  

2)  Flindt – Bulski  
Politiken Cup, Elsinore 2008  
22...\textsf{e}1+! 0-1  

3)  Wang Puchen – Bui Vinh  
Budapest 2008  
42...\textsf{x}f2! 0-1  

4)  Gorovykh – Shimanov  
St Petersburg 2008  
And a very important one. This is the queen, 
and after it is deflected away, Black’s king is 
hunted down on the queenside.  
21 \textsf{e}4! \textsf{xe}4 22 \textsf{d}6+ \textsf{b}5 23 \textsf{f}b1+ \textsf{a}5 24 \textsf{d}2+ 1-0  

5)  K. Stein – Movsesian  
European Clubs Cup, Panormo 2001  
The rook must protect \textsf{h}3, and so can be 
overloaded:  
35...\textsf{f}1!! 36 \textsf{xe}5+ \textsf{xe}5  
White is facing an impossible choice, either 
mate after 37 \textsf{g}1 \textsf{e}3+ or 37 \textsf{h}3 \textsf{xe}4 38 \textsf{e}8+ \textsf{g}7 39 \textsf{e}5+ \textsf{h}7.  
0-1  

6)  Akobian – Onishchuk  
Philadelphia (blitz) 2002  
White opens the f-file to force Black to de- 
defend his rook.  
1 \textsf{x}g5! \textsf{fxg5}  
And now he enjoys the overload created:  
2 \textsf{xc}7!! \textsf{d}7  
2...\textsf{x}f2 3 \textsf{xe}7 \textsf{f}1+ 4 \textsf{a}2 +-.  
3 \textsf{xd}7! 1-0  

7)  A. Manvelian (end of study)  
1st Prize, Zadachy i Etiudy, 1997  
1 \textsf{f}3+ \textsf{x}b3 2 \textsf{xc}3!! \textsf{bxc}3 3 \textsf{d}6#  

8)  G. Singh – Harikrishna  
Kolkata 2001  
36...\textsf{xf}4!? 37 \textsf{xf}4??  

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45...\textsf{xf}8 46 \textsf{f}5 e3+ 47 \textsf{h}2 \textsf{a}2+ 48 \textsf{h}3  
leads to mate on g7.  
46 \textsf{h}2 \textsf{e}6 47 \textsf{xe}6 \textsf{f}8 48 \textsf{c}8 \textsf{d}2  
48...\textsf{e}2 49 \textsf{xf}8+ \textsf{xf}8 50 \textsf{d}7.  
49 \textsf{xf}8+ \textsf{xf}8 50 \textsf{g}4 \textsf{e}8 51 \textsf{g}2 \textsf{e}2 52  
\textsf{xe}2 \textsf{d}7 53 \textsf{f}2 \textsf{xd}6 54 \textsf{e}3 1-0  

7)  Shirov – Ivanchuk  
Foros 2008  
...then the f3-pawn will be under attack, and  
White’s defences will be in ruins. This can be 
achieved with a study-like deflection which 
also disrupts the cooperation between the white 
pieces.  
32...\textsf{d}3!! 33 \textsf{xd}3  
This is forced.  
33...\textsf{xf}3+ 34 \textsf{g}1 \textsf{xd}3 35 \textsf{xe}5 \textsf{e}3+ 36 \textsf{h}2 \textsf{xe}2+ 0-1  
White’s king cannot survive after 37 \textsf{g}1 \textsf{e}3+ or 37 \textsf{h}3 \textsf{xe}4 38 \textsf{e}8+ \textsf{g}7 39 \textsf{e}5+ \textsf{h}7.  

8)  Toczek – Wozniak  
Poland 1999  
1 \textsf{h}7!! \textsf{h}7 (D)  

2 \textsf{b}6!  
The main defender, as usual, is the queen.  
After its deflection, the idea behind White’s 
first move becomes clear.  
2...\textsf{x}b6 3 \textsf{g}5+ \textsf{g}8  
3...\textsf{h}6 allows mate in two: 4 \textsf{h}2+ \textsf{g}5 5  
\textsf{h}5#.  
4 \textsf{h}2 \textsf{e}3+ 5 \textsf{b}1 \textsf{e}8 6 \textsf{d}3 \textsf{xd}3  
The only move. Both 6...\textsf{xe}5 7 \textsf{g}6 \textsf{xf}6 8  
\textsf{h}7+ \textsf{f}8 9 \textsf{h}8# and 6...\textsf{d}4 7 \textsf{h}1 lead to 
mate.  
7 \textsf{cxd}3 \textsf{xe}5 8 \textsf{h}1 \textsf{xe}5 9 \textsf{h}7+ \textsf{f}8 10  
\textsf{h}8# 1-0  

---
This natural move is a fatal error, as White neglects his back rank.

White should play either 37 \( \text{h4} \), safely neutralizing the danger and claiming a modest advantage after 37...\( \text{f4} \) (37...\( \text{f4} \) 38 \( \text{g4} \) 38 \( \text{g4} \) is pleasant for White) loses to 38 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{c2} \) + 39 \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{g7} \) 40 \( \text{e4} \) with an overwhelming attack.

Now Black finds a killing shot:

37...\( \text{d4} \) +! 0-1

White resigned in view of: 38 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{f3} \) + 0-1

Chapter 4

1) Knott – S. Haslinger

_Hastings 2007/8_

48...\( \text{e4} \)!

Decoying the king into a promotion check.

49 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{b1} \) + 0-1

2) C. Horvath – Brnas

_Croatia Cup, Pula 2001_

23 \( \text{e6} \) ! \( \text{xe6} \) 24 \( \text{c4} \) 1-0

The queen is trapped.

3) Dudzinski – Mielczarski

_Ustron 2008_

26 \( \text{h8} \) + \( \text{f7} \) 27 \( \text{g6} \) +! \( \text{g6} \) +

27...\( \text{g6} \) 28 \( \text{h7} \) #.

28 \( \text{h5} \) +

28...\( \text{g3} \) + \( \text{f5} \) 29 \( \text{h5} \) + --.

1-0

28...\( \text{g7} \) 29 \( \text{g3} \) + --.

4) H. Hunt – Petrenko

_Calvia (Women’s Olympiad) 2004_

White first interposes on the b-file.

62 \( \text{b6} \) ! \( \text{b1} \) + 63 \( \text{a6} \) \( \text{a1} \) + 64 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{b1} \) +

65 \( \text{c6} \) \( \text{c1} \) +

Now she drags her opponent’s rook close to her king to escape from the perpetual check:

66 \( \text{c4} \) ! \( \text{c4} \) + 67 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{b4} \) + 68 \( \text{c5} \) \( \text{g4} \)

69 \( \text{b8} \) \( \text{g3} \) + 70 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xb6} \) 71 \( \text{xe5} \) + 1-0

5) De Jong – L. Johannessen

_European Clubs Cup, Kemer 2007_

36 \( \text{d7} \) ! \( \text{xg7} \) 37 \( \text{a7} \) 1-0

37...\( \text{xb7} \) 38 \( \text{a8} \) + \( \text{g7} \) 39 \( \text{xb7} \) +.

6) H. Rinck

_Deutsche Schachzeitung, 1903_

With simple moves White first destroys an important pawn, then chases the queen to a bad square, traps and finally wins it. The queen has the powers of both bishop and rook, but in this study the combined efforts of these two individual pieces prove of greater value:

1 \( \text{a8} \) ! \( \text{a2} \)

...\( \text{a8} \) 2 \( \text{f3} \) +; for 1...\( \text{a8} \) 2 \( \text{g6} \) see the main line.

2 \( \text{xa4} \) \( \text{g8} \)

2...\( \text{xa4} \) 3 \( \text{e8} \) +.

3 \( \text{a8} \) ! \( \text{g7} \) 4 \( \text{g6} \) ! \( \text{g6} \) 5 \( \text{a6} \) +

White’s skewer wins Black’s queen and the game.

7) Corrales Jimenez – Hungaski

_World Junior Ch, Erevan 2007_

30 \( \text{c7} \) !

Decoying the queen onto a mined square.

30...\( \text{xc7} \)

Black lacks time to take the queen:

30...\( \text{d7} \)

31 \( \text{xf7} \) + \( \text{g8} \) (31...\( \text{e8} \) 32 \( \text{xe7} \) #) 32 \( \text{g7} \) +

31 \( \text{xf6} \) + \( \text{xf6} \)

The only move since 31...\( \text{e8} \) allows mate in two by 32 \( \text{g8} \) + \( \text{d7} \) 33 \( \text{e6} \) #.

32 \( \text{xc7} \)

White has won back the sacrificed piece and emerged two pawns ahead. He was able to capitalize on his material advantage:

32...\( \text{ac8} \) 33 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{f7} \) 34 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d4} \) 35 \( \text{f3} \)

36 \( \text{h2} \) \( \text{c5} \) 37 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 38 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{g5} \) 39

\( \text{f5} \) \( \text{f4} \) 40 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 41 \( \text{g3} \) + \( \text{f7} \) 42 \( \text{h7} \) +

\( \text{e6} \) 43 \( \text{h5} \) 1-0

8) v. Petkov – Sanchez Guirado

_Collado Villalba 2008_

21 \( \text{xa7} \) +! \( \text{c7} \) 22 \( \text{axc6} \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 23 \( \text{xc6} \) !

\( \text{xe1} \) 24 \( \text{xa5} \) + \( \text{b6} \)

Black’s moves are all forced; otherwise he loses material.

25 \( \text{c6} \) + \( \text{xa5} \) 26 \( \text{a6} \) + \( \text{b4} \) 27 \( \text{a3} \) + \( \text{b3} \)

28 \( \text{b6} \) + \( \text{a4} \)

And now comes the most pleasant moment in the combination – a silent deadly move.

29 \( \text{a2} \) !

As we said before – it doesn’t take many pieces to mate a lone king out in the open.

29...\( \text{hxh1} \) 30 \( \text{b3} \) + \( \text{a5} \) 31 \( \text{a6} \) # (1-0)
Chapter 5

1) Wehner – A. Rotstein
_German Ch, Bad Wörishofen 2008_

In principle it was a good idea, but there is a major tactical flaw here:

12...Ne4! 13 fxg4 hxg4 0-1


2) Alexandrov – Danin
_Minsk 2006_

White’s king and rook are situated on the same diagonal, so line clearance should spring to mind!

24...Nxd5!

Black is an exchange down, but makes use of the insecure position of the opponent’s king as well as a simple geometrical motif.

25 exd5 Bb6+

Double attack.

26.e1 Ba7

The tables have turned. Now Black is a healthy pawn up and has a decisive attack.

27.h5 Be3

Threatening a discovered attack.

28.d1 c3 0-1

3) Carron – Nemet
_Swiss Ch, Silvaplana 2003_

The first move is quite obvious: Black annihilates an important defender and opens the long diagonal.

21...Nxh3! (D)

However, White has a zwischenzug:

22.Nxc4

It was important to see this detail in advance, and to have foreseen the brilliant finish:

22...Ne3!! 0-1

4) Tiviakov – Ponomariov
_FIDE Knockout, Moscow 2001_

23...Kh3+! 24 gxf3 Kg8 0-1

5) Aronian – Karpov
_Hoogeveen 2003_

27.e7! (D)

White opens the d-file for his rooks, takes away the d7-square from his opponent’s knights, and breaks open Black’s shelter on the kingside.

27...Nc7 28.Nxf6 gxf6 29.Ne4 Na7 30.Nc4

31.Ng7 32.Nc6 Nh8 32...d8 1-0

32...Nxd8 33.Nh6+ Kg8 34.Nf6#.

6) Esquivel – Gongora
_Cuba 2002_

A double attack deflects Black’s blockading piece:

1.Nxb5!! Nxb5 2.Nxc4+! Nxc4

Or: 2...g6 3.Nxb5 Nxd4 4.c6 Bf7 5.b5+-; 2...g7 3.Nxb5 Nf6 4.c7+-.

3.d7 1-0

The knights are too clumsy to stop a passed pawn that is right next to them.

7) An. Perez – Ordonez
_Cuba 2003_

1.Nh3! Nxe4

After 1...h6 2.Nxd6 White threatens to take on h6 with the rook, and 2...f6 3.Nd1 promises White a solid pawn and a winning position. Nevertheless, after the text-move it looks as if the attack has ended. However...
2 \( \texttt{d5!} \)
This double attack aims to deflect Black's defender of h7.

2...\( \texttt{\textbf{c6}} \)??
A clever move, but insufficient to save the game.

3 \( \texttt{\textbf{xg6}!} \) \( \texttt{fxg6} \) 4 \( \texttt{\textbf{xh7+}}! \) 1-0
Facing 4...\( \texttt{\textbf{xh7}} \) 5 \( \texttt{\textbf{h4#}} \), Black threw in the towel.

8) Y. Perez – L. Martinez (variation)  
Cuba 2004

By decoying the king into a discovered attack, Black bags a mighty trophy – the white queen:

1...\( \texttt{\textbf{h2+!!}} \) 2 \( \texttt{\textbf{xh2}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{g4+}} \) 28 \( \texttt{\textbf{g1}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{e3}} \)
And since he can operate with check, before capturing the queen, Black wins two minor pieces for a rook thanks to an overload:

3...\( \texttt{\textbf{xf1+}}! \) 4 \( \texttt{\textbf{xf1}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xh1+}} \) 5 \( \texttt{\textbf{g1}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{h3+}} \) 6 \( \texttt{\textbf{e1}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xa4}} \) –+

Chapter 6

1) Fedorov – Lastin  
Voronezh 2007

26...\( \texttt{\textbf{xh2+}}! \) 27 \( \texttt{\textbf{xh2}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{g4+}} \) 28 \( \texttt{\textbf{g1}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{e3}} \)
Black realized his material advantage:

29 \( \texttt{\textbf{f3}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{g4}} \) 30 \( \texttt{\textbf{f4}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{g7}} \) 31 \( \texttt{\textbf{xd5}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{d8}} \) 32 \( \texttt{\textbf{b6}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xd4}} \) 33 \( \texttt{\textbf{c1}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{d3}} \) 34 \( \texttt{\textbf{d1}} \) e5 35 \( \texttt{\textbf{g3}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{e2}} \) 36 \( \texttt{\textbf{c1}} \) e4 37 \( \texttt{\textbf{h3}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{f7}} \) 38 \( \texttt{\textbf{g4+}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{g4}} \) 39 \( \texttt{\textbf{xc4}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{d1}} \) 40 \( \texttt{\textbf{xd1}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xe1}} \) 41 \( \texttt{\textbf{axa5}} \) e2 42 \( \texttt{\textbf{c2}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{d3}} \) 43 \( \texttt{\textbf{e3}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{g7}} \) 44 \( \texttt{\textbf{ac4}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xc4}} \) 45 \( \texttt{\textbf{xc4}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{f6}} \) 46 a5 \( \texttt{\textbf{f7}} \) 47 \( \texttt{\textbf{d2}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{f4}} \) 48 \( \texttt{\textbf{e4}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{e6}} \) 0-1

2) M. Makarov – Ibragimov  
Russian Ch, Samara 2000

It took only one move for the Russian GM to deal with his colleague:

22 \( \texttt{\textbf{e6}} \) 1-0
22...\( \texttt{\textbf{xc6}} \) 23 \( \texttt{\textbf{d7+}} \) .

3) Praznik – Stojanović  
Bled 2008

Not at all:

28 \( \texttt{\textbf{xf6+}}! \) 1-0
White frees a square for a fork, and opens a line for the remaining rook. Thanks to that, Black cannot protect his e8-rook.

4) Fedorowicz – Vaganian  
Reykjavik (Summit) 1990

24 \( \texttt{\textbf{h8+}}! \) 1-0
This decoys Black's king into the corner as seen above. 24...\( \texttt{\textbf{xh8}} \) 25 \( \texttt{\textbf{xh8+}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xh8}} \) 26 \( \texttt{\textbf{xf7}} \) +.

5) Stojanović – Dumpor  
Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008

First Black advances his knight:

39...\( \texttt{\textbf{f3}} \) 40 \( \texttt{\textbf{f1}} \) (D)
40 \( \texttt{\textbf{h1}} \) does not help either due to 40...\( \texttt{\textbf{e6}} \) with the decisive threat of 41...\( \texttt{\textbf{wh3}} \)#.

And now comes the rook:

40...\( \texttt{\textbf{b1+}}! \) 0-1
A beautiful deflection. Now three different forks are possible: 41 \( \texttt{\textbf{g2}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{e1+}} \), 41 \( \texttt{\textbf{e2}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{d4+}} \) and 41 \( \texttt{\textbf{xb1}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{d2+}} \).

6) Short – Timman  
Staunton Memorial, London 2008

The correct solution is 19 \( \texttt{\textbf{d6}} \)!! \( \texttt{\textbf{cxd6}} \) (or 19...\( \texttt{\textbf{xd6}} \) 20 \( \texttt{\textbf{f7+}} \)) 20 \( \texttt{\textbf{xc6+}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{d7}} \) 21 \( \texttt{\textbf{xb8}} \) +.

Instead there followed 19 \( \texttt{\textbf{b3?}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xb3}} \) 20 \( \texttt{\textbf{a5}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{e8}} \) 21 \( \texttt{\textbf{xa7}} \) and while White was still better, the win is not easy at all, and later Short even lost on time.

7) P. Nikolić – Bindrich  
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Answer B is correct.

49...\( \texttt{\textbf{f3+}} \)??
When going for a combination, we must never forget our opponent's resources, no matter how ridiculous they may look.

50 \( \texttt{\textbf{xf3!}} \)
Black was obviously counting on 50 \( \texttt{\textbf{xf3}} \)? \( \texttt{\textbf{xf4+}} \) 51 \( \texttt{\textbf{g2}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{g5+}} \) 52 \( \texttt{\textbf{h2}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xf3}} \) with an
edge for Black. However, he forgot that White may take the knight with another piece. No wonder – this type of psychological failing is common even in the practice of experienced grandmasters. Most people simplify their calculation by excluding the ‘unnecessary’ lines.

1-0

After 50...\(\texttt{\textit{xf}}3\) White wins back the queen thanks to the fork 51 \(\texttt{\textit{e}}6+\ \texttt{\textit{e}}7\) 52 \(\texttt{\textit{xg}}5\) and emerges a piece ahead.

8)  
F. Chin – Van Weersel  
British League (4NCL) 2007/8  
In the game White hurried to perform a study-like shot:

25 \(\texttt{\textit{l}}f6?\)  
However, this appears to be enough only for perpetual check. He needed to deflect Black’s queen away from the vital e7-square instead by 25 \(\texttt{\textit{f}}4!\ \texttt{\textit{f}xe}6\) and then 26 \(\texttt{\textit{xe}}6!! \texttt{\textit{xf}}3\) (the point is that after 26 ...\(\texttt{\textit{xf}}6\) 27 \(\texttt{\textit{xg}}7+\ \texttt{\textit{h}}8\) 28 \(\texttt{\textit{h}}7+\ \texttt{\textit{g}}8\), the e7-square is not protected and so there follows 29 \(\texttt{\textit{e}}7#\) 27 \(\texttt{\textit{e}}7+\ \texttt{\textit{h}}7\) 28 \(\texttt{\textit{xg}}6\) 26 \(\texttt{\textit{xf}}6+\) 29 \(\texttt{\textit{xg}}8+\ \texttt{\textit{h}}8\) 30 \(\texttt{\textit{xf}}6+-\).  
25...\(\texttt{\textit{xf}}6\) 26 \(\texttt{\textit{xe}}6+\ \texttt{\textit{h}}8\) 27 \(\texttt{\textit{h}}7+\ \texttt{\textit{g}}8\) 28 \(\texttt{\textit{g}}7+\ \texttt{\textit{h}}8\) 29 \(\texttt{\textit{h}}7+\ \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\)

Chapter 7

1]  
I. Sokolov – Oll  
Pärnu 1996  
White only needs to decoy the enemy king onto a mined square:

16 \(\texttt{\textit{d}}8+! \texttt{\textit{xd}}8\) 17 \(\texttt{\textit{xf}}7+\ \texttt{\textit{e}}7\) 18 \(\texttt{\textit{xf}}7\) 19 \(\texttt{\textit{c}}4+\ \texttt{\textit{g}}7\) 20 \(\texttt{\textit{d}}1\) \(\texttt{\textit{f}}5\) 21 \(\texttt{\textit{c}}7+\ \texttt{\textit{h}}6\) 22 \(\texttt{h}3\) 1-0

2)  
Cmilyte – Borić  
European Clubs Cup (women), Kallithea 2008  
White found a beautiful win:

23 \(\texttt{\textit{xc}}6!\ \texttt{\textit{bxc}}6\)  
23...\(\texttt{\textit{xa}}1\) 24 \(\texttt{\textit{d}}8!\).  
24 \(\texttt{\textit{d}}7!\) 1-0  
24...\(\texttt{\textit{xb}}3\) 25 \(\texttt{\textit{xd}}7+\ \texttt{\textit{h}}8\) 26 \(\texttt{\textit{xf}}6+.\)

3)  
Shoker – A. Hernandez Muñoz  
Malaga 2008  
White’s knight prevents him from delivering a decisive discovered check. The b1-h7 diagonal must be cleared!

26 \(\texttt{\textit{f}}8+!\) 1-0  
26...\(\texttt{\textit{xf}}8\) 27 \(\texttt{\textit{e}}4+.\)

4)  
Briscoe – Marlow  
British League (4NCL) 2007/8  
Black is far behind in development. White must not give him time to finish it.

19 \(\texttt{\textit{xd}}5!\ \texttt{\textit{xd}}5\) 20 \(\texttt{\textit{d}}1+\ \texttt{\textit{c}}6\) 21 \(\texttt{\textit{d}}6+\ \texttt{\textit{c}}7\) 22 \(\texttt{\textit{xe}}6+\ \texttt{\textit{c}}8\) 23 \(\texttt{\textit{xe}}7\) 1-0

5)  
Efremov – Soloviev  
corr. 2004  
1 \(\texttt{\textit{g}}4!! \texttt{\textit{xe}}3\) 2 \(\texttt{\textit{xe}}8+\ \texttt{\textit{d}}7\)  
2...\(\texttt{\textit{c}}7\) 3 \(\texttt{\textit{xd}}3\) c4 (3...\(\texttt{\textit{b}}6\) 4 \(\texttt{\textit{e}}7\) and White doubles his rooks on the seventh rank) 4 \(\texttt{\textit{d}}7+!\ \texttt{\textit{xd}}7\) 5 \(\texttt{\textit{f}}6+\ \texttt{\textit{xe}}8\) 6 \(\texttt{\textit{fxg}}7+-.\)  
3 \(\texttt{\textit{f}}6+!\) 1-0  
Black resigned, spotting the line 3...\(\texttt{\textit{xe}}8\) 4 \(\texttt{\textit{fxg}}7\) \(\texttt{\textit{xd}}1+\ 5 \texttt{\textit{xd}}1\), when nothing can prevent the rebirth of White’s queen.

6)  
Čabriło – Matović  
Yugoslav Team Ch, Vrnjačka Banja 1999  
For a successful discovered attack, White needs to clear a line, and decoy the enemy king.

36 \(\texttt{\textit{h}}7+!\ \texttt{\textit{xh}}7\) 37 \(\texttt{\textit{xe}}8+!\)  
Not 37 \(\texttt{\textit{d}}3+??\) \(\texttt{\textit{f}}5--+.\)  
37...\(\texttt{\textit{xe}}8\) 38 \(\texttt{\textit{c}}7+\ \texttt{\textit{g}}7\) 39 \(\texttt{\textit{e}}8\) \(\texttt{\textit{e}}1+\ 40 \texttt{\textit{g}}2\ \texttt{\textit{d}}2+\ 41 \texttt{\textit{h}}3+-\)

7)  
Alexandrova – Chorvatova  
Hlohovec 1996  
Yes, this was an easy nut to crack:

20 \(\texttt{\textit{d}}5!\ \texttt{\textit{exd}}5\) 21 \(\texttt{\textit{xe}}7+\) 1-0

8)  
Negi – Grivas  
Wijk aan Zee 2008  
The first move is obvious: White takes a pawn thanks to the discovered attack, but will drop his proud knight on e5. Still, destroying Black’s castled position should have encouraged you to press on with your analysis of this line.

20 \(\texttt{\textit{xe}}6!\ \texttt{\textit{xe}}5\) 21 \(\texttt{\textit{xe}}7+!\ \texttt{\textit{xe}}7\)  
Or: 21...\(\texttt{\textit{xe}}7\) 22 \(\texttt{\textit{h}}3+\) \(\texttt{\textit{g}}8\) 23 \(\texttt{\textit{xf}}6+\ \texttt{\textit{g}}5\) 24 \(\texttt{\textit{g}}5\); 21...\(\texttt{\textit{h}}8\) 22 \(\texttt{\textit{c}}2+-..\)  
22 \(\texttt{\textit{f}}4+\)  
And not 22 \(\texttt{\textit{f}}6+??\), when the attacking piece remains unprotected and it is Black who wins after 22...\(\texttt{\textit{xe}}3\) 23 \(\texttt{\textit{h}}xg3\) \(\texttt{\textit{xf}}6\).  
22...\(\texttt{\textit{g}}7\) 23 \(\texttt{\textit{xe}}7+!\ \texttt{\textit{xe}}7\)
Black has enough material for the moment, but White has additional prey in his sights:

\[ 24 \text{d}7 +- \text{f}6 25 \text{xb}7 \text{cd}8 26 \text{h}3 \text{h}8 27 \text{h}6 \text{g}8 28 \text{xf}7 \text{g}1+ 29 \text{c}2 1-0 \]

Chapter 8

1) Davies – Dive
Wrexham 1994

\[ 31 \text{g}8+ \text{h}7 32 \text{h}8+! 1-0 \]
33 \text{g}8+ and 34 \text{g}6# will follow.

2) Lujan – Tkeshelashvili
Stockholm (rapid) 2008

\[ 20 \text{e}5! \text{fxe}5 21 \text{xb}7 \text{d}6 22 \text{e}4! 1-0 \]
Funnily enough, the black queen is trapped!

3) Skembris – Timman
Match (game 1), Corfu 1993

\[ 25 \text{fxe}6! 1-0 \]
25...\text{fxe}6 26 \text{b}7 and mate is unavoidable.

4) Volokitin – Nanu
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

\[ 31 \text{h}6+! \text{g}8 \]
In case of 31...\text{hx}6 the king is decoyed in front of its pieces, and White mates thanks to the vacant \text{h}3-square for his queen: 32 \text{h}3+ \text{g}6 33 \text{h}5#.

\[ 32 \text{h}3 \text{c}7 33 \text{h}4 1-0 \]

5) Gleizerov – Alavkin
Kaluga 2003

\[ 23 \text{f}6! \]
A multi-purpose move. It breaks up Black’s pawn-shield, threatens mate, and frees a line for the rook to finish the job.

\[ 1-0 \]
23...\text{gxf}6 24 \text{g}3+ \text{h}8 25 \text{xf}6#.

6) Nayer – Ftačnik
Bundesliga 2007/8

\[ 18 \text{e}5! \]
With this beautiful blow White opens the d-file towards the king and with energetic play soon mates it. 19 \text{f}7# is the threat.

\[ 18...\text{fxe}5 \]
In case of 18...\text{h}7 above everything else White can win a rook using a knight fork: 19 \text{xa}8+ \text{xa}8 20 \text{c}6+.

\[ 19 \text{dxe}5 \]
Black now tries to close the d-file, but White responds by removing all the bishop’s defenders.

\[ 19...\text{c}4 20 \text{fd}1+ \text{d}5 21 \text{f}2! \text{e}8 22 \text{xd}5+! 1-0 \]
\[ 22...\text{xd}5 (22...\text{xd}5 23 \text{xb}6+) 23 \text{d}7#. \]

7) Jelica – Lujan
Rijeka 2008

\[ 29...\text{xf}5! \]
This piece cannot play a major role in the attack, but the queen will make grateful use of the square it has vacated.

\[ 30 \text{exf}5 \]
30 \text{xf}5 \text{h}4#; it would have been wiser for White to play on a pawn down.

\[ 30...\text{h}4+ 31 \text{h}3 \text{e}4+ 32 \text{h}1 \text{h}3+ 0-1 \]
33 \text{gxh}3 \text{g}1#.

8) Lovkov – Siugirov
Russian Junior Ch, St Petersburg 2008

\[ 27...\text{xb}3! 28 \text{xb}3 \]
28 \text{xb}5 \text{a}1#; 28 \text{xb}3 \text{xc}1+ nets a whole queen.

\[ 28...\text{e}2! 0-1 \]
This is also a double attack: 29 \text{d}2 \text{g}4 or 29 \text{c}1 \text{d}3+.

Chapter 9

1) Sergienko – Rustemov
Russian Ch, Samara 2000

\[ 39...\text{h}2+! 0-1 \]
A variation on the standard smothered mate follows: 40 \text{xe}2 \text{g}3#.

2) Casper – Brener
Bundesliga 2007/8

\[ 27 \text{g}7+! 1-0 \]
White decoys the rook to g7 where it closes off the black king’s exit. 27...\text{xg}7 28 \text{f}6+ \text{h}8 29 \text{d}8+ \text{g}8 30 \text{xe}8#.

3) Li Shilong – Wang Yue
Chinese Ch, Wuxi 2006

\[ 33...\text{b}3! \]
Black blocks the diagonal, and so destroys the defensive mechanism 33...\text{d}8 34 \text{a}4.

\[ 34 \text{axb}3 \text{d}8 35 \text{b}4 \text{xc}6 0-1 \]
4) Nayer – Nepomniashchyy  
*Moscow 2006*

Black could have won on the spot had he have seen an unusual smothered mate idea, combined with decoy: 31...g4! 32...g3 and now comes the amazing 32...xf1+!! 33...xe2#. 
In the game he played 31...b5? and later lost.

5) Geirnaert – Pel  
*Groningen 2008*

Of course not! 55...5g7??
My (DB) good friend Bonno Pel was very upset about this mistake after the game: “I saw this position from miles and miles away, but then in time-trouble something made me move my rook away...” After some neutral move like 55...e7 56...xg5 56...xg5 or, even better, 55...c7 56...xg5 56...xg5 it is a simple fortress thanks to the blockade. White cannot improve his position. 
56 g5 56...xg5 57...f5 58...e4 59...xg5 59...xg5 60...xg5 hxg5 61 h6 
White got the upper hand and later won.

6) Rafizadeh – L. Truong  
*Australian Under-18 Ch, Canberra 2001*

13...xg7!!
White decoys the rook to a very bad square where it blocks the king. Black cannot prevent a discovered attack now. 
13...xg7 14...f6+...f8 15...xd7+...e8 
15...g8 16...f6+...h8 17...xg8+...xg8 18...h6+--. 
16...f6+...f8 17...xd8+...xd8 18...h6+-

7) Kanttsler – Malisov  
*Moden 2000*

White is seeking a perpetual by blocking off the king’s escape-route, and this proved successful in the game after 1...fxg5? 2...h7+!...xh7 3...xf7+...h6 4...f8+...h7 (4...h5?? 5...h8##) 5...f7+ 1/2-1. 1...xf5? is also met by 2...h7+! (2 gxg6+??...g8 3...a7...g5-- 2...xh7 3...xf7+...h8 (3...g7?? 4...gxf6++) 4...f8+ (4...xf6??...c8-- 4...h7 5...f7+, with a draw, while Black can even lose: 1...e6?? 2...xf6+...g8 (2...xf6 3...h7+! --) 3...h8+!...xh8 4...f8+--.
1...g8! solves Black’s problems and wins, as 2...h7? allows 2...xf3+, and otherwise White has nothing; e.g., 2...xf6...f5.

8) Vila Gazquez – Pogorelov  
*Linares (open) 2005*

1...h2+! 2...xh2...f3! 
The key move. The bishop blocks the f-pawn, thus creating a mating-net, and controls the d1-square, not permitting White to exchange rooks. Black now needs to get to the h-file somehow. 
3...e1
This loses at once, but other defences also fail, as shown by Pogorelov: 
a) 3...g1...xc5!! 4...xc5...g6 5...g2...h7+ 6...g1...d8--; 
 b) 3...g5?! f5 and now:  
b1) 4...ac1...d8! 5...xd8...xd8 6...c4 e4--; 
b2) 4...g4 f4 (4...g5??) has the point 5 c6...g4+ 6...g1...d8! 5...g1...g6 6...g2...xc5 7...xc5...h7+ 8...g1...d8-- with the idea...xdh8. 
b3) 4...g1...g6! (and not 4...xc5? 5...xc5...g6 6...f8...xg5 7...g2...h7+ 8...g1...d8 9...h2!!), when White turns the tables in his favour) 5...c6 (5...g2...xc5 6...xc5...h7+ 7...g1...d8) 5...xc6 6...a7...f3 7...g2...c5 8...xc5...h7+ 9...g1...d8 10...c6...xc6 11 f4...xg2 12...xg2...d2+ 13...f2...c7--; 
3...d8! 4...xd8...xd8 0-1

Chapter 10

1) Claverie – Lemos  
*Fischer Memorial, Villa Martelli 2008*

31...a1+! 32...f1...f3+ 33...g2...xf1+! 34...xf1...a1+ 0-1

2) Shaked – Cherniaev  
*New York 1993*

...and it hinders White’s access to the seventh rank, and must be destroyed: 
28...xe4!...xe4 29...b7...h5 
Now a subtle queen manoeuvre forces resignation: 
30...e3! g5 31...xe4! 1-0
3) **P. Carlsson – Braun**  
*Wijk aan Zee 2008*

We hope you noticed that Black has left his king in the centre. Two of its defenders can be removed (destroyed or deflected), and the last one can be blocked.

26 $\text{Bxc6!} \text{Bxc6}$ 27 $\text{Bd7+} \text{Kh8}$ 28 $\text{g5}$  
Mate is threatened on f7 and d8, and Black can’t stop both.

28...$\text{Bd6}$ 29 $\text{Bxd6} \text{Bxh1}+ 30 \text{Bd1} \text{Bxe3}+ 31 \text{Bb1} 1-0

4) **Ushenina – Dvoirys**  
*Moscow 2008*

White’s bishops and queen are perfectly placed, and Black is holding his position together thanks only to his excellent knight. It should be annihilated by a piece that isn’t playing a leading role in the attack:

26 $\text{Bxe5!}$

26 $\text{Bxe6?} \text{fxe6}$ 27 $\text{Bxe6+} \text{Kh8}$ 28 $\text{xf5}$ might look attractive if you miss the solution, but after 28...$\text{e2!}$ the tables will turn in Black’s favour (Aagaard).

1-0  
Black resigned, as after 26...g6 27 $\text{Bxf5}$ exf5 28 $\text{wd4}$ he is mated.

5) **Afek – Gershaev**  
*Israel 1999*

White has a series of three violent sacrifices that remove two defenders and open a vital diagonal:

1 $\text{Bxe4!} \text{dxe4} 2 \text{Be5+!} \text{Bxe5} 3 \text{Bxf5}! 1-0$  
Black resigned in view of 3...$\text{h8} 4 \text{Bf7+} \text{g8}$ 5 $\text{Bxe7+} \text{f8}$ 6 $\text{Bf7+} \text{g8}$ 7 $\text{Bf6+} \text{g7}$ 8 $\text{Bd7#}$ or 3...$\text{e6} 4 \text{h6+} \text{g8}$ 5 $\text{f8+}! \text{xf8} 6 \text{xe6+}++$.  

6) **J. Caceres – Nogueiras**  
*Montreal (open) 2002*

The d4-bishop is too strong to be left on the board. It both pins the white knight and defends on the long diagonal. After its removal, the dark squares in Black’s camp will be indefensible.

1 $\text{Bxd4!} \text{Bxd4} 2 \text{Bxf5} \text{Bxe4}$  
White already has two pawns for the exchange, and his opponent cannot return the exchange. 2...$\text{d6} 3 \text{exd4} 4 \text{Bh1} d5 5 \text{exd5} \text{Bxd5} 6 \text{c3+}++; 2...$\text{f6} 3 \text{c3!} \text{xf5} 4 \text{xf5} ++$.  

3 $\text{wc3+} \text{Bf5} 4 \text{Bxd6!} 1-0$  
4...$\text{f6} 5 \text{xf5} \text{e5} 6 \text{Bf7}++$.  

7) **Handke – H. Hernandez**  
*Havana 2003*

And without a bishop to defend them, Black’s days are numbered.

23 $\text{Be7+} \text{Bxe7} 24 \text{Bxd6} \text{Bd7}$

Or: 24...$\text{e8} 25 \text{xf7+!} \text{xf7} 26 \text{f6+} \text{g8}$ 27 $\text{g7#}$.  
24...$\text{xf8} 25 \text{e6}++$; 24...$\text{e6} 25 \text{Bxe7 Bxc4} 26 \text{e1} \text{Bc6} 27 \text{f6} \text{f8} 28 \text{Bxe6}++$.

25 $\text{e1!} 1-0$

25...$\text{d6}$ 26 $\text{e8#}$.  

8) **Bojkovic – J. Houska**  
*Belgrade (women) 2008*

21 $\text{Bxg7!} \text{Bxg7}$

There is no time for 21...$\text{f3?} 22 \text{h6}$.  
22 $\text{Bh5+} \text{f8}$ 22...$\text{g6} 23 \text{Bf4}++$.  
23 $\text{Bh6+} \text{e7} 24 \text{Bxf7}$!  
White has annihilated the pawn-shield and now threatens various tactical strikes. Her position is winning.

24...$\text{d7} 25 \text{Bxe8+} \text{c7} 26 \text{f6} \text{xf3} 27 \text{g7+} \text{Bb8} 28 \text{xf3} \text{e4} 29 \text{d7+} \text{e8} 30 \text{e1} \text{c2} 31 \text{Bd4} 32 \text{Bxb6+} \text{Bxb6} 33 \text{axb6} \text{Be6} 34 \text{Bc6} 1-0$

**Chapter 11**

1) **Gubaydulin – Kasyan**  
*Uzbek Ch, Tashkent 2008*

32...$\text{g2}!+$

Unblocking the pawn, and clearing an important line.

0-1  
33 $\text{Bxg2+} \text{fxg2}+ 34 \text{Bf1} 35 \text{Bh2} \text{g1} 36 \text{Bh3} \text{g3#}$.  

2) **Morchiazhvili – S. Novikov**  
*European Ch, Plovdiv 2008*

Black’s own rook is hindering the pawn’s dreams. So it is sacrificed:

45...$\text{Bd2+}$!  
Much better than the simplistic 45...$\text{g2}! 46 \text{Bh7+} \text{Bh6} 47 \text{Bd8}$, when White’s rook can halt the a-pawn.

46 $\text{Bxd2} \text{a2} 47 \text{g4} \text{a1}$
The rook and the pawn were ‘exchanged’ for a queen.

48 gxf5 \( \text{\#d4} + \) 49 \( \text{\#c2} \) c4 50 f6 \( \text{\#d3} + \) 51 \( \text{\#b2} \) 0-1

3) L’Ami – Spoelman
Wijk aan Zee 2008
Black wins an exchange:
35...\( \text{\#e3}! \) 36 \( \text{\#b3} \)
He had seen the zwischenzug 36 fxe3 c2!, gaining the decisive tempo.
36...\( \text{\#xf1} \) 37 \( \text{\#xf1} \) \( \text{\#f3} \) 0-1

4) Narciso Dublan – Krivoruchko
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008
The young Ukrainian GM Yuri Krivoruchko loudly announced his presence to the world at the 2008 European Championship, where he qualified for the World Cup. Here is one of his wins:
80...\( \text{\#c5}+ \) 0-1
The hasty 80...\( \text{\#c5}+ \) would lead to a huge disappointment after 81 \( \text{\#g6} + \) ! \( \text{\#g8} \) 82 \( \text{\#e8} + \) ! \( \text{\#e8} \) stalemate!
We should note that Black has several other ways to win, including the dramatic 80...\( \text{\#xf4} + \) 81 gx4 e1\( \text{\#w} \), mating with checks, and the prosaic 80...\( \text{\#d3} \), threatening 81...\( \text{\#d8} + \) and so overloading the white queen. Your basic task here was to notice the stalemate defence and avoid it.

5) Nijboer – Naumkin
Hoogeveen 2008
White finds a pretty way to use his passed pawn.
31 \( \text{\#xd8} \) \( \text{\#xd8} \) 32 \( \text{\#f6}! \) \( \text{\#f8} \)
32...gx6 33 \( \text{\#g8} + \) \( \text{\#xg8} \) 34 fxg8\( \text{\#w} \#. \)
33 \( \text{\#g7} \) 1-0

6) S. Williams – G. Jones
Bunratty 2008
But first Black should remove the defender of the back rank:
34...\( \text{\#c5} + \) 35 \( \text{\#d2} \) \( \text{\#xc1} \) 36 \( \text{\#xc1} \) e3!
Now the breakthrough.
37 \( \text{\#g1} \)
37 fxe3 f2.
37...\( \text{\#d4}! \)
This is a precise move that keeps the pawns intact and creates a duo of passed pawns.
38 \( \text{\#h1} \) e2 39 \( \text{\#d2} \) \( \text{\#xf2} \) 40 a3
Black is not in a hurry now. He simply improves his pieces before collecting the point.
40...h7 41 b4 axb4 42 axb4 \( \text{\#h6} \) 43 b5 e1\( \text{\#w} + \) 44 \( \text{\#xe1} \) \( \text{\#xe1} + \) 45 \( \text{\#xe1} \) \( \text{\#xh5} \) 46 \( \text{\#f2} \) \( \text{\#g4} \) 0-1

7) R. Martin – R. Hernandez
Benasque 2000
...endgame!
1...\( \text{\#xf6}! \)
The passive 1...\( \text{\#f8} \) 2 bxa3 bxa3 3 \( \text{\#b1} \) allows White the initiative.
2 \( \text{\#xf6} + \) \( \text{\#xf6} \) 3 \( \text{\#xf6} \)
Many roads lead to Rome after 3 \( \text{\#d2} \); for instance, 3...\( \text{\#e2} + \) 4 \( \text{\#xe2} \) axb2 5 \( \text{\#xb2} \) \( \text{\#xb2} \).
3...\( \text{\#xf6} \) 4 \( \text{\#xf6} \) \( \text{\#xc2} \) 5 \( \text{\#b1} \)
5 bxa3 \( \text{\#xa1} \) 6 \( \text{\#xd6} \) \( \text{\#c2} +. \)
After all the forced exchanges, the breakthrough proves decisive:
5...b3!! 0-1

8) Hendriks – Michalczak
Dieren 2008
Some moves earlier White sacrificed his queen in order to create a strong passed pawn. Now he carefully advances it, and creates additional passed pawns too.
29 a7 \( \text{\#b7} \) (D)

30 d6!
For the sake of promotion, White is ready to part with the bishop. He will, of course, gain some tempi in return.
30...\( \text{\#xe4} \)
30...c6 31 d7 \( \text{\#d8} \) 32 \( \text{\#d1} \) forces Black to block the pawn with his most powerful piece. White wins thanks to the plan of b4-b5.
31 dx.c7 \( \text{\#g4} \) 32 f3 \( \text{\#xf3} \)
After 32...\texttt{w}c8 33 \texttt{fx}e4 \texttt{wa}6 34 \texttt{wh}2 (with the idea \texttt{a}1) 34...\texttt{h}7, White can choose 35 \texttt{xf}4, when the rook will support the pawns, while advancing the third passed pawn by 35 \texttt{e}5 is also good enough.

33 \texttt{xf}3 \texttt{wc}8 34 \texttt{xf}4 \texttt{h}7 35 \texttt{c}4 g5 36 \texttt{a}8\texttt{w} 1-0

\textbf{Chapter 12}

1) \textit{I. Gonzalez – Pulido}
\textit{Havana 2001}

1 \texttt{we}6+! \texttt{wh}8

Black's problem is obvious after 1...\texttt{xe}6 2 \texttt{xc}8+ \texttt{f}7 (2...\texttt{e}8 3 \texttt{xe}8+ \texttt{f}7 4 \texttt{g}5+) 3 \texttt{g}5+ --.

2 \texttt{xc}8! 1-0

2) \textit{Fressinet – Macieja}
\textit{European Ch, Plovdiv 2008}

Unfortunately, even the best-motivated positional moves are not always tactically sound. Here Black did not notice that his back rank might be in danger, obviously counting on his rooks being able to defend the vital e8-square. Sadly for him, one of them may be annihilated immediately, which simultaneously deflects the second one...

24 \texttt{xa}8! 1-0

24...\texttt{xa}8 25 \texttt{e}8+ \texttt{xe}8 26 \texttt{xe}8#.

3) \textit{Sargisian – Skoberne}
\textit{European Ch, Plovdiv 2008}

34 \texttt{d}1! \texttt{hx}2+ 35 \texttt{f}1

And not 35 \texttt{hx}2??, which gives Black a chance to withdraw his queen with gain of tempo, and win after 35...\texttt{h}4+ 36 \texttt{g}1 \texttt{xa}4.

35...\texttt{d}6

35...\texttt{d}5 does not help either: 36 \texttt{xd}5 \texttt{xd}5 37 \texttt{e}8#.

36 \texttt{xd}6 1-0

4) \textit{Pruijssers – Kroeze}
\textit{Dutch Club Ch 2008}

25...\texttt{xf}2+! 0-1

26 \texttt{xf}2 \texttt{d}1+ 27 \texttt{f}1 \texttt{xf}1#.

5) \textit{Zwanzger – Marković}
\textit{Passau 1997}

24...\texttt{d}8 0-1

25 \texttt{xd}8 \texttt{c}1+ 26 \texttt{d}1 \texttt{xd}1+ 27 \texttt{f}1 \texttt{xf}1#.

6) \textit{Stefanova – Peptan}
\textit{Moscow (Women’s Olympiad) 1994}

No – it is time for her to win by force! First Black needs to chase her opponent’s king into position for a back-rank mate:

34...\texttt{b}6+! 35 \texttt{h}1

And then deflect White’s only defender:

35...\texttt{b}1!! 36 \texttt{e}2 \texttt{e}4!

By now Black even had a choice: 36...\texttt{d}1! also wins.

0-1

A painful defeat!

7) \textit{Oleksienko – Golubev}
\textit{Odessa 2007}

False. White has a weak back rank!

38...\texttt{x}f6! (D)

39 \texttt{xf}6

If 39 \texttt{xf}6 \texttt{d}1+ 40 \texttt{f}1 \texttt{xf}1+ 41 \texttt{xf}1 Black should give the discovered check by 41...\texttt{f}6+, forcing White to move his queen to a bad square: 42 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{f}1#.

39...\texttt{xf}6 40 \texttt{a}1

After 40 \texttt{xf}6? \texttt{d}1+ White loses on the spot, while 40 \texttt{xa}8 \texttt{xf}1+ 41 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{xa}8 42 \texttt{xf}1 \texttt{f}5 leads to an endgame that should be won for Black.

40...\texttt{a}5 41 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{xf}3 42 \texttt{xf}3 \texttt{a}4 43 \texttt{e}3 \texttt{xc}4 44 \texttt{c}1 \texttt{d}5+ 45 \texttt{g}1 \texttt{d}4 0-1

8) \textit{Feller – Bacrot}
\textit{French Ch, Pau 2008}

32...\texttt{xd}6! 0-1

The critical square is for sure a1, but White can cover the check from there with his queen.

39 \texttt{xf}6

If 39 \texttt{xf}6 \texttt{d}1+ 40 \texttt{f}1 \texttt{xf}1+ 41 \texttt{xf}1 Black should give the discovered check by 41...\texttt{f}6+, forcing White to move his queen to a bad square: 42 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{f}1#. 39...

40 \texttt{xf}6 40 \texttt{a}1

After 40 \texttt{xf}6? \texttt{d}1+ White loses on the spot, while 40 \texttt{xa}8 \texttt{xf}1+ 41 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{xa}8 42 \texttt{xf}1 \texttt{f}5 leads to an endgame that should be won for Black.

40...\texttt{a}5 41 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{xf}3 42 \texttt{xf}3 \texttt{a}4 43 \texttt{e}3 \texttt{xc}4 44 \texttt{c}1 \texttt{d}5+ 45 \texttt{g}1 \texttt{d}4 0-1

8) \textit{Feller – Bacrot}
\textit{French Ch, Pau 2008}

32...\texttt{xd}6! 0-1

The critical square is for sure a1, but White can cover the check from there with his queen.

39 \texttt{xf}6

If 39 \texttt{xf}6 \texttt{d}1+ 40 \texttt{f}1 \texttt{xf}1+ 41 \texttt{xf}1 Black should give the discovered check by 41...\texttt{f}6+, forcing White to move his queen to a bad square: 42 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{f}1#. 39...

40 \texttt{xf}6 40 \texttt{a}1

After 40 \texttt{xf}6? \texttt{d}1+ White loses on the spot, while 40 \texttt{xa}8 \texttt{xf}1+ 41 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{xa}8 42 \texttt{xf}1 \texttt{f}5 leads to an endgame that should be won for Black.

40...\texttt{a}5 41 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{xf}3 42 \texttt{xf}3 \texttt{a}4 43 \texttt{e}3 \texttt{xc}4 44 \texttt{c}1 \texttt{d}5+ 45 \texttt{g}1 \texttt{d}4 0-1
After 33...\textit{f6} 34\textit{e1} (not 34 \textit{f1} \textit{e3}+ 35 \textit{h1} \textit{xf1#}) 34...\textit{xe1}+ 35 \textit{f2} Black has won a piece, but for the moment all his pieces are hanging. However, the b4-pawn will have the decisive word: 35...\textit{c1}! 36 \textit{xcl} (36 \textit{xb4} leaves Black winning, with two minor pieces for a rook) 36...\textit{xc1} 37 \textit{xf6} b3 ++.

Chapter 13

1) Bojkov – Delemarre

\textit{World Under-18 Ch, Szeged 1994}

Back in 1994, stalemate did not seem an important concept to me. I knew that it sometimes happens to some poor guys, who are just too blind to foresee their opponent’s silly threats. This was something that would never happen to me, I thought. And then I had to bite the bitter pill. My position is obviously winning, and I was wondering why on earth my opponent did not resign.

58 \textit{e7+}??

This awful move chases my opponent’s king into a safety box. I saw the winning continuation 58 \textit{xe3} \textit{h3}+ 59 \textit{f3} \textit{h1} 60 \textit{f5}+ \textit{d6} 61 \textit{a5}. I later admitted to my trainer that the strategy of “this wins as well” does not always bear fruit...

58...\textit{f4} 59 \textit{xe3}

Now comes the shock.

59...\textit{xf2}+ 1/2-1/2

Black’s king will be stalemate almost in the middle of the board.

2) Bojkov – Parker

\textit{World Under-18 Ch, Szeged 1994}

Unfortunately this was not all. Two days later I had to face a strong player. I managed to outplay him, and this position arose. While I was thinking, my trainer, the colourful IM Stoyan Ivanov (unfortunately he passed away some years ago) saw the position and remarked to his colleagues: “While there is still a pawn, there is no stalemate!” However... 76 \textit{xa6}??

Again the same principle: depriving my opponent of any chances, or rather trying to... However, chess is a game where the rules are often confronted with the exceptions. In our particular case the pawn on a6 is an irrelevance, as it is not threatening to promote any time soon. Now Jonathan Parker saves himself using stalemate motifs.

76...\textit{e3}+ 77 \textit{g5}

77 \textit{h7} does not change anything, since after 77...\textit{e7}+ 78 \textit{g6} (78 \textit{h6}?? \textit{g7#}) 78...\textit{e6}+ 79 \textit{xe6} it is stalemate again.

77...\textit{e6}+

I remember that I was desperately gazing at the position for some minutes, even wondering if I should play 78 \textit{h7} or 78 \textit{g6}. And finally, I took the queen.

78 \textit{xe6} 1/2-1/2

3) I. Goldin – Riabov

\textit{Moscow 1972}

1 \textit{d6}++!

As usual we start the sacrificial policy with the weakest pieces.

1...\textit{xe6}

1...\textit{a7}?? leads to mate in three after 2 \textit{f7+} while after 1...\textit{b8} 2 \textit{c6} it is Black who needs to force a draw: 2...\textit{a2}+ 3 \textit{d1} \textit{c3}+ =.

2 \textit{c7+}! \textit{xe7} 3 \textit{c7}+! 1/2-1/2

In case of 3...\textit{a6} White does not capture the queen, but continues 4 \textit{c8}+! \textit{b5} 5 \textit{c4}+ \textit{xc4}.

4) Atakisi – V. Spasov

\textit{Turkish Team Competition 2008}

In a severe time-scramble, White played 1 \textit{e8}? and got mated by 1...\textit{h4#} (0-1).

One can only guess what Umut Atakisi’s feelings were when Vasil Spasov demonstrated 1 \textit{h8}+! \textit{h8} 2 \textit{e8}+ \textit{h7} 3 \textit{g6}+, when both 3...\textit{g6} 4 \textit{h8}+ \textit{xh8} and 3...\textit{h6} 4 \textit{h8}+ \textit{g6} 5 \textit{g7}+ \textit{g7} are stalemate. 1 \textit{g6}+, based on the same idea, is also sufficient to draw.

5) Fichtl – Hort

\textit{Czechoslovak Ch, Košice 1961}

43...\textit{f5} 44 \textit{e5} 45 \textit{e4} 46 \textit{e3}

This pawn advance does not seem to bring Black any relief. Why does he not simply give up?

46...\textit{h5} 47 \textit{f2} 48 \textit{f6}

Zugzwang?

48...\textit{h3}!

No! Black has built a safety box! 1/2-1/2
6)  
Y. Afek  
Pfeiter Jubilee, 1981  

1 g7+ ♔h7 2 g6+ ♔h6 3 a8♕ ♔xa8 4 ♔f7 ♔a7+ 5 ♔g8!! ♔xg7+  
5...♔xg6 6 ♔h8.  
6 ♔h8 ♔a7 7 g7 ♔xg7  
Stalemate.

7)  
E. Pogosiants  
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981  
1 ♖d6+ ♔d3 2 ♕xc4 ♔e2?? (2...f2 3 ♔e3 ♔xe3 stalemate) 3 ♔e5 (not 3 ♔e3? ♔xe3 4 ♔g1 ♔e2 5 ♔h1 ♔e1 6 ♔g1 f2+ 7 ♔h1 ♔f1#)  
3...f2 4 ♔f3 ♔f1# (4...♔e3 5 ♔d2 ♔e2 6 ♔f1 ♔xf1 stalemate) 5 ♔g1+ ♔f2 stalemate.

8)  
Spoelman – Hebden  
European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008  
No, the talented Dutch player found a safety box and exploited it.  
72 g7! ♔a8 73 ♔f5! a1♕ 74 ♔xa1 ♔xa1 75 ♔g6+ ♔e7 76 f5!  
And not 76 h7?? ♔a6+ or 76 ♔h7? ♔f7 77 f5 ♔xg7 78 hxg7 ♔d8 79 f6 ♔g8 80 ♔h6 ♔xf6 --.  
76...♔g8 77 ♔h7  
77 f6+ transposes and leads to a draw too:  
77...♔xf6 78 ♔h7.  
77...♔f7 78 f6 ♔e5 ½-½  

Chapter 14  

1)  
Macieja – Simaček  
Czech Team Ch 2004/5  
41...♖e1 42 ♔d4  
A clever try, but it does not bring White a whole point. 42 ♖c8+ doesn’t change anything:  
42...♔g7 43 d8♕ ♔xf3+ 44 ♔f1 ♔xh2+ is a draw.  
42...exd4 43 d8♕+ ♔g7 44 ♔f1 ♔xf3 45 ♔c8 ♔xh2+ ½-½  

2)  
Galkin – Liang Chong  
Internet 2004  
Yes, it is! White needs to save his skin:  
1 ♖xh7! ♖xh7 2 ♖h1+ ♖g8 3 ♖h8+ ♔f7 4 ♖h7+ ♔e8 5 ♖h8+ ♔d7  
Now the king must be exposed:  
6 ♖xe7+! ♖xe7 7 ♖h7+ ♔e8 8 ♖h8+  
With a draw.

3)  
Saada – Alanić  
French Team Ch, Lille 2005  
Watching the decisive game of the match I realized that my team-mate Julien Saada could exchange everything at once and win the match by 85♕xg4! ♕xg4 86 ♔f3 ♕g6 87 ♕xg4! ♕xg4 88 ♔f6 ♔h3 89 ♔f5 ♔h2 90 ♕xg4+ ♔h4 91 ♔f3, drawing.  
Unfortunately, he failed to see this option, chose 85♕f5 instead, and it was only his luck that saved the half-point in the end.

4)  
Prusikhin – Buhmann  
Griesheim 2003  
26 ♕xc5!!  
This bishop is protecting an important square.  
26...♕xc5  
Not 26...♖xc5? 27 ♔f6+ ♖g7 28 ♔d8+.  
27 ♔d7!! ♖xd7 28 ♔f6+ ♕g7  
28...♔g7 29 ♖f8+ ♔g8 30 ♖f6+ is an immediate perpetual check. White now needs to find something more.  
29 ♔g6+!  
As we already know, deflection is also useful as a defensive method.  
29...♖xg6 30 ♔h4+ ♔h7 31 ♔f6+ ♕g7 32 ♔d8+ ½-½  

5)  
H. Lommer  
L’Italia Scacchistica, 1933  
White constructs a drawing mechanism based on the discovered check:  
1 ♔e8+! ♔c2 2 ♔b7! f1♕ 3 ♔c7+ ♔d3 4 ♔d7+ ♔c4  
4...♔e4 5 ♔e7+ and Black’s king may not step onto the f6-square due to the discovered attack with ♔e1+.  
5 ♔c7+ ♔h5 6 ♔b7+ ♔a6 7 ♔b6+ ♔a7  
7...♔a5 8 ♔b1+.  
8 ♔b7+ ♔a8 9 ♔b8+  
With a draw.

6)  
Cao Sang – Acs  
Budapest 2000  
...and needs to profit from his activity immediately.  
31...♖c3! 32 ♔h7+  
32 ♔d7+ ♔e7 33 ♕xc3 ♕xc3 34 ♕x3 ♔xa3+ 35 ♕h2 ♕xc3 =.  
32...♔e7 33 f6+  
33 ♕g7+? ♕d8 34 ♕f6+ ♕c7 --.
33...d8 34 wxc3 bxc3 35 bxc3 a3+ 36 b2 axc3 \(1/2-1/2\)

Perpetual check by \(...ab3+\) and \(...a3+,\) etc., will follow.

7) Galliamova – Korchnoi

Amsterdam (Ladies vs Veterans) 2001

34 axe6+! fxe6

Alisa Galliamova now rushed with 35 g7+? and lost after 35...f7 36 wxg5+ (36...d6 --) 36...d7, etc.

The correct line was given by Mark Taimanov: 35...e7+! d6 36 c6+! xc6 (36...bxc6 37 d8+ e5 38 b8+ f6 39 f1=) 37 c8+ d6 (37...d6 38 d8+ c6 39 c8+ =) 38 d8+ e5 39 b8+! f6 (39...d4?? 40 xa7++ --) 40 f1=.

Moral: Sometimes the road to heaven may be very narrow, and every wrong step can be the sin that leaves us outside.

8) G. Zakhodiakin

Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981

1 e1 cd2+ 2 g4!

Precisely here. All White’s pieces are now in full harmony.

2...b1 3 g3! a1w 4 d6+ f7 5 e7+ g6 6 e6+ f7 7 e7+ f6 8 e5+ xe5 9 xe5 xe5

With a draw.

Chapter 15

1) Kravtsov – Sieciechowicz

Warsaw 2007

Alas, Black’s light squares were blown open: 13 xe6! fxe6 14 g6+ 1-0

A forced mate is coming.

2) Khenkin – T. Søndergaard

Esbjerg 2005

Black was definitely sorry that his rook had left the f-file:

13 xf7+! 1-0

3) P. Cramling – Kovalevskaya

European Women’s Ch, Plovdiv 2008

The pawn has a lot of energy left in it, and provides vital back-up to the assault on f7.

25 xf7! xf7 26 e7 d7

26...d8f8 27 d7 axd7 28 xd7 a5 (28...g6 29 xa7) 29 h5.

27 xf7 h8 28 f3 g6 29 g4 h5 30 g5 f5 31 f6 g7 32 f7+ h8 33 f6 g7 34 f2 f8 35 xf8 xf8 36 e3 e8 37 d4 d7 38 e5 b5 39 d5 a5 40 e5 d3 41 d5 b1 42 c6+ e6 43 e4 1-0

4) Valdes – J. Diaz

Cuba 2001

And it is possible because Black did not occupy the blockading square d5. White now showed his trumps:

1 xf7! xf7 2 xe6+ f8

2...g6 3 e5 and e4+ is coming.

3...h5! 1-0

3...g6 4 h6#. 3...xh5 4 xe7+ xe7 5 xe7+ g8 6 e6+-.

5) Čabrilo – Popović

Yugoslavia (rapid) 2004

...and it is the one in front of the king:

1 xf7+! xf7 2 b3+ f8 3 f3!

With the idea g5.

3...f6

In the event of 3...h6 White still plays 4 g5!! hgx5 and then opens the f-file by 5 f4! g4 6 f5 g5 7 f6+-.

4 e5 b6 5 ad1! b7 6 xd4 xf3 7 f4 1-0

6) Shirov – Korchnoi (variation)

Drammen 2004

28 xf7+! xf7 29 xg6+ h8 30 xf7

Mate follows.

7) Asrian – Karasev

Russia Cup, St Petersburg 1997

21 xf7!! xf7

Or: 21...xf7 22 xd5 +-; 21...dxc4 22 xf8+ xf8 23 d5 bxc5 24 f1+ f6 25 d6 wc7 26 xa8 +.

22 xd5+ g6 23 c6+ h5 24 e2+ g5 25 e4+ f4 26 f1+ xe5 27 xf8 1-0

8) Sanduleac – Varadi

Szombathely 2003

13 xf7+! xf7 14 g5+ g6

The only move. Worse is 14...g8? 15 b3+ d5 16 xd5 +. 
174

A COURSE IN CHESS TACTICS

15 f4!
White’s attack proves to be decisive. I hope that you foresaw most of the beautiful supporting lines.

15...\(\text{\textDelta}e5\)
Or 15...\(\text{\textC}c5\) 16 f5+ \(\text{\textA}xf5\) 17 exf5+ \(\text{\textA}xf5\) 18 \(\text{\textA}e6\)!, and now:

a) 18...\(\text{\textW}d7\) 19 \(\text{\textW}f3+\) \(\text{\textA}g6\) 20 \(\text{\textW}g3+\).

b) 18...dx3 19 \(\text{\textW}f3+\) \(\text{\textA}g6\) 20 \(\text{\textW}g3+\) ++.

c) 18...\(\text{\textC}xe6\) 19 \(\text{\textW}d3+\) \(\text{\textC}e4\) (19...\(\text{\textW}g4\) 20 \(\text{\textW}h3\)) 20 \(\text{\textW}xe4+\) \(\text{\textA}f6\) 21 \(\text{\textW}xe6\).

16 f5+ \(\text{\textA}xf5\) 17 exf5+ \(\text{\textA}xf5\) 18 \(\text{\textA}xe5\)!! \(\text{\textD}xe5\) (D)

18...\(\text{\textA}xe5\) 19 \(\text{\textW}e2+\) (or 19 \(\text{\textC}f7+\) ++) 19...\(\text{\textW}f5\) 20 \(\text{\textW}d3+\) \(\text{\textA}e5\) 21 \(\text{\textA}g3\) \(\text{\textD}d7\) 22 \(\text{\textA}f4+\) \(\text{\textW}f6\) 23 \(\text{\textD}d5\).

Chapter 16

1) Short – Ye Jiangchuan
Taiyuan 2004

We can strike immediately:

27 \(\text{\textW}xh7+\)!! 1-0

White creates a discovered attack mechanism which forces mate: 27...\(\text{\textA}xh7\) 28 \(\text{\textA}h3+\) \(\text{\textC}g7\) 29 \(\text{\textA}h6+\) \(\text{\textA}h7\) 30 \(\text{\textA}f8+\).

2) S.B. Hansen – H. Olafsson
Reykjavik Zonal 1995

We can include the sleeping rook from h1:

19 \(\text{\textA}xh7+\)!! \(\text{\textA}xh7\) 20 \(\text{\textW}h5\) 1-0

20...\(\text{\textW}hf6\) loses to the double exchange on f6, while 20...\(\text{\textA}xg5\) is met by 21 \(\text{\textA}xg5!!\).

3) Bellon – Ask
Rilton Cup. Stockholm 2007/8

21...\(\text{\textA}a2+\)!!

One rook is sacrificed, to allow the other one to deliver the decisive blow.

22 ...\(\text{\textA}xc2+\) 23 \(\text{\textA}xh7\) 1-0

20 ...\(\text{\textA}g5\) loses to the double exchange on f6, while 20 ...\(\text{\textA}xg5\) is met by 21 \(\text{\textA}xg5!!\).

4) Timofeev – Svidler
Russian Ch. Moscow 2008

An exchange of pieces and a rook sacrifice will have a similar effect:

18 \(\text{\textA}xf6\)!! \(\text{\textA}gxf6\) 19 \(\text{\textW}h6\) 1-0

Black resigned because of 19...\(\text{\textA}xh7\) 20 \(\text{\textW}h3+\) \(\text{\textC}g7\) 21 \(\text{\textW}g4+\) (remember this stairway: White clears the road for his rook) 21...\(\text{\textA}h8\) 22 \(\text{\textA}e3\) \(\text{\textA}e4\) 23 \(\text{\textA}h3+\) \(\text{\textA}h7\) 24 \(\text{\textW}h4\)!

5) Kravtsiv – I. Popov
Lvov 2006

14 \(\text{\textW}d3+\)!! \(\text{\textA}e4\) 20 \(\text{\textW}h3\)!

In an unusual way, the queen is sneaking to the h-file and h7-square.

16 ...\(\text{\textA}xh7\) 17 \(\text{\textA}xf6\)!!

The first one, which blocks the f-pawn.

16...\(\text{\textA}h8\) 17 \(\text{\textA}e7\)

This is the most important move in the assault. Black is not allowed to escape by ...\(\text{\textA}g8\).

17...\(\text{\textA}d6\)

17...\(\text{\textA}d7\) is impossible due to 18 \(\text{\textW}xf7\)!, while 17...\(\text{\textW}d7\) is met by 18 \(\text{\textW}xf7\)!! 19 \(\text{\textA}d3++\).

18 \(\text{\textW}xg5\) \(\text{\textA}f5\) 19 \(\text{\textA}d3\) \(\text{\textA}g6\) 20 \(\text{\textW}f6\) 1-0

6) Van Haastert – Broekmeulen
Dutch Club Ch 2008

15 \(\text{\textA}xh7\)!! \(\text{\textA}xh7\) 16 \(\text{\textW}f6\)!

The first one, which blocks the f-pawn.

16...\(\text{\textA}h8\) 17 \(\text{\textA}e1\)

This is the most important move in the assault. Black is not allowed to escape by ...\(\text{\textA}g8\).

17...\(\text{\textA}e6\)

17...\(\text{\textA}d7\) is impossible due to 18 \(\text{\textW}xf7\)!, while 17...\(\text{\textW}d7\) is met by 18 \(\text{\textW}xg5\) f5 19 \(\text{\textA}d3++\).

18 \(\text{\textW}xg5\) \(\text{\textA}f5\) 19 \(\text{\textA}d3\) \(\text{\textA}g6\) 20 \(\text{\textW}f6\) 1-0

7) Amura – Ruan Lufei
Women’s World Ch. Nalchik 2008

19...\(\text{\textA}xe5\) 20 \(\text{\textA}xe5\) \(\text{\textA}xe5\)

21 \(\text{\textA}g1\) \(\text{\textA}xg6\) will clear both the g- and h-files, and the rook will be transferred via e3 to give mate.
21...g3 22 d3 xe6! –+
Black breaks in and starts collecting material.
23 f1 h2+ 24 f2 g3+ 25 e2 xg2+ 26 d1 xxb2 27 e2 a3 28 e4 e5 29 exd5
d7 30 d2 eee 31 f3 a5 32 d6 xd6 33
xd6 xd6 xd6 c5 35 fd3 e3 36
c2 e2+ 37 d2 f5+ 38 d6 d3 e3 0-1

8) Elianov – Van Wely
Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008
19 xh7! (D)

It must have been very painful for a top GM to suffer this heavy blow at such an early stage of the game.
19...f8
19...xh7 20 xe6 (20 d3+ is also winning) 20...fxe6 21 d3+ h8 22 xg7 xg7
23 g1+ h8 24 g6 ++.
20 d3
White has won an important pawn and converted it easily into victory:
20...b6 21 g4 a5 22 d1 g6 23 f1
g7 24 h3 xcl+ 25 xc1 e8 26 e3
c4 27 xg6 1-0

Chapter 17

1) Anand – Aronian
Morelia/Linares 2008
30...e3! 31 fxe3 xf3 32 ec2 fxg3 33
hxg3 xg3+ 34 h1 f5 0-1

2) Mitkov – Mikhailuk
Las Vegas 2007
And his king is too vulnerable.
17 f6+! h8
17...xh6 18 h4+ and xh7#.
18 h4 g8 19 f8 h5 20 g5 1-0

3) Utiuganov – Konovalov
USSR 1950
Black uses a well-known pattern that involves a double check:
1...g2+! 2 xg2 f4++ 3 g1 h3# (0-1)
Yes, a weakened fianchetto can be exploited with a + combination.

4) Pogorelov – Diaz Castro
Dos Hermanas 2004
The bishop, for sure. In this example White gives mate in an unconventional way.
25 xg7+!! xg7 26 f6+!! 1-0
Black did not wish to see 26...xf6 (26...h7
27 g5 leads to a more standard finish) 27
h6+ e7 28 d6#.

5) Aveskulov – Averianov
Kharkov 2005
To make use of it, he must get his queen nearer the g7-square, or the h-file.
34 xe3! dxe3 35 f5! h6
Or: 35.gxf5 36 xh5+ g8 37 h8#;
35...g8 36 xh5 ++.
36 xe3+ h7 37 xh5+ gxh5 38 g5
gxg2+ 39 xg2 1-0

6) Roiz – Kritz
Biel 2007
In order to destroy the fianchettoed bishop and get control over all the dark squares, White sacrifices a whole rook:
1 xg6!! hxg6 2 xh8+ xh8 3 f6+ (D)
Chapter 18

1) Z. Almasi – Navara
Reggio Emilia 2007/8

White decided to liquidate into a rook endgame with two pawns more:
32 \texttt{\textbackslash xf7}+! \texttt{\textbackslash xf7}
32...\texttt{\textbackslash h8} 33 \texttt{\textbackslash g6}.
33 \texttt{\textbackslash xd6} \texttt{\textbackslash wa7} 34 \texttt{\textbackslash xf7}+ \texttt{\textbackslash xf7} 35 \texttt{\textbackslash xf7} \texttt{\textbackslash xf7} 36 \texttt{\textbackslash xb6}
and White won later. Thus energy had transformed into material.

2) M. Fuentes – J. Hernandez
Havana 2002

Then awaken him. The price is insignificant: only a pawn!
1 \texttt{\textbackslash d5}!* \texttt{\textbackslash d5} exd5
1....\texttt{\textbackslash dh8} 2 \texttt{\textbackslash d4} \texttt{\textbackslash dh6}
Now White wins by force, but if White declines the sacrifice, then Black has simply won a valuable pawn for nothing.

Black comes out on top in the desperado dogfight after 15 \texttt{\textbackslash xc6} \texttt{\textbackslash xd6} (16 \texttt{\textbackslash xc6}?! \texttt{\textbackslash xc6} 17 exf3 bxc6 leaves Black a piece up)
16...\texttt{\textbackslash xf7}+! \texttt{\textbackslash xf7} 17 \texttt{\textbackslash xh8}+-.

Suddenly the black queen is frighteningly close to the white king.

3) Danilov – A. Vajda
Romania 2004

We know that the light squares are vulnerable, and we need to find a way to open lines:
1 \texttt{\textbackslash h5}!* \texttt{\textbackslash g8}
1...\texttt{\textbackslash xh5} 2 \texttt{\textbackslash xh5} \texttt{\textbackslash g8} 3 \texttt{\textbackslash xf7}+ \texttt{\textbackslash h7} 4 \texttt{\textbackslash h5}#.

Black resigned in view of 2...\texttt{\textbackslash xf7} (or the other way round: 2...\texttt{\textbackslash f8} 3 \texttt{\textbackslash h8}+ \texttt{\textbackslash xh7} 4 \texttt{\textbackslash e6}#)
3 \texttt{\textbackslash e6}+! \texttt{\textbackslash h8}#.
4) Yuzhakov – Frolianov  
\textit{Khanty-Mansiisk 2007}  
Black decided to prevent White permanently from castling:  
1...\textit{b4!} 2 \textit{\textsf{xb}4} \textit{\textsf{xe}2+!}  
Black exchanges the main defender in his opponent's position, and keeps pounding on the light squares.  
3 \textit{\textsf{d}xe2} \textit{\textsf{d}3+} 4 \textit{\textsf{e}1} \textit{\textsf{g}4!} 5 \textit{f3} \textit{\textsf{e}8+} 6 \textit{\textsf{f}2} \textit{\textsf{e}2}+ 7 \textit{\textsf{g}3} (D)  
![Diagram]

If you have seen this far, I congratulate you.  
The end is near:  
7...\textit{\textsf{x}g2+!} 8 \textit{\textsf{h}4}  
8 \textit{\textsf{g}2} \textit{\textsf{x}f}3+ 9 \textit{\textsf{g}1} \textit{\textsf{h}3} and White cannot protect both \textsf{f1} and \textsf{g2}.  
8...\textit{\textsf{xf}3} 0-1

5) E. Pogosiants  
\textit{Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981}  
Black will try to exchange the last remaining pawn, but in the process will have to place his pieces too awkwardly:  
1 \textsf{c}5 \textsf{a}4 (1...\textsf{c}4 2 \textsf{e}7 \textsf{b}3 3 \textsf{d}2 \textsf{a}4 4 \textsf{d}5 \textsf{a}5 5 \textsf{c}3+--+) 2 \textsf{c}2 \textsf{a}5 (2...\textsf{c}4 3 \textsf{c}3 and now 3...\textsf{g}8 allows White the shortcut 4 \textsf{b}5!? \textsf{a}x\textsf{b}5 5 \textsf{b}4 and the knight will come round to mate, while after the waiting 3...\textsf{f}1 White wins by \textsf{b}6-a5 and \textsf{d}4-c5-b6) 3 \textsf{b}5! \textsf{a}xb5 4 \textsf{d}5 and White wins.

6) Ionica – Jianu  
\textit{Bucharest 2001}  
30 \textsf{x}f7! \textsf{xf}7 31 \textsf{e}6+ \textsf{g}6  
Black's king needs to step in front of his army since 31...\textsf{e}8 32 \textsf{x}g7 \textsf{e}7 33 \textsf{f}7+ \textsf{d}7 34 \textsf{g}4+ \textsf{d}8 35 \textsf{g}8+ \textsf{d}7 36 \textsf{e}6+ nets material for White.  
32 \textsf{f}4! \textsf{e}7

32...\textsf{f}6 33 \textsf{h}5+ \textsf{x}h5 34 \textsf{f}7+ is a quick mate.  
33 \textsf{f}7+ 1-0  
It is mate in two: 33...\textsf{x}f7 34 \textsf{g}5#.  
33 \textsf{h}5+ would have mated in four: 33...\textsf{x}h5 34 \textsf{g}4+ \textsf{g}6 35 \textsf{f}5+ \textsf{h}6 36 \textsf{h}5#.  

7) Moiseenko – Yuldachev  
\textit{Turin Olympiad 2006}  
24...\textsf{xe}2+!  
This temporary piece sacrifice leads to an opposite-coloured bishops position where Black is the more active side.  
25 \textsf{xe}2 \textsf{xe}2 26 \textsf{hx}g4 \textsf{wd}4 27 \textsf{f}1 \textsf{xd}2  
Black recovers the piece, and his attack proved to be decisive.  
28 \textsf{f}4 \textsf{xd}3 29 \textsf{ce}1 \textsf{c}6 30 \textsf{h}2 \textsf{g}5 31 \textsf{ce}3 \textsf{wg}4 32 a4 \textsf{ba}x4 33 \textsf{ha}1 \textsf{b}3 34 \textsf{le}1 a3 35 \textsf{a}1 a2 36 \textsf{h}3 \textsf{w}f3 37 \textsf{d}4 \textsf{g}4 38 \textsf{f}1 \textsf{b}1 0-1

8) Marin – De Vreugt  
\textit{Tel Aviv 2000}  
It's all about the initiative!  
34 \textsf{xe}4! (D)  
After the primitive 34 \textsf{xd}6? \textsf{b}8, Black gains counterplay.

34...\textsf{xe}4  
34...\textsf{xe}7 is met by two deadly blows: 35 \textsf{h}6+! \textsf{g}8 36 \textsf{xf}6--.  
35 \textsf{xf}6 \textsf{e}1+ 36 \textsf{h}2 \textsf{e}4  
The question is who is quicker. It should be the one who starts first, of course.  
36...\textsf{f}1 37 \textsf{e}6+ \textsf{h}8 38 \textsf{e}8+ \textsf{xe}7 39 \textsf{h}6+! --.  
If 36...\textsf{al} White wins in various ways: 37 \textsf{xa}1 \textsf{xa}1 38 \textsf{xd}6 -- or 37 \textsf{d}8+ \textsf{xe}7 38 \textsf{h}6+! \textsf{xb}6 39 \textsf{f}8+ (or 39 \textsf{xd}6+ \textsf{g}7 40...
A COURSE IN CHESS TACTICS

178

Chapter 19

1) Fridman – Wells
   European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008
   No. The d4-rook should switch to another file where it poses much more danger for Black:
   24 ~xg7! 1-0
   24...~xg7 25 ~g4+.

2) Haba – Kachar
   Pardubice 2004
   1 ~xg7+! 1-0
   1...~xg7 2 ~g4+ ~h8 3 ~f6 with the idea 3...~d1+ 4 ~xd1 ~h7 5 ~c2+ followed by ~xh#. Both rooks found juicy lines to work on.

3) C. Reyes – E. Estevez
   Cuba 2005
   White will use the open file to deliver mate or win material.
   1 ~he7!
   This move, restoring the coordination of all White’s troops, moves decisive.
   1...~xe7
   1...~xh8 2 ~e1e6#.
   2 ~xf6+ ~c7
   2...~d5 3 ~e5#; 2...~d7 3 ~xe7+ ~c8 4 ~f8+ and mate next move.
   3 ~xe7+ ~b6
   3...~b8 4 ~e5+ ~c8 5 ~h8+.
   4 ~e6 ~c8
   4...~xe6 5 ~xe6+ and Black also loses the g4-rook.
   5 d5!
   Forcing the inevitable.
   1-0

4) Gavrilov – Soloviov
   St Petersburg 2005
   Black opens both g- and h-files and delivers mate with a cunning manoeuvre by his queen:
   31...~xh3+!! 32 gxh3 ~g7+!
   32...~xh3 33 ~g2 ~xe3 --.
   33 ~h2 ~xh3+! 34 ~xh3 ~e8+! 0-1

5) Quesada – C. Diaz
   Cuba 2000
   White uses clearance to bring both the rooks and the bishops into the attack:
   1 ~xf6+! ~xf6 (D)
   1...~xf6 leads to a forced mate: 2 ~xh7+ ~h8 (2...~f7 3 ~g6+ ~f8 4 ~g8#) 3 ~g6+ ~g8 4 ~h7+ ~f8 5 ~h8#; 1...~h8 2 ~xh7 ~c5+ 3 ~h1 ~xf1+ 4 ~xf1 is hopeless as well.

2 ~h7+! 1-0
   Black resigned in view of a line where the fl-rook is the star: 2...~xe4 (2...~xh8 3 ~c2+) 3 ~d8+! ~xd8 (3...~f7 4 ~xh7#) 4 ~f8#.

6) Dzagnidze – Stefanova
   FIDE Knockout (Women), Elista 2004
   Both black rooks are working on semi-open files, but it will be even better if they have an open file:
   23...~e4! 24 ~xe4
   The only move. If 24 ~g2 or 24 ~c2, then 24...~xd3! nets a pawn for Black.
   24...~xe4+ 25 dxe4 ~xd2
   Black has a large advantage thanks to the control of the only open file. She won convincingly:
   26 ~g2 ~ed8 27 ~ge2 ~f8 28 ~g2 ~xe2+ 29 ~xe2 ~d1 30 ~f3 ~e7 31 ~g2 ~a1 32 ~h4 46 ~g6 33 ~d2 ~a1 34 ~b4 ~a3+ 35 ~f4 ~xh4+ 36 ~e5 ~f6+ 37 ~f4 ~f5 38 b5 ~xb5 39 ~xb5 ~xe4+ 40 ~c5 ~xe3 41 ~b6 ~e5 42 ~d3 f4 43 ~h3 g5 44 ~xb7 f3 45 b6 g4 46 ~c6 ~e6+ 47 ~d5 ~xb6 48 ~xb6 f2 49 ~b7+ ~f6 50 ~b8 ~g7 51 ~b7+ ~g6 52 ~b6+ ~g5 53 ~b1 g3 54 ~e4 g2 55 ~h5+ ~g4 56 ~h7 f1 =g7 ~g7+ ~h5 58 ~xh7+ ~g6 0-1
7) **Bologan – Akopian**  
*FIDE Grand Prix, Moscow 2002*

49...\underline{\text{e}3}!!

After this nice tactical idea, based on both clearance and interference, White has no defence. Note that 49...\underline{\text{b}3} is less effective in view of 50 \text{\underline{w}}c5, covering f2.

50 \text{\underline{w}b7+} \text{\underline{h}8} 51 \text{\underline{w}f1} \text{\underline{w}xe5} 52 \text{\underline{w}b6} \text{\underline{w}g5} 53 \text{\underline{h}4} \text{\underline{w}xh4} 0-1

8) **A. Graf – Gustafsson**  
*German Ch, Altenkirchen 2005*

...and finds a way to use it:

23...\text{\underline{x}h3!} 24 \text{\underline{f}4} (D)

24 \text{\underline{g}xh3} \text{\underline{w}e}4+ 25 \text{f}3 (or 25 \text{\underline{g}g1} \text{\underline{g}g6}+) 25...\text{\underline{x}f3} 26 \text{\underline{w}g2} (26 \text{\underline{g}g1} \text{\underline{g}g3}+) 26...\underline{\text{x}h3}+ 27 \text{\underline{g}g1} \text{\underline{g}g3}–+

B

24...\underline{\text{x}g2}+!

Nevertheless.

25 \text{\underline{w}xg2}

25 \text{\underline{h}h2} \text{\underline{e}4}–+

25...\text{\underline{w}h5}+ 26 \text{\underline{w}h2} \text{\underline{w}f3}+ 27 \text{\underline{w}g2} \text{\underline{h}6}+ 28 \text{\underline{g}g1} \text{\underline{g}g6} 0-1

**Chapter 20**

1) **Shirov – Wang Hao**  
*Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2009*

23 \text{\underline{x}h6}!! 1-0

23...\underline{\text{w}xh6} 24 \text{\underline{g}f6}+ \text{\underline{h}8} (or 24...\text{\underline{x}f6} 25 \text{\underline{x}f6} \text{\underline{g}g6} 26 \text{\underline{x}f6}) 25 \text{\underline{g}g5}! traps the queen.

2) **Dziuba – Dydyshko**  
*Polanica Zdroj 2000*

Black first shuts the queen out of the game, and wins material:

1...\underline{\text{d}2}!! 2 \text{\underline{w}a2}

2 \text{\underline{w}xd2} \text{\underline{w}xc1} 3 \text{\underline{d}xc1} \text{\underline{w}xd2} costs White an exchange.

2...\text{\underline{w}xc1} 3 \text{\underline{d}xc1}

White’s position crumbles after 3 \text{\underline{w}xc1} b3 4 \text{\underline{w}a1} \text{\underline{g}g5} 5 \text{\underline{f}f1} \text{\underline{w}e4}+ 6 \text{\underline{g}g1} \text{\underline{w}xe2}–+

3...\text{\underline{w}e4}+ 4 \text{\underline{g}g1} \text{\underline{g}g5} 5 \text{\underline{f}f1} \text{\underline{w}c2} 0-1

White’s rook is trapped.

3) **Godena – Trent**  
*European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008*

It is the white queen that is the target:

26...\underline{\text{f}7}

The threat of a discovered attack forces decisive material gains.

27 \text{\underline{c}1} \text{\underline{d}2} 28 \text{\underline{\text{d}1}} \text{\underline{d}3} 29 \text{\underline{a}xb3} \text{\underline{w}c2} 30 \text{\underline{b}4} \text{\underline{e}4} 0-1

4) **Narancić – Leventić**  
*Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008*

The only piece that is in danger is the a6-rook, and White’s own knight has just cut off its retreat.

21...\text{\underline{x}c4} 22 \text{\underline{c}xb4} \text{\underline{d}xb4} 23 \text{\underline{g}g4} \text{\underline{x}d3} 24 \text{\underline{x}e5} \text{\underline{x}e5} 25 \text{\underline{x}d3} \text{\underline{w}g4}+ 26 \text{\underline{h}h1} \text{\underline{w}f3}+ 27 \text{\underline{g}g1} \text{\underline{d}a6} 0-1

5) **V. Milov – V. Meijers**  
*Zwolle 2003*

Black’s queen has access to e4, and this square should be blocked.

38 \text{\underline{e}4}!! \text{\underline{d}xe4}

38...\text{\underline{\text{d}d6}} 39 \text{\underline{e}5} \text{\underline{e}e4}+ gives White a chance to create a strong passed pawn: 40 \text{\underline{w}xe4} \text{\underline{dxe4}} 41 \text{\underline{e}xf6} \text{\underline{exd3}} 42 \text{\underline{f}7}–+

In case of the more resilient 38...\text{\underline{w}xe4} 39 \text{\underline{w}b8}+ \text{\underline{\text{g}7}} 40 \text{\underline{g}g1} \text{\underline{w}h2} (40...\text{\underline{w}f3} 41 \text{\underline{d}d1}) 41 \text{\underline{h}h1} \text{\underline{w}g2} 42 \text{\underline{c}g1} \text{\underline{f}f3} 43 \text{\underline{\text{d}d1}} White also traps the queen.

39 \text{\underline{w}xf7}!

An important gain of time, giving Black no respite to free his queen.

39...\text{\underline{w}xf7} 40 \text{\underline{\text{d}e}5} \text{\underline{g}g7}

Or: 40...\text{\underline{\text{f}e}7} 41 \text{\underline{\text{e}3}} \text{\underline{x}e5} 42 \text{\underline{d}xe5} \text{\underline{w}f3}+ 43 \text{\underline{w}xf3} \text{\underline{g}x3} 44 \text{\underline{f}f4}++; 40...\text{\underline{\text{d}xe5}} 41 \text{\underline{d}xe5} \text{\underline{d}d7}+ 42 \text{\underline{\text{e}2}} \text{\underline{w}f3}+ 43 \text{\underline{\text{w}xf3}} \text{\underline{exf3}}+ 44 \text{\underline{\text{e}3}}+

41 \text{\underline{\text{d}e}3}!

Now \text{\underline{g}g1} is inevitable. Not at once 41 \text{\underline{g}g1}? due to 41...\text{\underline{w}e}3+.

41...\text{\underline{\text{d}xe5}} 42 \text{\underline{dxe5}} \text{\underline{w}f3}+ 43 \text{\underline{\text{w}xf3}} and White soon won.
6)  Grischchuk – Sutovsky  
*European Team Ch, Plovdiv 2003*

White sets up his opponent’s pieces for some punishing blows:

21 f6! exf6 22 e5 Qg5  
22…Qg7 23 Qe4 is a double attack against both the queen and the b7-pawn. If Black drops that pawn he will also lose his a6-knight.

23 f2 Qf4 24 Qe4 Qf5 25 Qe2 1-0  
There follows g4.

7)  D. Petrov  
*Sovietsky Shakhmatny Etiudy, 1955*

White gives up both his minor pieces, but traps the black rook in return:

1.c4!  

1...Qh1+ 2.Qg3 Qxb2 3.Qe1+! Qc1 4.Qg2  
Qd1 5.Qd2+! Qxe1 6.Qd4!  
White wins.

8)  B. Maksimović – Bojkov  
*Varna 2002*

A series of exchanges granted Black time to trap the white knight on the edge of the board:

35...Qxc4 36 Qxc4 Qxc4 37 Qxc4 axb5 38 Qxb5 c4  
With two mighty bishops, and White’s pieces very short of moves, Black’s task is very pleasant. Later White even sacrificed the poor knight but this did not save him.

39 Qg4 Qf8 40 Qg3 Qe7 41 h4 Qd6 42 h5  
xh5 43 g5 hxg5 44 fxg5 Qe5 45 Qxb6 Qxb6  
46 Qc4 Qd5 47 Qxd5 Qxd5 48 Qh4 Qe6 49  
Qxh5 Qf5 50 Qh6 Qd4 51 a4 Qc3 52 a5  
xax5 53 Qg7 Qe6 54 Qh7 Qc3 55 Qh6 Qd2  
0-1

Chapter 21

1)  Todorović – Kraai  
*Budapest 2003*

White will obviously clear the g-file for his rook. In doing so he must foresee what to do against Black’s only defensive resource – bringing his own rook to the g-file.

26 Qxe4!  
The best place for the knight. It will now cooperate perfectly with the queen.

26...Qg8 27 Wh7++  
The easiest way: White decoys the king into a mate in two.

However, the simple 27 Qxg8+ should also give mate: 27...Qxg8 28 Wh8+ Qg7 29 Qg7+ Qf6  
(29...Qh8 30 Qxf6 is similar) 30 Qxf6+ Qh7  
(30...Qh5 31 Qg3#) 31 Wh7+ Qh8 32  
Qf6 and mate is inevitable. This is no surprise, since neither of the black pieces can help their king.

1-0  
27...Qxh7 28 Qxf6+ Qh8 29 Qxg8#.

2)  An. Rodriguez – Soto  
*Callao 2007*

All the white pieces are fully active, and it is no wonder that he finds a decisive way to break in:

24 Qg6! 1-0  
It is forced mate after 24...fxg6 25 Qxh6+ gxh6 26 Qxh6#.

3)  Gyimesi – Bistrić  
*Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008*

The situation is similar to the previous one. Black king lacks defenders, while White’s attacking forces are much superior. There must be a forced win!

25 Qxh7+! 1-0  
25...Qxh7 26 Qh3+ Qg8 27 Qg6 leads to forced mate.

4)  J. Polgar – Karpov  
*Hoogeveen 2003*

25 Qxh7+!  
Lasker’s idea in action. By sacrificing both bishops, White opens up her opponent’s king, enabling her major pieces to give mate.

25...Qxh7 26 Wh5+ 1-0  
26...Qg8 27 Qxg7 Qxg7 (after 27...f6 White has various wins, but the best one is to keep on opening lines for her rooks: 28 Qxf6 Qxf6 29  
Qg3+ Qf8 30 Wh8+ Qf7 31 Qg7#) 28 Qg3+  
Qf6 29 Qg5#. This must have been a great shock for the ex-world champion!

5)  Malakhatko – Ovechkin  
*Voronezh 2008*

20 Qf6+!  
White opens a route for his queen.

20...Qxf6
SOLUTIONS 181

20...gxf6 21 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{g3+ f7}}}} 22 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{g7+ e8}}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{x\texttt{f}}8\texttt{\#}}. This motif will be repeated in all lines.

21 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xf6 gxf6}}} 22 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{g3+ h7}}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{f7+ h8}}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{g7\#}}.

22 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{g3+ g6}}} 22...\texttt{\texttt{f7}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{g7+ e8}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{f8\#}}.

23 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xg6+ h8}}} As a result of the combination, White has regained the sacrificed material, and is left with by far the best pieces on the board. He has various ways now to conclude the job; domination is the most effective.

24 d6 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{b7}}} 25 \texttt{\texttt{f8}}} 1-0

6) \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{Dimitrijević – K. Stokke}}}  
\textit{Rilton Cup, Stockholm 2007/8}
White has an overwhelming concentration of forces on the h-file. He now needs first to open it, and then to make good use of it.

23 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xg6 xg6}}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{\texttt{xg6+ f7}}} 26 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{h7+ e8}}}} 27 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xf6+ 1-0}}}}}}

White's pieces cooperate in perfect harmony.

7) \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{Dzagnidze – Sulskis}}}  
\textit{Gibraltar 2008}
Black has established control of the open b-file, and penetrated to his seventh rank. Various tactical ideas arise now, but first he needs to bring up some material support for his attack:

29...\texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xf3!}}}}

With this simple idea, Black introduces two powerful pieces with gain of tempo:

30 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xf3 g4}}} 31 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{g2 xh5}}} ...\texttt{\texttt{f4+ or ...xg3+ is inevitable now.}}}}

32 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{d1} xg3+ 33 \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{h1 \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{w3}}} 34 \texttt{\texttt{g1 g3 0-1}}}}}}}}

8) \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{Garbisu – Kosić}}}  
\textit{Budapest 2008}

26 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xe6!}}} White has concentrated too many troops against the f5-square to contemplate a cowardly retreat by his knight. By sacrificing a small amount of material, he unleashes the power of the remaining pieces. He will also achieve a pleasant opposite-bishops position.

26...\texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xe6} 27 \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xf5} xxf5} 28 \texttt{\texttt{xf5 f6}}} 29 \texttt{\texttt{h7+ e8}}} 30 \texttt{\texttt{h8+ 1-0}}} 30...\texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{c7}} 31 \texttt{\texttt{wg7+ xg7}}} 32 \texttt{\texttt{f7+ e6}} 33 \texttt{\texttt{f5\#}.}}}

9) \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{Siebrecht – Van Haastert}}}  
\textit{Dutch Team Ch 2007/8}
All the light squares on the black kingside are weak, and there ought to be a way to exploit this fact.

21 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{c2! dxe4}}} 22 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{h7+ h8}}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{g6+ xh7}}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xf8+ g8}}} 25 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{h7+ xf8}}} 26 \texttt{\texttt{h8+ g8}} 27 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{e8+ xe8}}} 28 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xg8+ e7}}} 29 \texttt{\texttt{e1+ d6}}} 30 \texttt{\texttt{f8+ 1-0}}}}}}

Black loses additional material.

10) \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{P. Nikolić – Swinkels}}}  
\textit{Dutch Team Ch 2007/8}
White has prepared a rook-lift on his fourth rank. Now he exploits the weaknesses in Black's kingside pawn-structure:

30 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{e6+! fxe6}}} 31 \texttt{\texttt{f4+ 1-0}}} After 31...\texttt{\texttt{e8}} 32 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xg4}}} Black loses a queen or a rook.

11) \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{Vitiugov – Diachkov}}}  
\textit{Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008}
A king in the centre is always a juicy target. We should be willing to part with some material in order to open files for our rooks against it, and exploit the pins created:

21 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xh5! xh5}}} 22 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xe6} f7}}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{f5}}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{e1}} is also possible, but less precise due to 23...\texttt{\texttt{e5}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{xf6}}.

23...\texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{d8}}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xe7} g6}}} 25 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xd7+ xxd7}}} 26 \texttt{\texttt{b6+ 1-0}}} 26...\texttt{\texttt{e8}} 27 \texttt{\texttt{e1+ f7}} 28 \texttt{\texttt{e7\#}.}}}

12) \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{De Vreugt – Mchedlishvili}}}  
\textit{Hilversum 2008}
Black has an enormous strategic advantage due to his glorious bishops, and he finds the easiest way to convert it – tactics:

30...\texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xg3}}} 31 \texttt{\texttt{hgx3 d4! 0-1}}}

13) \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{Ristić – Kojović}}}  
\textit{Yugoslav Team Ch, Vrnjačka Banja 1999}
White will be happy to include his rook in the assault. However, the immediate 20 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{f6+}}}} gives Black the additional option 20...\texttt{\texttt{d6}}. Thus:

20 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{d5+! exd5}}} 21 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{f6+ f8}}} 22 \texttt{\texttt{e3}}} 1-0

The powerful tandem of queen and rook is sufficient to mate: 22...\texttt{\texttt{g6}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{h7}}} (23...\texttt{\texttt{e7}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{h8+ xh8}}} 25 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xh8#}}}}) 24 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{g7+ e7}}} 25 \texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xf7+ d8}}} 26 \texttt{\texttt{xf7#}.}}}

181
14) Tovio – Echavarria
Colombian Ch 2005

White decided to prepare a discovered attack, and wasted precious time by playing 29 \( \text{c}6 \), and the game was drawn after 29...c3 30 \( \text{bx}6 \) \( \text{bx}4 \)? (30...hxg6 31 \( \text{xe}7 \) cxb2 is a lot less clear) 31 \( \text{xe}7+ \) \( \text{g}7 \) 32 \( \text{g}3+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 33 \( \text{xe}5+ \)? (33 \( \text{xf}7+ \) \( \text{d}4+ \) 34 \( \text{h}1+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 35 \( \text{g}6+ \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 36 \( \text{h}4 \) is winning for White) 33...\( \text{g}6 \) 34 \( \text{d}5+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 35 \( \text{e}5+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 36 \( \text{g}5+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 37 \( \text{g}6+ \) \( \text{hx}6 \) 38 \( \text{h}6+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 39 \( \text{xe}6+ \) 1/2-1/2.

However, his major pieces were already well-placed for a decisive assault, and he could have sacrificed his bishop immediately to deflect Black’s queen away from the kingside:

29 \( \text{tx}g6!! \) \( \text{hx}g6 \) 30 \( \text{ax}g6 \) \( \text{xb}4 \)

A counter-deflection by 30...c3 does not work since after 31 \( \text{xf}7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 32 \( \text{g}3+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 33 \( \text{xe}6+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 34 \( \text{g}5+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 35 \( \text{f}7 \) --

15) Bologan – Heberla
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

White’s rooks have occupied both central files, and the black queen is poorly placed on a7. Both black knights are also wandering around on the queenside. This suggests that the position is ripe for an assault on the kingside.

20 \( \text{f}6+ \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 21 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{fxg}5 \) 22 \( \text{g}5+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 23 \( \text{f}6+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 24 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 25 \( \text{dxe}5 \) \( \text{exe}5 \) 26 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{f}8 \)

26...h6 was somewhat more resilient, when Black will finally include his queen in the defense after 27 \( \text{wh}6 \) \( \text{h}6 \), but only to lose on the next move: 28 \( \text{g}5+ \) \( \text{g}6 \) 29 \( \text{xe}6+ \) \( \text{f}6 \) 30 \( \text{h}6+ \).

27 \( \text{g}5+ \) \( \text{f}8 \) 28 \( \text{f}5 \)

The only ‘imperfection’ in White’s play is that 28 \( \text{h}6+ \) mates in five, one move earlier than the text-move would do.

1-0

16) Kovalevskaya – T. Vasilevich
European Women’s Ch, Plovdiv 2008

White uses the power of her passed pawn to establish control over the seventh rank.

35 \( \text{b}7 \)

35 \( \text{a}6 \) is another solution. We gave this example to demonstrate the power of the passed pawn, and the fact that it can be used in various ways, in this case thanks to a pin: 35...\( \text{xa}7 \) 36 \( \text{b}7 \).

35...\( \text{f}8 \) 36 \( \text{d}7 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 37 \( \text{xe}7 \) \( \text{xe}7 \) 38 \( \text{xe}7 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 39 \( \text{c}7 \) 1-0

17) Motylev – Markos
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

White needs to break in via the open h-file.

41 \( \text{g}6 \) \( \text{ef}7 \)

White’s rooks are forked, and he needs to act promptly if he is not to lose.

43...\( \text{xg}2! \) 44 \( \text{xg}2 \) \( \text{e}8 \)

The two rooks are getting untangled and their power is sufficient to keep the balance.

45 \( \text{xb}7 \)

After 45 \( \text{dc}1 \) \( \text{e}7 \) Black will make use of the pin.

45...\( \text{b}6 \)!

Black’s sacrifice on g2 blew open the white king’s pawn-shield, so White now cannot afford to capture the rook.

46 \( \text{g}2 \)

Not 46...\( \text{xh}8 \)??, when 46...\( \text{xf}2+ \) 47 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{b}2 \) will be mate.

46...\( \text{e}6 \) 47 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{xc}7 \)

Black has broken free of the fork, and is rewarded with half a point for his creativity.

48 \( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 49 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{b}2+ \) 50 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{fx}5 \) 1/2-1/2

19) Jojua – Banikas
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

White drags the black king towards the center, and mates:

23 \( \text{f}5+! \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 24 \( \text{g}3+ \) \( \text{f}6 \) 25 \( \text{d}7+ \) \( \text{xd}7 \) 26 \( \text{f}4 \) 1-0

20) Pantsulaia – Swiercz
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

The first move is obvious: White will open the h-file for his rooks.

28 \( \text{xe}6!! \) \( \text{hx}g6 \)

28...h6 29 \( \text{fh}1 \) \( \text{xf}4+ \) 30 \( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{xf}4 \) 31 \( \text{c}4 \) is good for White.

29 \( \text{fh}1 \) \( \text{g}7 \)
But what now?

30 $\text{a}h2$!

The key move: White has enough time to triple his major pieces on the only open file.

30... $\text{exe}5$

Black’s only chance is to fish in muddy waters, but it will not work here.

31 $\text{fxe}5$ $\text{exe}5$ 32 $\text{wd}3$ $\text{xf}6$ 33 $\text{h}6$ $\text{a}6$ 34 $\text{xg}6+$ $\text{g}7$ (D)

W

35 $\text{h}8+$! $\text{hx}8$ 36 $\text{h}3+$ $\text{g}8$ 37 $\text{h}7+$! $\text{f}8$ 38 $\text{h}8+$ $\text{e}7$ 39 $\text{xg}7+$ $\text{d}6$ 40 $\text{h}2+$ 1-0

21) Minina – Djingarova

European Women’s Ch, Plovdiv 2008

22... $\text{h}3+$!

With this clever strike, Black wins material due to the pin on the d-file.

23 $\text{hx}3$ $\text{f}2+$ 24 $\text{g}2$ $\text{xd}1$ 25 $\text{xd}1$ $\text{b}4$ 0-1

22) E. Cosma – Calzetta

European Women’s Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Black’s queen is overloaded:

18 $\text{b}8+$ $\text{xb}8$ 19 $\text{wb}8+$ $\text{d}8$ 20 $\text{b}5+$ 1-0

23) Zimina – Zakurdzhaeva

European Women’s Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Black’s king is desperately weak, and the position is screaming out for the decisive blow:

19 $\text{xb}6+$! $\text{axb}6$ 20 $\text{xb}6$ 1-0

24) Nayer – Maletin

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

20 $\text{xf}7$!

20 $\text{ad}1$ $\text{xf}3$ 21 $\text{xf}3$ $\text{e}8$ 22 $\text{xa}6$ $\text{f}6$

23 $\text{c}3$ is also excellent for White, although Black may then have some hopes based on the opposite-coloured bishops in an endgame. The game continuation is based on the poor coordination of Black’s pieces.

20... $\text{xf}7$ 21 $\text{g}5$ $\text{h}5$ 22 $\text{xf}7$ $\text{xf}7$ 23 $\text{xf}7+$ $\text{xf}7$ 24 $\text{ad}1$ $\text{e}8$ 25 $\text{wh}7$!

White plays for the attack, and already has a material advantage. Not 25 $\text{xe}8$? $\text{xh}2+$! 26 $\text{hx}2$ $\text{xd}3$ 27 $\text{xd}3$ $\text{exe}8$, which lets Black slip away.

25... $\text{wd}7$ 26 $\text{wd}3$ $\text{b}5$ 27 $\text{axb}5$ $\text{axb}5$ 28 $\text{e}5$ $\text{d}8$ 29 $\text{d}5$ $\text{we}6$ 30 $\text{g}3$ $\text{e}4$ 31 $\text{f}3+$ $\text{f}6$ 32 $\text{xb}5$ $\text{g}8$ 33 $\text{b}6$ $\text{we}5$ 34 $\text{we}3$ $\text{e}4$ 35 $\text{b}xd6$! 1-0

25) Roiz – B. Savchenko

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

15 $\text{exe}6$! $\text{f}8$

Probably Black had overlooked that after 15... $\text{hxg}5$ 16 $\text{e}5$ $\text{xe}5$ 17 $\text{xd}5$ $\text{exd}5$ 18 $\text{e}6+$ his position is falling apart.

16 $\text{exe}6$+! $\text{exe}6$ 17 $\text{we}3$ $\text{wd}5$

17... $\text{we}8$ 18 $\text{f}6$ $\text{h}7$ 19 $\text{d}5$.

18 $\text{e}5$ 1-0

26) D. Fridman – N. Mamedov

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

21 $\text{g}4$!

Some computer engines take quite while to discover this unexpected blow.

21... $\text{fxg}4$ 22 $\text{d}5$!

The point: this opens lines on the kingside, and excludes Black’s queen from the defence.

22... $\text{e}6$

White also mates after 22... $\text{f}8$ 23 $\text{wh}4$ $\text{we}8$ 24 $\text{wh}5$ $\text{e}6$ 25 $\text{g}1$ $\text{exd}5$ 26 $\text{wg}5$.

23 $\text{wg}4$ $\text{h}8$ 24 $\text{h}3$ $\text{eg}8$ 25 $\text{wh}5$ 1-0

25... $\text{h}6$ 26 $\text{g}1$ and $\text{wh}6+$ is inevitable.

27) Akopian – lotov

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

The $\text{e}4$-bishop protects $\text{h}7$, but an idea based on both interference and pin will make it an ineffective defender.

30 $\text{g}6$! $\text{xg}6$

Now the pin will come into play. The interference theme is seen in the line 30... $\text{fxg}6$ 31 $\text{wh}7$#.

31 $\text{g}1$ $\text{g}5$ 32 $\text{xg}5$ $\text{f}6$ 1-0

Black resigned since many roads lead to Rome.
28) Vachier-Lagrave – Vitiugov
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008
36...dxe1 Qf8 37...xg6 hxg6 38...h4+ 1-0
After 38...g8 39...e7+...f7 40...e4+...e8
41...xg6+ White wins everything.

29) M. Gurevich – Jojua
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008
33...e3!
Without the fianchettoed bishop, Black collapses.
33...xe3
33...g7 34...xg7+...xg7 35...g2+...h6 36...h4+...h8 37...xh6+...g8 38...g6+...f7 39...g7+...e8 40...e6+...e7 41...xe7#.

30) Cmilyte – E. Atalik
European Women’s Ch, Dresden 2007
35...g4! 36...xg4...f1+ 0-1
37...g1...f2+ 38...h2...xg4+.

31) Bromberger – Kremenietsky
Gausdal 2008
By dragging the king out, White will awaken his queenside forces:
20...xf6!!...xf6 21...f1+!...g7 (D)
21...e7 22...g5+...e8 23...h5+.

32) Efimenko – Andreikin
Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008
No centralized king is ever safe! White will break in by using the queen’s need for ‘fresh air’.
17...a5!...xa5 18...xd7+...xd7 18...e7 19...xa5...xa5 (or 19...xd7 20...xf7+...e7 21...c4!) 20...e4!, planning 21...f4.
19...xf7+...e7 20...c5+...xc5 20...d8 21...xe6+...d7 22...c7+.
21...xc5...b6 22...xg7...g8 23...c7+!
22...xc7 24...xe7+...b8 25...d6+...a8 26...xd4 1-0

33) Lilleoren – Zhu Chen
Gibraltar 2008
A bishop on c5 is a monster, and Black needs an open h-file to support its efforts.
22...g4+! 23...hxg4
23...h1...f2+ 24...h2 h4 25...e5...g3+ 26...xg3...b6 is no picnic either.
23...hxg4 24...f3...h6+ 25...g2...h2+ 0-1

34) Naiditsch – Mas
Dresden Olympiad 2008
It is not easy to understand what is happening at the moment, as there are so many pieces hanging.
25...xh6+!
White creates an overloaded piece in his opponent’s camp while using one of his attacked pieces as a desperado.
25...gxh6 26...xf6...xb3 27...xd8...xb2 28...xe6...xd8 29...xf7+...xf7 30...xe5 ±
The end of the forced line leaves White a solid pawn ahead with a positional advantage.
30...e7 31...f1+...g7 32...e6...f6?
32...f8 is more resilient.
33...e1 d5 34...e7+...g6 35...e7 1-0

35) Leventić – Bistić
Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008
Both central files have been occupied by white rooks, and the black king is in the centre. He has no chance...
18...d7...xd7 19...xe4...f8 20...d7+...d8 21...a5+ 1-0

36) Bluvstein – Rowson
Dresden Olympiad 2008
20...e3!
A pawn – even a centre pawn – for a whole diagonal is a small price!
21...xe3...b7 22...f2
22...c1...h1+ 23...f2...xh2+.
22...f3+ 0-1
37) M. Muzychuk – I. Andrenko  
Ukrainian Girls’ Ch, Odessa 2008
White has a way to bring a piece into the attack with gain of tempo:
39 e4! fxg8 40 f6+ h6 41 xg8+ 1-0

38) Malakhatko – Perez Felipe  
La Laguna 2008
With such an exposed king, our task is a pure pleasure:
20 Md5+! g6
Or: 20...f5 21 wxe7+ f6 22 f4+; 20...exd5
21 w6+ f5 22 h5+ e4 23 f3+ d4 24 f6+ c5 25 xc3.
21 d3#!
Interference. White excludes the black queen from the defence and so gives mate.
1-0

39) K. Rohonyan – Motoc  
Dresden (Women’s Olympiad) 2008
Black’s king is not safe on e7, and it will be even worse if dragged into the middle of the board:
18 xxd7+! xd7 19 c5+ d6 20 xe6+ xc5
20...c7 is not advisable either: 21 f7+ b6 22 d7+ c7 (22...a5 23 b4+ c4 24 b3#) 23 xf6+ c8 24 e6+ b8 25 d5 +–.
21 b4+ d4 22 g2 d2
After 22...e5 there are mating lines possible, but it is enough if you saw that Black’s queen is doomed: 23 d1+ e3 24 e1+.
23 w6+
23 c4+ c3 24 c6+ d4 25 c5# and 23 d5+ e3 24 e4+ f2 25 f1# are both effective too.
1-0

40) Pruess – Chua  
USA Ch Qualifier, Chicago 2008
The rooks have already occupied the vital seventh rank. It is time for White to make use of this:
22 xf7! xd7 23 xg7+ h8 24 c3
Creating a deadly battery.
24...h5
Or 24...b5 25 g5+ e5 26 h6 e6 27 xe6 +–.
25 h6
Even better is 25 f7+ g8 26 h6#.
1-0

41) Harikrishna – Svidler  
Dresden Olympiad 2008
25 xe6!
White breaks in thanks to his light-square domination.
25...ab8
After 25...fxe6 26 xe6+ h7 27 f3! the white queen switches to the h-file. The attack proves to be decisive since White has an enormous dynamic advantage. 27...d4 28 h3+ g7 29 h6+ f6 30 f5! and now:
a) 30...xd6 31 xg6+ e7 32 e1+ d8 33 xd6 +–.
b) 30...xf2+ 31 g2 d5+ 32 xf2 d4+ 33 g3 and the checks are over.
c) 30...g8 31 g5+ g7 32 e7+ h8 33 h4+ g7 34 h6+ h7 35 f8#.
25...c8 is answered in a similar way: 26 e4 h7 27 e3 fx6 28 xe6 +–.
26 e3 c4 27 e1 1-0

42) Bukowska – Valickova  
Trinec 2001
White first makes use of the vulnerable back rank:
17 xd6!! xe1+ 18 xe1 xg3
18...xd6 19 e8+ f8 20 xd6 c7 21 e7+ h8 22 xax8 +–.
19 e8+ f8 (D)

And now the power of his centralized knights.
20 xdx8!! g5
This counterattack had to be foreseen, as White’s rook and king are both in danger.
20...xd8 is met by 21 e7+ h8 22 xf7#.
21 \( \text{\textit{W}xe3!} \text{\textit{D}e2+} \)

Or: 21...\textit{W}xe3 22 \textit{fxe3} ++; 21...\textit{W}xd5 22 \textit{\textit{D}xa8} ++; 21...\textit{W}xd8 22 \textit{\textit{D}e7+} \textit{W}xe7 (only move) 23 \textit{W}xe7 \textit{cxd6} 24 \textit{hxg3} ++.

22 \textit{W}xe2 \textit{W}xd5

22...\textit{W}c1+ 23 \textit{Wf1} \textit{Wxf1}+ 24 \textit{Wxf1} \textit{\textit{W}xd8} 25 \textit{\textit{D}e7+} \textit{\textit{W}h8} 26 \textit{\textit{W}xf7#}. This mating mechanism works in most of the lines.

23 \textit{\textit{W}xa8} \textit{W}xe2 22 \textit{\textit{W}xe2} \textit{\textit{W}xd5} 22...

... \textit{W}c1+ 23 \textit{Wf1} \textit{Wxf1}+ 24 \textit{Wxf1} \textit{\textit{W}xd8} 25 \textit{\textit{D}e7+} \textit{\textit{W}h8} 26 \textit{\textit{W}xf7#}. This mating mechanism works in most of the lines.

23 \textit{W}xe2 \textit{W}xd5 22...

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28...exd5 29 \( \text{\L} \)xd5
The powerful bishop duet makes a pleasant aesthetic impression.
29...a6 30 \( \text{\L} \)xa8 \( \text{\L} \)xa8 31 b7 1-0

47)  
Barsov – D. Flores  
Dresden Olympiad 2008

The position is anything but usual. White has a great material advantage, but almost all the black pieces are full of energy. His only inactive piece had to join the battle now: 29...\( \text{c} \)c5+!
30 \( \text{\L} \)hl \( \text{\L} \)el+ (even better than the line advocated by Golubev: 30...\( \text{\L} \)xd5+!? 31 \( \text{\L} \)xd5 \( \text{\L} \)h3, when White is a whole queen ahead, but his only defence is to give it away for free: 32 \( \text{\L} \)e8+ \( \text{\L} \)xh8 33 \( \text{\L} \)g2 \( \text{\L} \)d4 and Black should be objectively winning) 31 \( \text{\L} \)g2 \( \text{\L} \)g1+ 32 \( \text{\L} \)xg1 \( \text{\L} \)xd5+ 33 \( \text{\L} \)h3 \( \text{\L} \)xg4!! is equally hopeless for White) 32...\( \text{\L} \)c8+ 33 \( \text{\L} \)ad7 \( \text{\L} \)xd7 and Black has both a material advantage and a decisive attack.

Instead, the game followed a very different course. Probably both players were in severe time-trouble, which would explain the tactical errors that occurred in the actual play:
29...

31 \( \text{\L} \)xe5?!
After 31 \( \text{\L} \)f1 \( \text{\L} \)d4 32 \( \text{\L} \)db5 \( \text{\L} \)e6 33 \( \text{\L} \)xe5 \( \text{\L} \)h3+ 34 \( \text{\L} \)e1 \( \text{\L} \)d7 White has a queen for just a bishop, but Black’s pieces are very active. The best practical solution for him is then to part with some of the superfluous material by 35 \( \text{\L} \)d1! \( \text{\L} \)c7 36 \( \text{\L} \)xe7 \( \text{\L} \)xe7 37 \( \text{\L} \)e8+ \( \text{\L} \)f8 38 \( \text{\L} \)d8 \( \text{\L} \)h6 39 \( \text{\L} \)c8+-, when Black’s pieces are completely tied up.
30 \( \text{\L} \)xe5!!
Further evidence of time-trouble. After the natural 33...

34 \( \text{\L} \)a4 \( \text{\L} \)b1 the game would still have been unclear.
34 \( \text{\L} \)xd2 1-0

48)  
Jobava – Rowson  
Dresden Olympiad 2008

38 \( \text{\L} \)c4! (D)

A cunning double attack. Black needs to part with his a5-pawn, since 39 \( \text{\L} \)d6# is a much more unpleasant threat...
38...

After 38...dxc4 39 \( \text{\L} \)xc4+ White wins an exchange in addition to the pawn.
39 \( \text{\L} \)xa5 \( \text{\L} \)a8 40 b4 1-0

49)  
Topalov – Zhigalko  
Dresden Olympiad 2008

39 \( \text{\L} \)xd5!
White has various ways of converting his huge advantage, but this small combination is both the shortest and the most beautiful way.
39...exd5 40 e6 1-0
Black resigned in the face of 40...\( \text{\L} \)f8 41 \( \text{\L} \)xc6+ \( \text{\L} \)xc6 42 \( \text{\L} \)e7+ or 40...\( \text{\L} \)xf6 41 \( \text{\L} \)xf6 gxf6 42 e7.

50)  
Radjabov – Kamsky  
Dresden Olympiad 2008

Black has just committed a terrible mistake by 29...\( \text{\L} \)xh6??.
30 d5+!
This double decoy forces Black to part with material.
30...

There’s nothing better: 30...\( \text{\L} \)xd5 31 \( \text{\L} \)c7+; 30...

31 dxe6 bxc6 32 \( \text{\L} \)xb4 cxb5 33 \( \text{\L} \)xb8 ++
34 \( \text{\L} \)xf4 \( \text{\L} \)xd3 35 \( \text{\L} \)xa7 \( \text{\L} \)a8 36 \( \text{\L} \)d4 1-0
Index of Players

When a player’s name appears in bold, that player had White. Otherwise, the FIRST-NAMED PLAYER had White. An italic number signifies an exercise.

ABELLO – Zeynelabidin 73
ACS – Cao Säng 172
ADLY – Ramesh 25
AEK – Gershav 168
AGAFII – Bargan 138
AGDELIS – Bojkov 13
ÅKESSON – Van Oosterom, C. 105
AKOBAN – Onishchuk 161
AKOPIAN – Bologan 179; Iotov 183;
Volkov 112
ALANIC – Saada 172
ALAVIKIN – Gleizerov 166
ALEKSIKOV, A. – Magalashvili 106
ALEXANDROVA – Danin 163; Bojkov 78
ALEXANDROVA – Chorvatova 165; Semionova 45
ALMASI, Z. – Navara 176
ALSINA LEAL – Fluvia Poyatos 104
AMONATOV – Zemtsov 52
AMURA – Ruu Lufeı 174
ANAND – Aronian 175; Kramnik 14; Topalov 170; 135, 182
ANDERSSON, C. – Bjørke, S. 88
ANDONOV – Brkić 160
ANDREKIN – Efimenko 184
ANDRENKO, I. – Muzychuk, M. 185
ARENCIBIA – Zapata 59
ARONIAN – Anand 175; Gefand 93; Karpov 163; Polgar, J. 12;
Shirov 64
ASK – Bellon 174
ASRIAN – Karasev 173
ATAKISI – Spasov, V. 171
ATALIK, E. – Cmilyte 184;
Dimitrov, V. – Gligoric 86
AUTERIANOV – Aveskulov 175
AVESKULOV – Averianov 175
AVRUKH – Raetsky 45;
Shavtaladze 26
BABULA – Gongora 186
BACROT – Feller 170; Krisenkov 18; Rausis 74
BANIKAS – Jojua 182
BARGAN – Agafii 138
BARSOV – Flores, D. 187
BATSANIN – Inants 160
BAUER, C. – Renet 85
BAYRAM – Bojkov 79
BELAVSKY – Khamrakulov 39
BELKIN – Yuidachev 32
BELLON – Ask 174
BEN-PINCHAS – Freidles 120
BERELOVICH – McNab 20
BEREND – Bojkov 116
BETOTSKY – Ormos 92
BINDRICH – Nikolić, P. 164
BIRUKOV – Pogonina 118
BISTRIĆ – Gylmesi 180; Leventić 184; Narančić 158
BJERKE, S. – Andersson, C. 88
BLAJOVIĆ – Čabriolo 39
BLANCO – Gongora 59; Illas 186
BLUYSHTIE – Rowson 184
BOBRAS – Wojtaszek 132
BOJKOV – Aggelis 13; Alexandrov, V. 78; Bayram 79; Berend 116;
Borisek 91; Delemarre 171;
Ermenkov 57; Geimaert 37;
Larino 16; Misojčić 38; Murray 80;
Panbukchian 36; Parker 171;
Peredov 40; Schaufelberger 47;
Van den Doel 134; Yassin 71
BOJKOVIC – Houska, J. 168
BOKKOS – Griffiths, R. 73
BOLOGAN – Akopian 179; Heberla 182; Markus 160
BORIC – Čmilyte 165
BORISEK – Bojkov 91
BOROS, D. – Hendriks 32
BOSBOOM – Jansen 11
BOUDE – Prié 74
BRAUN – Carlsson, P. 168
BRENER – Casper 166; Georgiev, V. 143
BRISCOE – Marlow 165
BRKIĆ – Andonov 160
BRNAS – Horvath, C. 162
BROEKEULEN – Van Haastert 174
BROMBERGER – Kremenetskij 184
BRUNELLO – Rowson 24
BRUZON – Flores 9
BU XIANGZHI – Topalov 109
BUHAMANN – Fodoruch 19;
Prusikin 172
BUI VINH – Wang Puchen 161
BUKOWSKA – Valicova 185
BULSKI – Flindt 161
BYKOVSKY, AN. – Sitnikov 159
BYRON, A. – Motzer 60
ČABRILO – Blagojević 39; Matović 165; Popovic 171
CACERES, J. – Nogueira 160
CALZETTA – Cosma, E. 183
CAO SANG – Cao Sang 172
CAPABLANCA – Winter 143
CARLSJOHN, P. – Braun 168
CARRON – Nemet 163
CASPER – Brener 166
CHAN WENG CHEE – Ly Hong
Nguyen 61
CHEPARINOV – Navara 106
CHERNIAEV – Shaked 167
CHIN, F. – Van Weersel 165
CHORVATOVA – Alexandrova 165
CHUA – Pruss 185
CIFUENTES – Zviagintsev 106
CLAVERIE – Lemos 167
CMILOTE – Atalik, E. 184; Borić 165
CONQUEST – Edouard 96
CORRALES – Ferragut 59
CORRALES – Jimenez – Hungaki 162
COSMA, E. – Calzetta 183
CRAMLING, P. – Franco 58;
Kovalevskaya 173
DANILOV – Vajda, A. 176
DANIN – Alexandrov 163
DAVIES – Díaz 166
DE JONG – Johannesssen, L. 162
DE VREUGT – Groffen 146; Marin 177; Mchedlishvili 181
DELEMARRE – Bojkov 171
DELGADO – Llorente 160
DIACHKOV – Vituiovich 181
DIAMANT – Fier 38
DIAZ CASTRO – Pogorelov 175
DIAZ, C. – Quesada 178
DIAZ, J. – Valles 173
DIMITRIJEVICH – Stokke, K. 181
DIMITROV, V. – Gligoric 86
DIVE – Davies 166
DJINGAROVA – Minina 183
DOETTLING – Gross, D. 147
DOMINGUEZ, L. – Frois 176;
Perez, R. 105
DREEV – Seirawan 7
DUBINSKY – Lapshun 82
DUDZINSKI – Mielczarski 162
DUMPOUR – Stojanovic 164
DVORISR – Ushenina 168
DWORAKOWSKA – Stefanova 146
DYDYSHKO – Dzhiba 179
DZAGNIDZE – Stefanova 178;
Sulsikis 181
DZHUMAEV – Kurnosov 158
DZIVA – Dzyhskh 179
ECHAVARRIA – Tovio 182
ECONOMESCU – Svetushkin 115
EDOUAR – Conquest 96
EFIMENKO – Andreikin 184
EFREMOV – Vajda, A. 176
EFLERMO – Solovev 165
ELEDS – Pereira, S. 145
ELIANOV – Van Wely 175
EPSTEIN – Tuvsintugs 65
ERMENKOV – Bojkov 57;
Khalilman 77
ESPINOSA – Gonzalez, A. 54;
Miranda 136; Perez, Y. 137
ESQUEREL – Gongora 163
ESTEVEZ, E. – Reyes, C. 178
INDEX OF PLAYERS
The advice frequently given to chess-players eager to improve their results is straightforward: study tactics! But there is often little useful guidance as to how this is best done. By solving puzzle positions? Or endgame studies? By dissecting the games of great tacticians?

Few books present a structured approach to tactics, so this book fills a valuable niche in the ambitious player’s library. The authors present each major tactical theme in turn, explaining how it works and providing inspiring examples. They then explain how you can spot the idea in your own games and use it to your advantage. You immediately get a chance to put your knowledge to the test, as there are challenging exercises throughout the whole book, with detailed solutions.

The second part of the book offers more advanced material, and takes us inside the professional’s tactics laboratory. Here we see how tactical themes are combined, and employed to achieve strategic goals. We are also shown how grandmasters spot the targets for their breathtaking combinations, which we thus come to see not as sheer witchcraft, but as the product of disciplined thought and training.

Bulgarian grandmaster Dejan Bojkov is an extremely active player and writer on chess, whose reports appear on Chessbase.com and in Chess Today, among many others.

Vladimir Georgiev is also a grandmaster from Bulgaria, who now plays for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – he has won the national championship of both countries. He is the trainer of former Women’s World Champion Antoaneta Stefanova.