DANGER IN CHESS
How to Avoid Making Blunders

Amatzia Avni
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Symbols and Abbreviations

W White to move  
B Black to move  
0-0 Castles kingside  
0-0-0 Castles queenside  
e.p. En passant  
x Captures  
+ Check  
! Good move  
!! Brilliant move  
? Bad move  
?? Blunder  
!? Interesting move  
?! Dubious move  
= Equal position  
± Advantage to White  
+ Advantage to Black  
±± Winning for White  
±±± Winning for Black  
Ch. Championship  
Ol. Olympiad  
corr. Correspondence  
izt Interzonal
Introduction

The rules of chess do not keep score of accumulated interim results.

A player can build up a sizeable advantage over his (or her) opponent and keep it during most stages of the contest; but a few seconds lack of attention can squander all his hard work. In chess no one counts “advantages” or “winning positions”; only the final result matters. Consequently a mistake in chess can be of greater significance than in games where interim results do count, like football, basketball, table-tennis, etc.

In these games a player or a team leading by a considerable margin may allow themselves the luxury of grave errors; at worst it will narrow the difference. On the other hand, bad blunders in chess can nullify all former achievements, even turn the tables. Any (chess) move can be critical, any decision may determine the outcome of the whole battle.

Bearing in mind the significance of chess mistakes, it could be argued that a chessplayer is required to display a high and constant level of concentration, in comparison with a competitor in other games or pursuits. He cannot permit himself to rest on his laurels during the game; he should be tense like a spring, always alert and attentive.

The trouble is that this demand is not realistic; people are unable to maintain a high attention level for prolonged periods. They tire, their minds wander and watchfulness decreases. You can verify this assertion by observing the behaviour of drivers on the road, or frontier guards on sentry duty. Clearly both have strong motivation to maintain maximum attention – any diminution of watchfulness can cost a life, possibly their own. Do they succeed in staying fully alert and watchful for many hours? Hardly.

Back to chess. To be honest, the alertness of chessplayers (including the very best) is not constant. Sometimes we relax, at other times we day-dream and let our thoughts wander (even in our own thinking time). Sometimes
we get distracted by things that have nothing to do with chess. And only for part of the time that our own clock is ticking do we put all our efforts into evaluating and calculating the various possibilities on the board.

A glance around the tournament hall lends support to the hypothesis that the competitors switch from rest to alertness, from wandering with dreamy eyes to energetic investigation of the board situation. Contrary to what non-players believe, chessplayers do find time for idle dreams and fleeting thoughts.

So far we have made two main points, which are of a contradictory character. First, that on account of the game's rules the player is obliged to display continued high-level vigilance; and secondly, that being human, this task is beyond his reach.

The question is: How do chessplayers manage to bridge the gulf between what they can do and what they should do? To be more specific: How do they identify when they are free to "dream" and when they must mobilise all their resources and capabilities? How do they succeed in classifying (competently) the position on the board as "safe" or "dangerous" for them?

In a way that is not totally clear, stronger players manage somehow to "know" (without concrete analysis of variations) when they can move quickly and when, on the other hand, they must take the utmost care, plunge into deep thought and re-examine the accuracy of former assessments.

Our wonder and admiration at this skill of competent players may be even greater if we return to the comparison of chess with other sports. In soccer, a goalkeeper seeing five forwards rushing towards him with the ball cannot misinterpret their intention. In a long-distance race, a runner noticing the spectators getting up and roaring, grasps immediately that something is happening. At tennis, a situation of set point makes it clear to the protagonists that a critical moment has arrived.

All these signals are absent in chess. The issue is frequently resolved not by a direct attack against the king. Hence, the player may face difficulties in recognising that an aggressive action is taking place against him. Spectators - if present at all - are not allowed to utter a sound, according to the regulations. Finally, there being no limit on the length of a game (at least not in "serious" tournaments), no critical situation is a priori defined as such. Moreover, a chess game is played from the beginning to the end with the competitors in a state of compara-
tive uncertainty. A player almost never knows his situation during the game; he only assumes. His state is therefore much more difficult than that of a swimmer, who knows at least if he is in the lead or not, or that of the sharpshooter, who gets continual feedback after every shot.

In life most people prefer to purchase articles that have signals which will act as warning signs in case of any failure or breakdown. If something is wrong, the computer will flash an error. A red light will come on in a malfunctioning car; bad smell or taste will signify spoiled food, and a smoke detector will produce an alarm sound in the event of a fire.

And in chess?

Well, square a1 is not going to flicker as a warning sign. The hostile knight will not change its colour. Our opponent will not alert us by shouting in our ears “Beware!”.

And with all that, in spite of a complete lack of outside aids, strong chessplayers do receive (or produce) warning signals and can interpret them correctly. Finding an answer to the question, “How do they do it?”, is important and contains significant implications.

If we were able to define and characterise those signals, and pin-point situations liable to cause failures in the alarm system, and if we could determine what kind of positions contain the probability of danger, then we would be able to develop and sharpen this instinct. We would establish this “feeling for danger” as an object of study of equal importance to, for instance, “coping with an isolated pawn” or “when to exchange pieces”. One could derive great practical use from it. The characterisation of typical positions where there is a high probability of the danger-instinct failing might, by a player’s very awareness of these archetypes, lessen such slips.

Conversely, a better understanding of the signals that broadcast danger may also help us to lull the adversary’s feelings of danger, by implementing masking tactics of disguise and deception.

These are the subjects of the present book.

In the absence of serious research data, the following will reflect more the author’s thoughts, ideas and theories than proven, valid facts.

It is to be hoped that further works on this issue will enlighten us more, thus broadening our understanding.
1 The Sense of Danger – Its Meaning and Importance

In the chess literature of recent decades there are references to what is called a sense of danger. The purpose of this sense is: “to be aware of impending danger in time, and to avoid it” – Alexander Kotov.\(^1\) This probably means that certain signs – perhaps at a subconscious level – act as alarm signals for the chessplayer, indicating that he must raise his vigilance.

The usual indicators of control systems provide us with feedbacks, that is they pin-point something that has already gone wrong. Here we are dealing with signals whose aim is to provide us with feed-forward; to point out the probability of future failures. A feed-forward system “is a means of seeing problems as they develop and not looking back – always too late – to see why a planning target was missed.”\(^2\)

Drawing an analogy with real battle, here is “something” that distinguishes between routine and emergency, between a relatively peaceful situation and the outbreak of hostilities.

One example of a variable related to the sense of danger is correct timing:

“The player feels, for example, that the moment has come when delay will mean death, that it is exactly now and not later that he must begin the counterattack. . . . This sense of of timing is manifested for instance in the feeling of danger, which is familiar to many players . . .” – Nikolai Krogius.\(^3\)

Also, this sixth sense is related to the skill of “entering the opponent’s mind”. Annotating a game lost by Bobby Fischer, GM Edmar Mednis wrote: “White is dreaming of his attack, completely oblivious to the fact that it is Black who is doing the attacking!”\(^4\)

Such a mistake stems from focusing too much on what we plan, while ignoring the other side’s intentions. A developed sense of danger means orienting one’s own thoughts towards perceiving the rival’s train of thought.

As many authorities advise, it
is useful to put oneself in the opponent’s place, to think from his point of view.

Descriptions of the sense of danger sometimes appear in connection with the terms “critical position” or “critical moment”. For instance, British trainer John Littlewood writes:

“We have to learn to detect critical moments in play ... In a real game situation we learn to develop, with practice, a sixth sense about such critical moments.”

Acquiring a developed sense of danger apparently helps us to spot critical moments in the game. The trouble is that both terms are rather vague, and leave the student wondering how to recognise critical moments, whatever that means, before they arrive.

The most detailed characterisation of the sense of danger and its working mechanism during a chess game is given by Mark Dvoretsky, widely regarded as the number one chess trainer in the former USSR:

“The opponent makes an apparently innocent move, but for some reason or another he rouses our vigilance and promptly we discover the cunning that is concealed. Another instance: We abandon serious consideration of a move that at first sight looked tempting, because we feel that there must be a refutation. Or: the variations that we work out are all to our advantage, but a “feeling for danger” forces us to check and recheck repeatedly; and we discover an error somewhere in the calculation.

“Clearly in such a situation there is a connection between pure chess information ... and psychologically influenced decisions.”

It is quite common for players to treat this mysterious intuitive sense as something very realistic/materialistic, and to attribute errors in games to “failures” of the danger-detector. “The reason for my awful oversight was that over-confidence sapped my sense of danger,” writes Kotov.

Let’s have a look at a few examples that demonstrate the importance of a danger instinct.
The preceding diagram is a modified version of a position played in 1982 between two Israeli junior players.

A brief study of the diagram brings out the weakness of Black’s isolated and doubled e-pawns. Asked to choose a White move, the majority of strong players would probably single out 1 0-0.

Although 1 \( \text{Qxe6} + \) wins a pawn, experienced tournament players would not seriously contemplate this move. They would rule out the possibility on the grounds that “it does not smell good” to grab pawns before completing development, and would reach a decision without concrete calculation.

In fact, a refutation of 1 \( \text{Qxe6} + \) does exist:

1 ... \( \text{Wxe6} \)
2 \( \text{Wxc5} \) \( \text{Wb3!!} \)

Surprisingly, White now cannot save himself from heavy losses: 3 0-0 \( \text{Qe4} \) \( \text{Qf} \), or 3 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qe4}! \) (still!) 4 \( \text{Wb5} \) \( \text{Qd1} + \).

The point, however, is that a White player can reach the right conclusion on the basis of his awareness of danger, without the necessity for precise analysis.

A sharp-eyed player would notice the possibility 1 \( \text{Qxe4} + \). A concrete calculation has a lot to say for this move: 1 ... \( \text{Wxe4} + \) 2 \( \text{Wxe4} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \) 3 d7; or 1 ... \( \text{Qxe4?} \) 2 \( \text{Qd5} + \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 4 d7 are in White’s favour.

Still, self-pinning the white bishop whilst the rook is also under attack looks very suspect. This feeling prompted IM Shvidler to recheck the variations, and his doubts were soon verified: 1 \( \text{Qxe4} + \) actually loses to 1 ... \( \text{Qf6}!! \), temporarily unpinning, but 2 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) renews the pin with decisive effect.

Usually it is not at all easy to spot the critical moment, or identify an approaching danger. Diagram 3 shows an innocent-looking position in which Black
should apparently feel safe, having neither structural deficiencies nor any obvious reason to worry about his king’s position.

Quinones-Silva
3 Tel Aviv Ol. 1964

However, in the actual game Black went rapidly downhill:

1 ... \( \text{Qxf3} \)
2 \( \text{Qxf3} \) \( \text{Qd7} \)
3 \( \text{Qe6d1} \) \( \text{Qb6} \)
4 \( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{Qc6} \)
5 \( \text{Qe7} \) \( \text{Qf6} \)
6 \( \text{Qd6} \) \( \text{Qb7} \)
7 \( \text{Qf6} \) \( \text{g6} \)
8 \( \text{Qad1} \) Resigns

What were Black’s mistakes? The position after 5 \( \text{Qe7} \) is won for White, so we have to look for improvements at earlier stages. One commentator blamed 1 ... \( \text{Qxf3} \), suggesting 1 ... \( \text{Qfd8} \), but this is surely wrong, on account of 2 \( \text{Qxa6}! \) [and if 2 ... \( \text{Qxe4} \) then 3 \( \text{Qh4 f5} \)] 4 \( \text{Qxa8 Qxa8} \) 5 \( \text{Qd7} - \text{Ed.} \].

2 ... \( \text{Qe8} \) with the intention of 3 ... \( \text{Qc7} \), 4 ... \( \text{Qe6} \) looks better (e.g. 3 \( \text{b4 Qc7} \) with 4 ... \( f6 \) to regroup), as does 4 ... \( \text{Qh8} \). But it seems that Black’s biggest error was that he was not aware that he was in danger! That is, until it was too late to do something about it.

Even more confusing is the next diagram.

Keres-Penrose
Hastings 1958

Black’s queen and two knights appear to be a threatening force, while White also has to reckon with an advance of the h4 pawn;

Strangely, and contrary to first impressions, it is White who holds the initiative:

1 \( \text{Qxf4} \) \( \text{Qxf4} \)
2 \( \text{Qe3}! \) \( \text{h3} \)
2 ... \( \text{Qh6}! \).
3 \( \text{Qg4}! \)
Now, if 3 ... h×g2 (crushing?) 4  
\( \text{c}d7+ \g\g8 5 \text{e}e8+ \g\g7 6 \text{e}e7+ \) and White is the first to deliver mate!

So Black had to settle for an ending, but without success:

3    \( \text{e}xg2+ \)
4 \( \text{e}xg2 \)
5 \( \g\e5 \)
6 \( \text{c}3 \)
7 \( \g\h2 \)
8 \( \g\d3 \)
9 \( \g\h3 \)
10 \( \g\g3 \)
11 \( \g\f2! \)
12 \( \g\e2 \)
13 \( \text{b}xc3 \)
14 \( \g\d3 \)
15 \( \text{a}5 \)
16 \( \text{a}xb6 \)
17 \( \g\e3 \) Resigns

The game continued:

1 \( \g\e4 \) a2
2 \( \text{x}a2 \) \( \g\e2 \)
3 f5 \( \g\g7? \)

3 ... \( \g\g5! \) wins.

4 \( \g\e5 \) \( \g\f7 \)
5 f6 \( \g\c3 \)
6 \( \g\f5 \)

"Here my opponent continued with the expression of a winner 6 ...
\( \g\d5 \) 7 \( \g\g5 \) \( \text{x}f6 \)" — says Porath — "and it was only after 8 \( \g\h6! \) that he realised that he was in one of the no-win positions of a knight and pawn vs pawn!"

Draw.

True, it is not always so baffling. In certain positions the warning signals are evident.
Instead of the solid 1 \( \text{d}3 \) White chose 1 \( \text{d}2?! \) which was strongly countered by 1 ... \( \text{b}6! \) getting out of the pin and threatening to win the queen by discovered check. Such a nasty surprise would be enough to wake up most players, but White remained asleep, falling for the same trick once more!

2 \( \text{d}7? \)

2 \( \text{c}4. \)

2 ... \( \text{x}d7! \)

3 \( \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{d}4! \)

The threat of discovered check, formerly appearing on a rank, now re-emerges on a file. Probably White should now have given up his queen (4 \( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{h}2+ 5 \text{hx}h2 \)).

4 \( \text{h}1? \) \( \text{xd}2 \)

5 \( \text{ae}1 \) \( \text{f}4 \)

Black was feeling confident enough in this position to play 1 ... \( \text{xb}6? \), intending to challenge control of the d-file. Had he played 1 ... g6 he would have obtained a satisfactory position, but the queen sortie enabled the great attacking player of the white pieces to launch a powerful offensive:

6 g3 \( \text{f}3+ \)

7 \( \text{h}2 \) \( \text{c}6 \)

8 \( \text{xg}7 \) \( \text{f}8 \)

9 \( \text{e}3? \) \( \text{e}4 \)

10 \( \text{xh7} \) \( \text{d}2 \)

11 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{xf}1 \)

12 \( \text{xf}1 \) \( \text{c}5 \)

And in view of the continuation 13 \( \text{g}7 \) \( \text{d}8 \) White resigned.

However, frequently a certain measure of intuition is required to recognise the looming danger.

Alekhine-Lasker

Zürich 1934
2 \[d6!\] \[\f e d7\]

2 ... \[\f g6?\] 3 \[\f h6+\].

3 \[\f f d1\] \[\f a d8\]
4 \[\f g3\] \[\f g6\]
5 \[\f g5!\] \[\f h8\]
6 \[\f d6\] \[\f g7\]
7 e4 \[\f g8\]
8 \[\f d3\] f6

8 ... h6 9 \[\f f5+\] \[\f h7\] 10 \[\f x h6\] f6
11 \[\f f5!!\] brings a similar finish.

9 \[\f f5+\] \[\f h8\]
10 \[\f x g6!\] Resigns

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**Question 1:** What was the danger that eluded Black?

Tukmakov-Karpov
Leningrad izt 1973

White is a whole exchange behind, with no compensation whatsoever. His last move, 1 \[\f g1-f1\], seems pointless. The rook under attack has three respectable options: d2, b2 and e4. They all look good enough to clinch the win.

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**Question 2:** Are they?

In the course of a chess battle a player wavers. Is everything going well? Is my position strong? Will I be able to carry out my plans?

The answers to these questions are compared with hints the player gets from various sources. Signals may originate from inner feelings, or from the opponent's
behaviour, or from factors such as the conduct of spectators. But first and foremost, the player continually tests what he thinks and feels against what his evaluation and analysis of the board situation tell him. A player builds for himself, mostly unknowingly, a system of signals whose aim is to broadcast to him the presence of dangers, real or potential. The system forms, grows and stabilises with accumulated experience.

The idea is that each signal, independently, can press the 'alarm' button, thus calling for concrete calculation of variations on top of general strategic reasoning.

It must be pointed out that signals suggest the possibility of a dangerous situation, but do not constitute a testimony of its existence.

In chess, it is never possible to prove in advance that something will occur. Still, to own a good sense of danger is undoubtedly a valuable asset.

Let us observe the danger-signal system at work.
2 Obvious Dangers

We have already observed that many of the dangers awaiting a player during a game are not easy to foresee. Either the danger is concealed – the player is unaware of the risk involved – or he fails to interpret correctly the chess and psychological data.

However, before we delve into this matter, let us briefly review some well-known dangerous situations. These are positions that, by the very process of learning the game's rules and principles, we have already come to recognise as inherently risky.

1. Leaving the king with insufficient support from other pieces

(diagram 10)

1... $\text{c2?!}$ 0-0
2 $\text{fd2?}$

The natural follow-up to his previous move, but removing the king's knight from its defensive duties is brilliantly refuted:

2... $\text{xf2!}$
3 $\text{xf2}$

If 3 $\text{xe7}$ then 3... $\text{xd3}$ is simple and strong. 3... $\text{d1}$ is less convincing on account of 4 $\text{xd1}$ $\text{xd1}$ 5 $\text{el1!}$ collecting a third piece for the queen.

3... $\text{h4+}$
4 $\text{g3}$ $\text{f4!}$
5 $\text{g2}$ $\text{fxg3}$
6 $\text{hxg3}$ $\text{h3+!}$
7 $\text{xh3}$ $\text{xg3}$

The white monarch is completely naked now, waiting for his execution . . .

8 $\text{hxh7+}$ $\text{h8}$
9  \( \text{Qf3} \)  \( \text{Hxf3} \)
10  \( \text{Hh1} \)  \( \text{Qf4+} \)
11  \( \text{Rg2} \)  \( \text{Hg5}+! \)

Very impressive.

12  \( \text{Qxf3} \)  \( \text{Hg3}+ \)
13  \( \text{Re2} \)  \( \text{Hg2}+ \)
14  \( \text{Re1} \)  \( \text{Hxh1}+ \)
15  \( \text{Rf2} \)

And now the simplest was 15 ... \( \text{Hf8} \). Black won.

Golovko-Karasev
USSR 1965

![Chess Diagram]

1  \( \text{Wxa7} \)

Grabbing this distant pawn is playable, but Black now develops a certain initiative, which demands some careful play on White's part.

1  ...  \( \text{Wb4} \)
2  \( \text{Qf3} \)  \( \text{Cc8} \)
3  \( \text{d6} \)

It was better to return the queen to participate in the defence, by 3 \( \text{We3} \).

3  ...  \( \text{Qa4}! \)
4  \( \text{Wxb7}? \)

But this is really careless. It was essential to play 4 \( \text{d7} \) \( \text{Dd8} \) 5 \( \text{Wd4} \), e.g. 5 ... \( \text{Wa5} \) 6 \( \text{Wd5}! \) \( \text{Vb6} \) 7 \( \text{Wd4} \).

4  ...  \( \text{Qc2}+! \)
5  \( \text{Ra1} \)

5 \( \text{cl}? \) \( \text{f5}+. \)

5  ...  \( \text{Qxd1} \)
6  \( \text{Wxe7}+ \)

What else? 6 \( \text{Wxc8}? \) \( \text{Qxf3} \) 7 \( \text{We6} \) \( \text{Wd2}! \) 8 \( \text{Wxe7}+ \) \( \text{h6} \) is hopeless.

6  ...  \( \text{h6} \)
7  \( \text{We3}+ \)  \( \text{g5} \)
8  \( \text{Qxd1} \)  \( \text{We1}! \)

White resigns.

9 \( \text{Wh3}+ \) \( \text{g7} \) 10 \( \text{Wd7}+ \) \( \text{g6} \) and the checks are over.

II. Weakness of the eighth rank

(diagram 12)

There are several advantages for Black in this position: a queenside pawn majority, strong outposts for his heavy pieces, a weak and blockaded white d-pawn. But his single disadvantage – no 'luft' for his king – brings his demise.

1  \( \text{Cc2}! \)  \( \text{Wxd4} \)
White is in dire straits, not because he is pinned along the d1-h5 diagonal, but because it is difficult to break this pin. He would need some tempi (\(\text{Da}3-b1-d2\), or \(c3\), \(\text{Ad}1\), \(d4\), \(\text{We}3\)) to ease his situation. Meanwhile Black can prepare his onslaught.

1 ... \(\text{Hg8}!!\)

With the magnificent idea of 2 ... \(\text{Dh4}+!\) 3 \(\text{gxh4}\) \(g5!\). White is defenceless.

2 \(c3\)

2 \(\text{Db1}\) \(\text{Dh4}+!\) 3 \(\text{gxh4}\) \(g5\) 4 \(\text{Dd2}\) will fail to 4 ... \(g4!\).

2 ... \(\text{Dh4}+!\)
3 \(\text{gxh4}\) \(g5\)
4 \(\text{Hg1}\) \(\text{Dxf3}+\)
5 \(\text{Hxf3}\) \(\text{gxh4}+\)

White resigns

III. Entering a lasting pin

Gomes-Neto
Rio de Janeiro 1942

IV. Capturing “poisoned” pawns

(diagram 14)

Black is a pawn up and 1 ... \(\text{De}7\) would put him in an advantageous position. It is remarkable that of all people, it was the solid and careful future world champion Botvinnik who chose the insane 1 ... \(\text{Dxe3}\) 2 \(\text{Dxe3}\) \(\text{Hxc3}??\) after which White developed an irresistible attack along the open b- and c-files.
The rest was:

3 $\text{Bf}c1$ $\text{Ba}5$
4 $\text{Bc}2!$ $\text{c}6$

He must weaken his pawn formation, for if 4 ... $\text{Bd}7$ then 5 $\text{Bd}2$ $\text{Ba}3$ 6 $\text{Bb}3$ followed by 7 $\text{Bb}1$.

5 $\text{Bd}2$ $\text{Bc}7$
6 $\text{Ba}4$

With the double threat of 7 $\text{Bxa}6$ and 7 $\text{Bxa}5$.

6 ... $\text{Bd}7$
7 $\text{Bxa}6$ Resigns

Another example of helping the opponent with his attack is the following diagram.

1 $\text{Bxc}5$ is forced. The continuation chosen by 15-year-old Kasparov is suicidal:

1 $\text{Bxc}5$ $\text{Bd}7$
2 $\text{Bh}3+$ $\text{f}5$
3 $\text{Bxb}7$ $\text{Bc}2+$
4 $\text{Ba}1$ $\text{Bd}6$

Now that the black rooks are united, ready to occupy the a- and b-files, White does not stand a chance.

5 $\text{Bd}5$
5 $\text{Bc}3$ $\text{Bb}8$ 6 $\text{Bd}5$ $\text{Bc}3$.!

5 ... $\text{Ba}8$
6 $\text{Ba}5$
6 $\text{Bxd}4?$ $\text{Bxa}2+$.

6 ... $\text{Ba}4$
7 $\text{b}4$

Forced.

7 ... $\text{Bxa}5$!
8 $\text{Bxa}5$ $\text{Bb}3+$.
A piece down, Black naturally avoids exchanges, but now White develops a crushing attack.

7  $\text{hxh7!} \quad \text{exd4+}
8  $\text{e3!!} \quad \text{dxe3}
9  $\text{hxh7+} \quad $\text{h8}
10 $\text{wh1} \quad \text{g6}
11 $\text{hxg6+} \quad $\text{g7}
12 $\text{wh6+} \quad $\text{f6}
13 $\text{f5+!!} \quad \text{Resigns}

The preceding diagrams contained prominent danger signals. They had features that are widely known to imply risk, and chess manuals are crammed with warnings about the dangers involved.

Other situations, like performing ‘sins’ against the rules of development, letting an enemy rook occupy the seventh rank, or rushing one’s moves during the adversary’s time trouble, are also well-known to be dangerous.

1 ... $\text{wh5?}$

1 ... $\text{b4}$ was appropriate. Black’s choice puts the queen in a vulnerable position.

2  $\text{h3} \quad \text{0-0}$
3  $\text{e2}!!$

A stunning move which gains material.

3  ... \text{e5}
4  $\text{g4} \quad \text{exg4}$
5  $\text{hxg4} \quad \text{hxg4}$
6  $\text{wg1} \quad \text{we6}$
1 \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash b}5}

Simple and better was 1 \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash e}2}. White intends to prevent the freeing move ... c5, but he forgets to pay attention to his own position.

1 \ldots \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash c}6}

2 \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash a}4}?

It was not too late to play 2 \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash e}2}.

2 \ldots \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash a}6}!

3 \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash e}4}

After 3 \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash x}c6? \textbf{\textbackslash f}6 4 a4 b5} White will lose material, but now his king is stuck in the centre with no compensation at all.

3 \ldots \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash f}6}

4 \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash d}2} \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash c}7}

5 f3? \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash d}5!!}

White resigns

Since preventing mate (6 \ldots \textit{\textbf{\textbackslash h}4+}) will cost him the queen.

Alas, not all dangers appear in such a clear-cut form. There are dangerous situations that are not so evident, which require a certain degree of wisdom (chess or otherwise) to spot and prevent before they materialise. These concealed dangers will be discussed in the following chapters.
Common Failures in the Sensing of Danger

The next three chapters are an attempt to outline various types of dangerous situation which are liable to catch out unsuspecting souls.

The situations are organised according to their characteristics:

Chapter 3 is about dangers that stem from the opponent, be it his identity (e.g. a woman player), his manners/behaviour, or his play (weak or incomprehensible).

Chapter 4 deals with dangers that are created by certain developments on the chessboard. It deals with such questions as what happens to a player who finds himself in a dominating position, handling an ending with very little material, making a series of mass exchanges, and more.

Chapter 5 covers chess dangers deriving from another source, the human thought-process, with its limitations: confusing right and wrong, the critical with the not so important; tending to think for our side, while neglecting the other side's motives and goals; relaxing our concentration after achieving a success, etc.

By looking through the examples in these chapters the reader will develop a pretty good feeling for the types of situation in which the probability of a particular danger increases.
3 Common Failures in the Sensing of Danger: Opponent-Related Factors

I. When the opponent plays badly in the opening

Suppose you play against someone who makes some silly moves, right from the start. He sheds material, or plays not in accordance with development rules, or he makes apparently self-destructive moves . . . Most chess players, when faced with such an enemy, tend to relax and expect an early success. It is a human trait to count on consistency in behaviour; if our adversary played weakly until now, so we reason, he is likely to demonstrate the same low quality in the following phases of the game as well.

This line of thought is devoid of empirical justification. Our opponent may possess poor openings knowledge, but still be a strong middlegame player. Or he may have deliberately made early provocations to lead us to think that our victory is assured.

Whatever our impression about our rival’s level of play, we must stay on guard!

The above position arose after the moves 1 e4 e5 2 d4 f3 d6 3 dxe5 c6? 4 dxc6 dxc6 5 e5 dxe4.

Black has given up a pawn for nothing, or so it seems. White can choose between a host of natural moves: 6 d4, 6 d3, 6 c3, 6 c4, 6 f3, 6 c3, among others.

They all look safe and sound; but the impression is misleading. 6 c4 is unnecessarily complicated, although probably playable: 6 ... dxe2? 7 f3, or 6 ... d4 7 e2.
6 d4 c5 is also not the best. However, certainly not 6 d3?? (which occurred in the game) 6 ... \( \text{c5} \) after which White resigned(!) since both 7 dxe4 \( \text{xf2}+ \) and 7 \( \text{xe3} \) \( \text{xe3} \) 8 fxe3 \( \text{Wh4}+ \) lead to defeat.

In the next example, White implemented a most peculiar opening scheme:

1 \( \text{c3} \)  
2 \( \text{b1}? \)

If his first move could be regarded as “original”, his second move is plain stupid. Black can now claim that he has already attained equality, but he must understand that if the enemy begins to play sensibly, then despite his bizarre opening White will not be worse.

2 ... \( \text{f6} \)  
3 \( \text{g3} \)  
4 \( \text{g2} \)  
5 \( \text{e4} \)

(diagram 19)

What would you do now? 5 ... d4, 5 ... \( \text{e6} \), 5 ... \( \text{g4} \), or 5 ... dxe4 all appear to be satisfactory for Black.

**Question 3:** Try to spot a concealed danger.

The next position arose after the following moves:

1 \( \text{e4} \)  
2 \( \text{f3} \)  
3 \( \text{d3} \)  
4 \( \text{g3} \)  
5 \( \text{d4} \)

Rather unusual, but perfectly logical. The holes in Black’s dark squares justify the loss of time involved in making the advance d2-d4 in two moves.

5 ... \( \text{cxd4} \)  
6 \( \text{xd4} \)  
7 \( \text{b5} \)

He should have prevented White’s next move with 6 ... a6.

An unpleasant situation for Black. Of course 7 ... d5 will be met by 8 exd5 exd5 9 \( \text{xd5} \).
Black's last two moves seem to show a total disregard for his adversary’s plans. Now the White player probably thought something like this: "Obviously 8 Qd6+ leads to my advantage, but this guy plays so badly... isn't it time to finish him off?"

8 Qd6(??)

And wins?

8 ... Qxe4!!

Yes, but the winner is Black! After 9 Qc7+ Qxc7 10 Qxe7 Qe5! or 9 Qf4 d5! 10 f3 e5 White is a pawn down with a ruined position.

The moves immediately prior to the next diagram have left White an exchange up.

In his notes to the game Kasparov refrains from calling this a "sacrifice", so it is possible that he simply miscalculated. Probably that is also what his opponent thought.

1 Qd2

"White should probably have considered 1 d5," writes Kasparov, "but why return the exchange when there is no immediately apparent danger?"

1 ... f5
2 Re1?! Qc8!
3 Qc3?

3 e4 fxe4 4 Qxe4 Qg5 5 Qe3! was equal, according to Kasparov.

3 ... Qf6
4 a3?

No one can afford to make
successive errors, playing against such a formidable enemy. Smyslov did not sense the seriousness of his position, otherwise he would have played 4 \( \text{Wd}3 \) intending 5 e4!.

\[
\begin{align*}
4 & \quad \text{...} & \text{W}e8! \\
5 & \quad \text{dxc5} & \text{W}h5 \\
6 & \quad \text{h}4
\end{align*}
\]

Black threatened 6 ... \( \text{W}xh2+ \). But now White’s position is beyond salvation.

\[
\begin{align*}
6 & \quad \text{...} & \text{g}4 \\
7 & \quad \text{g}2 & \text{bxc5} \\
8 & \quad \text{h}1 & \text{g}6 \\
9 & \quad \text{g}1 & \text{xh}4 \\
10 & \quad \text{W}a5 & \text{h}6 \\
\text{White resigns}
\end{align*}
\]

II. When the opponent plays incomprehensibly

Sometimes the guy we are fighting against makes a move that appears at first to be pointless. It does not defend anything, nor does it attack a concrete target. It seems not to be connected with any plan . . .

In short, it is as if the enemy has just moved aimlessly . . . The natural reaction is to pass the verdict “rubbish” and to go on with our intended plan.

However, degrading our rival to a level of woodpusher is not particularly clever, to say the least. Perhaps he does have a point, one that is evading us . . .

“When your opponent makes a move which looks like an obvious blunder – especially if he is a pretty strong player – it is advisable to try to find out what he has overlooked” – GM Lev Alburt.\(^\text{11}\)

Also, one should add, check twice to make sure that it is he who has overlooked something.

Annotating a losing blunder by the Swedish GM Ulf Andersson, who naïvely grabbed a pawn and was mated, GM Edmar Mednis enquired gently: “Shouldn’t he have been suspicious of Black voluntarily placing the c-pawn en prise?”\(^\text{12}\)

A more extreme case happens when our rival makes a move which seems to comply with our plans. Not only does he not try to prevent our schemes, he actually encourages them!

This is a clear reason for becoming suspicious.

(diagram 22)

White has advanced his d-pawn too far, and is now going to lose it (1 ... \( \text{Ffd}8 \), and if necessary, 2 ... g5, 3 ... \( g7 \), 4 ... \( g17 \)).

1 \( \text{g}\text{El}(!) \) \( \text{Ffd}8?? \)

Black interpreted White’s last as meaningless.
Black's last move was ... ²c6-e5. Now a sensible answer was to castle, since he has no time to keep his bishop: 1 ²e2? d3 or 1 ²e4? ²c4!. White, however, took Black's move as an oversight, and rushed to carry out the standard

1 ²xh7+? ²xh7
2 ²h5+ ²g8
3 ²xe5

It was only after

3 ...

²e8!

that he realised the catastrophe he brought upon himself. For the price of a mere pawn Black obtained a vehement attack.

4 ²g3 ²c4+
5 ²d1 ²c8
6 b3 ²e2+
7 ²c1 d3
8 c3 ²h5
9 ²a2 ²e2
10 ²b1

And now 10 ... ²b6 11 ²h3 ²xc3! 12 ²xc3 ²xb3+ 13 ²b2 ²c2+ 14 ²a1 d2 would have been the clearest. Black won.

(diagram 24)

1 ²c4 ²xe4?

Ex-world champion Karpov tortured his opponent for many moves, waiting for him to make a mistake; finally Black succumbed!

He should have asked himself:
lightheartedly. Many players are guilty (although they probably would not admit it) of believing that their "weakie" rival will crack any minute, so they just have to "make some moves": the enemy's resignation being a matter of time.

In the good old days, the "willing victims" were easily identified. They included women, youngsters, oldies, players from underdeveloped countries, and chess computers.

Times have changed a little, though. The Polgar sisters, Indian star Anand, supercomputer "Deep Thought" – all these ought to have made the former views obsolete. However, it is not easy to abandon old habits, and many players have experienced major difficulties adapting to the new realities.

Playing against supposedly weak opposition, one tends to relax. This could precisely be the root of one's downfall. Especially when the pussycat turns out to be a tiger . . .

(diagram 25)

In the position below, playing against 12-year-old Judit Polgar, GM Pal Benko, former candidate for the world championship, blundered badly with
1 ...  
\( \Box b4?? \)

The girl answered

2 \( \Box x b 6! \)

winning a pawn with the better position, since 2 ... \( \mathcal{W} x c 4? \) is met by 3 \( \Box a 5 \).

Says Benko: “I don’t believe I would have made such a mistake against an adult male opponent.”

One year later, the Israeli GM Alon Greenfeld lost a superior position to Judit, falling victim to a beautiful trick (see diagram 26).

Commenting on this game, Greenfeld said that he did not experience special problems, “though it is possible that I was subconsciously influenced.”

1 \( \Box d 4 \) \( \mathcal{W} c 7! \)

2 h4?

Completely missing the threat contained in Black’s last move.

2 ...  
\( \mathcal{E} d 2!! \)

Astonishingly, White has no way to prevent material loss.

3 \( \mathcal{E} e 1 \)

Or 3 \( \mathcal{E} x d 2 \mathcal{W} c 1+ 4 \mathcal{E} h 2 \mathcal{W} x d 2 \) and the d4 knight is doomed.

3 ...  
\( \mathcal{E} x d 4 \)

4 \( \mathcal{W} f 7 \)  
\( \mathcal{E} x h 4 \)

5 g3  
\( \mathcal{E} e 4 \)

And Black won.

A similar tendency, to underestimate the enemy, may occur when confronting a young male player.

“...I was not quite ready to believe he was as good as some
people said he was... he was still an unproven 15-year-old boy", is a typical remark. This particular quote is Benko's, the "unproven boy" being a certain Bobby Fischer.15

One tends to underrate not only humans, but also machines.

"Gideon"-Smirin
Israel 1991

1  ¿g4?!

The turning point of the game. Black expected his opponent to play weakly, and here it seems that White has obliged. This caused the grandmaster to relax...

1  ¿b7?
2  e5!

With disastrous consequences for Black, who had to surrender a central pawn.

White won, despite tough resistance from his distinguished opponent.
1. When the situation looks familiar

The opening phase in a battle between experienced chess professionals is usually played at a very fast rate. This is because the position on the board is well-known to the protagonists and play does not involve real thinking, since that part was done at home, before the game started.

Some middlegame schemes are also handled in a superficial manner, being part of a player’s common knowledge, and hence not requiring special treatment.

Familiarity breeds a sense of safety, whilst unfamiliarity arouses a feeling of alertness.

However, it so happens that from time to time one encounters a position that one wrongly assumes to belong to the basket of the ‘regular’, ‘well-known’, or ‘routine’, while this, in fact, is not so.

Nothing special seems to be happening in the following diagram. We are just out of the opening stage, and the position resembles many others resulting from queen’s pawn openings.

Kozma-Korchnoi
Luhacovice 1969

1 \textit{e}ad1?

Still, one careless move is enough for a sleepy position to explode.

The text enables Black to carry out a winning combination based on the lack of flight squares for White’s queen and bishop.

1 \ldots \textit{c}4!
2 \textit{bxc4} \textit{dxc4}
3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}xc4}

The alternative was 3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xc4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}c8} 4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}b3} (or 4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}d3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}e4}) 4 ... \textit{b5} 5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}d3} (5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}c1} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xc4} 6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xc4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}d5}) 5 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}d5}! and the queen is embarrassed.

3 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}c8}
4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}b3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}d5}

And in view of the inevitable 5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}a4} \textit{b5} 6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}xa6} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}a8}! 7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}xb5} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}a5} White resigned. A beautiful domination of the queen.

Marangunić-Novak
29 Arberô (Student Ol.) 1966 B

Black should feel quite comfortable in this very standard type of position. His next move, however, is a serious mistake:

1 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}ac8}?

The shrewd combination that follows is not easy to spot; but on general considerations, he should have made some air for his king with 1 ... \textit{h6}.

2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}d4}! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xg2}

1 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xd4}? 2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}xd4} winning a pawn due to the impossibility of 2 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xg2}? 3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}d8+}.

3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}b5}!!

The sting. Black cannot play 3 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}d5} 4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xc7} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}xc7} 5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}xd5}!.

3 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}e7}

Another clever point of White's combination is revealed in the variation 3 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}h3} 4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xc7} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}xc7} 5 \textit{g4}! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xg4} 6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}g3} with a decisive double attack.

4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xg2} \textit{g6}
5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}c1}!

White is in total control.

5 ... \textit{e5}
6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}dc2} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}e6}
7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xa7} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xa7}
8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}xc8}+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}xc8}
9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}xc8}+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{A}}g7}
10 \textit{a4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}d6}
11 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}e8} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}d5}
12 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}f3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}d6}
13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}e7}! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}xe7}
14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}xd5} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{W}}c7}
15 \textit{b4}

And \textbf{Black resigned} after a few moves.
II. The sound of silence

Most chess players react swiftly to the signal of noise. When our king is surrounded by a host of hostile forces, we interpret this as an alarm signal. When the tactical complications are numerous, or the time factor is critical (as in a race between opposite passed pawns), the average chessplayer perceives this as a loud alarm: "Keep looking" or "Beware".

But what if the situation on the board fills us with a sensation of peace and quiet? Here we can draw valuable conclusions by way of analogy with the field of parenthood.

For a mother whose small children are too quiet, the sound of silence is a strong signal for alarm. The father, hearing no child-nagging for a complete hour, senses that something could be very wrong.

No news is bad news in this particular case. Sometimes, this is true in chess too.

(diagram 30)

What could go wrong for Black in a position like this? 1 ... $\text{Ne}4$ looks simple and good. But so does Black’s actual choice!

Black deliberately went in for the position in diagram 31, inviting White to win a pawn by 1 $\text{Nx}e5$ $\text{Nx}e5$ 2 $\text{Wxa}5$. 
evidently did not expect, and he quickly replied with 1 ... $d4?.

If Najdorf had taken the trouble to ponder a moment, he would have noticed that White had slight chances to win. But being convinced that any move would result in a draw, he moved. 1 ... $c3 would really draw.”

2 $xb5 $c3
2 ... $b6 3 $a6.
3 $a8+ $g7
4 $e8! $xb4
5 $a7

So, White had won a pawn, and with his famous skill of converting small advantages into victory, Petrosian won the game in another fifty moves. The lesson of this is that it almost never pays to act hastily, and that even a barren position can contain poison.

III. The dark side of being in a dominating position

In certain positions one tends to lose one's sense of danger because the enemy is, apparently, without good options.

The next diagram is a good illustration of this phenomenon. 1 $g2, defending against the mate, was reasonable, although Black of course can draw by 1 ... $a2+.

In this boring position Black offered a draw. Petrosian writes:

“I declined, which my opponent
Larsen made what he thought to be a winning attempt:

1. g4  \( \text{h1+} \)
2. \( \text{g3} \)  \( \text{g1+} \)
3. \( \text{f4?} \)  \( \text{h2+} \)
4. \( \text{g5?} \)  \( \text{g3!} \)

Karpov, who was one of the competitors in this event, relates:

"(During analysis) we came across an amusing variation, in which Larsen could even lose, if he should carry on regardless ... Imagine our astonishment when ... (we) called in at the tournament hall ... we saw Larsen’s king had climbed voluntarily into the mating net." \(^{18}\)

5. \( \text{e3} \)

The position is worthy of careful study. White is tied up because he has to guard against ... \( \text{e5} \) mate.

It transpires that White is losing \( f6 \) as well: 9. \( \text{d4? h5+} \) or 9. \( \text{d6? g2+} \) are disastrous.

9. \( \text{g3} \)  \( \text{h5+} \)
10. \( \text{f4} \)  \( \text{f5+} \)
11. \( \text{e3} \)  \( \text{xf6} \)

And Black won.

In this dominating position White played the incomprehensible 1. \( \text{exh6?} \)

Petrosian later explained\(^{19}\) that he overlooked Black’s answer, “possibly because it was in contrast to Black’s hopeless position”. 1 \( \text{f3} \) was correct, keeping the advantage.

1. ...  \( \text{f3!} \)
2 \( g5 \)

2 \( \text{x} f3 \) \( g7+! \).

2 \( ... \) \( e8! \)

White resigns

Kevitz-Capablanca
New York 1931

A pawn up, it is difficult to believe that White faces any danger of losing, but indifferent play hands Black the initiative:

1 \( \text{d}d1 \) \( g6 \)
2 \( \text{h}h2 \) \( a5! \)
3 \( \text{e}e2 \) \( b5 \)
4 \( f4 \) \( a4 \)
5 \( bxa4 \) \( bxa4 \)
6 \( \text{d}d2 \) \( a3! \)
7 \( g4? \) \( g5! \)
8 \( \text{f}f2 \)

8 \( f5 \) \( \text{e}5+9 \) \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{c}1+10 \) \( \text{d}d1 \)
\( \text{b}211 \) \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{x}d112 \) \( \text{x}d1 \) \( \text{xa}2 \)

is losing.

8 \( ... \) \( \text{x}f2 \)
9 \( \text{x}f2 \) \( gxf4 \)

10 \( \text{f}f3 \) \( a8 \)
11 \( \text{f}f2 \) \( f3! \)
12 \( \text{f}f1 \)

Or 12 \( \text{x}f3 \) \( \text{b}b8 \), since White does not have the defence \( \text{f}3 \) any more.

12 \( ... \) \( \text{b}b8 \)
13 \( \text{x}f3 \) \( \text{b}2+ \)
14 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{x}a2 \)
15 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{a}1 \)

White resigns

Mikhailov-Beresovsky-Klovan
Riga 1974

The diagram describes a variation on what happened in the actual battle. Black appears to be
dominating, but this impression is misleading. In fact, placing his majesty at g4 entangles Black in great trouble.

1 f5! \( \text{\textit{xf5}} \)

Forced.

2 e6!!

A Greek gift. Capturing the pawn takes a square from the king, allowing 3 \( \text{\textit{xf4}} \) mate.

2 ... \( \text{\textit{wd8}} \)
3 exf7 \( \text{\textit{xf6}} \)
4 \( \text{\textit{we8}} \) \( \text{\textit{wd2+}} \)
5 \( \text{\textit{dh3}} \)

And White wins.

---

**Larsen-Spassky**
**Linares 1981**

The white king is in check. Since 1 \( \text{\textit{g4??}} \) h5 is helpmate, and 1 \( \text{\textit{f3}} \), self-pinning, is just silly, there remained two logical possibilities: 1 \( \text{\textit{wf3}} \) and 1 \( \text{\textit{g2}} \).

---

**Question 5:** What is your choice? Is there something wrong with these moves?

**Belyavsky-Adams**
**Haifa 1989**

Here is one of the least dangerous situations one can find oneself in: a rook ending a pawn up!

1 ... g5
2 \( \text{\textit{g2}} \) \( \text{\textit{g7}} \)
3 \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{f6}} \)
4 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) b5
5 \( \text{\textit{c1}} \) \( \text{\textit{b8}} \)
6 \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) \( \text{\textit{g6}} \)
7 h4 h6

“(Naturally) White should not lose . . . but should he win?! The end of the game is . . . tragicomic”

– Sergei Makarichev.
12 \textit{\texttt{g3}}+ \textit{\texttt{h5}}
13 \textit{\texttt{h3}}+ \textit{\texttt{g4}}
14 \textit{\texttt{fxh6}} \textit{\texttt{h4+}}
15 \textit{\texttt{e5}} \textit{\texttt{Resigns}}

Since mate follows. Quite incredible, when you consider the diagram position, don’t you think?

\textbf{IV. When there are (almost) no pieces left}

To sense danger, one has first to recognise an energy source that can create threats. The fewer forces our rival possesses, the less alert one tends to be to the possibility that some danger is lurking beneath the surface. But as long as our adversary is left with something, even a minimal and unimpressive army, a constant risk remains. After all, even a lone king can cause trouble, by way of stalemate.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Danger in Chess}
\end{center}

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

The position is a draw, because even if White loses his pawns, Black is left with a "wrong" bishop, opposite to the colour of the queening square h1.

\textbf{Question 6:} Well, if it is so simple, go ahead, make a draw! But be careful . . .

In diagram 41 White will have to give up his rook for the advanced black pawn, and the resulting ending will be a draw. However, it is
not that easy. The young star of the black pieces was of the opinion that all roads lead to Rome; and chose

1 ... $g2$?
2 $xf4$ $h1$=$w$
3 $xh1$ $xh1$

– only to be embarrassed after

4 $g3$!

Here Black surrendered, observing his hopeless situation after 4 ... $g1$ 5 $f4$ $f1$ 6 $f3$ $e1$ 7 $f5$ $d2$ 8 $e4$ $c3$ 9 $d5$ $b4$ 10 $f6$.

Had he been alert to possible danger, he would surely have found another path, which does draw: 1 ... $g3$! 2 $h8$ $f5$+ 3 $xf5$ $xf3$ 4 $xh2$ $g3$ =.

One wonders how it is possible for Black to lose in the next diagram. True, White has a better pawn structure and Black’s pieces are tied to the defence of his pawns, but the scanty material makes the win virtually an impossible task.

Indeed, after a sensible continuation like 1 ... $b5$ 2 $g2$ $a5$ 3 $f2$ $h5$ the draw is clear. Instead, the conclusion was

1 ... $h5$?
2 $xe5$+ $xe5$
3 $f4$+ Resigns

3 ... $f5$ 4 $xe5$ $xe5$ 5 $h4$ $f6$ 6 $xh5$ etc.

Notice that $xe5+$ was not a threat in the diagram position, which means that one has to look for potential dangers, in addition to actual ones.

In diagram 43 a Black player
really has to be cooperative in order to lose!

Dr Krejčik-NN Vienna 1939

1 Ee6+ h5??

Sometimes one makes a decision by a process of elimination; 1 ... f5/f7 loses a pawn, and ... g7/h7 appears passive; so let’s try another move. The trouble is that that one’s the worst!

2 Exe5+ Resigns

(diagram 44)

Not a particularly complicated position, one might think: 1 Ec8 g2 2 g8+ h3 3 Ec8 apparently takes care of Black’s two advanced pawns and draws.

Question 7: Check carefully the above variation. Spot the flaw, and find the right path for White.

In the position in diagram 45, 1 Ec5 Ec8 (1 ... g6 2 c8=\# Ec8 3 Exc8 Exe7 4 Ec7) 2 Eb5! would put a swift end to the game, e.g. 2 ... g6 3 e8=\# Exe8 4 Eb8.

Vaganian-Vasyukov USSR Ch. 1974

Instead, White “discovered”
1 \( \text{\&}e3?? \)

which permitted a saving shot:

1 ...  \( \text{\&}d5+! \)

and the draw was inevitable (2 \( \text{\&}xd5 \text{\&}xe7+ \) with 3 ... \( \text{\&}xc7 \)).

No position is so strong that it cannot be ruined by some bad play.

1 \( \text{\&}f2 \)  \( \text{\&}d1+ \)
2 \( \text{\&}g2? \)  \( \text{\&}a1 \)
3 \( \text{\&}g3 \)  \( \text{\&}g1+ \)
4 \( \text{\&}g2 \)  \( \text{\&}a3+ \)
5 \( \text{\&}h2 \)  \( g3+!! \)

White resigns

Otherwise 4 ... \( \text{\&}g4+ \) winning a pawn and the game.

4 ...  \( \text{\&}c5! \)

Oh dear. Out of a quiet and uneventful ending Black has conjured a mating net! Since 5 \( \text{\&}e5 \) \( \text{\&}xd3 \) 6 \( \text{\&}xg5 \) \( \text{\&}d5+ \) would lose, White preferred to admit failure at once. White resigned.

V. Moves that bring a false sense of security

Some moves bring with them a feeling of assurance. Castling can
serve as a good example.
Generally beginners do not rush to castle in the early stages, and most chess manuals consider this as one major reason for their lack of success. Experienced players, on the other hand, tend, as an automatic habit, to castle as soon as possible. It is worth pointing out that sometimes the very move that intends to bring the king into safety is a grave mistake. In certain cases it is precisely the early notification of the king's address that enables the opponent to launch a strong attack.

3 \(d3\)   c4
4 \(e4\)   \(b8\)
5 \(d4\)   \(b4\)

The folly of White's first move is apparent.
6 \(xc6\)
Or 6 \(xc6\) \(bxc3\).
6 ... dxc6
7 \(xb4\) \(xb4\)
White resigns

Korotkov-Stupeni
USSR 1965

1 \(h5!\)   0-0?

This provokes a vehement onslaught. Correct was 1 ... g6 and if 2 \(e2\) (2 \(xc6\) bxc6 3 \(d4?\) e5) 2 ... f5 3 \(c3\) \(e5\).

1 ... \(a5\)
2 \(b1\)   \(b5\)

2 \(xf7+!\)   \(xf7\)
3 \(xf7\)   \(xf7\)
4 \(h5+\)   \(g8\)
4 ... g6 loses to 5 \(xh7+\) \(e8\) 6
The black set-up does not suggest that he has any malice aforethought. Surprisingly, White’s last two moves (0-0, h3) allow Black to develop a very strong initiative, even from his “innocent” structure.

1 ...  $\mathcal{D}$g6
2 $\mathcal{A}$e3  h5!
3 $\mathbb{W}$d2  $\mathcal{A}$d7
4 b4  $\mathbb{W}$c8

This attack has chances of success only because White castled prematurely.

5 $\mathcal{D}$g5?

5 h4!.

5 ...  h4

6 g4  $\mathcal{D}$xg4!
7 hxg4  h3!
8 $\mathcal{D}$xh3?

It cannot be said that White puts up strong resistance; but also after the comparatively better 8 $\mathcal{A}$f3 $\mathcal{D}$xg4 9 $\mathbb{W}$d1 $\mathcal{A}$h4! his game would not be enviable.

8 ...  $\mathcal{D}$xg4
9 $\mathcal{D}$g5  $\mathcal{D}$xg5
10 $\mathcal{D}$e2

Despair. If 10 $\mathcal{D}$xg5 $\mathcal{A}$f3! 11 $\mathbb{W}$e3 then Black can choose between the simple 11 ... $\mathcal{D}$xg2 12 $\mathcal{A}$xg2 exd4, or the fancy 11 ... $\mathcal{A}$h1+ 12 $\mathcal{A}$xh1 $\mathbb{W}$g4+ 13 $\mathcal{A}$h2 $\mathbb{W}$h5+ 14 $\mathcal{A}$g3 $\mathcal{D}$f4!

10 ...  $\mathcal{A}$f3
11 $\mathcal{D}$g3  $\mathcal{D}$h4
12 $\mathcal{D}$xg5  $\mathcal{D}$xg2
13 dxe5  $\mathbb{W}$h3

White resigns

Another move that makes us feel well protected is a checking move. “Always check, it might be mate” or “As long as I check I’m alive” are familiar aphorisms. Indeed, when a player makes a check, he rarely considers this as a dangerous move to himself.

With a two-pawn advantage White felt happy in diagram 51. He decided to insert a checking move, probably “just to see what’s happening”.
1 \( \text{Ke5+??} \) \( \text{Kf2} \)

Suddenly a mate in two is threatened (2 ... \( \text{Kh1+!} \)) and White is defenceless. **White resigned.**

A massive exchange of forces is another situation which raises self-assurance that all is well. Below are two examples by ex-world champions, who initiated (Smyslov) or did not object to (Spassky) the emptying of the board by mass exchanges, only to realise subsequently that by this very step they had ruined their position.

**Korchnoi-Spassky**

USSR Championship 1956

1 \( d4 \) \( \text{Qf6} \)
2 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( g6 \)

3 \( g3 \) \( \text{Qg7} \)
4 \( \text{Qg2} \) \( 0-0 \)
5 \( b3 \) \( d6 \)
6 \( \text{Qb2} \) \( e5 \)
7 \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{Qg4} \)
8 \( 0-0 \) \( \text{Qxe5} \)
9 \( \text{Qxe5} \) \( dxe5 \)
10 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qd7} \)
11 \( \text{Wh2} \) \( \text{Qf6} \)
12 \( \text{Wxd8} \) \( \text{Xxd8} \)
13 \( \text{Xfd1} \) \( \text{Xxd1+} \)

The exchanges have not improved Black's position; quite the contrary.

14 ... \( \text{Qf5} \)
15 \( \text{Qxb7} \) \( \text{Qb8} \)
16 \( \text{Qc6} \) \( \text{Qxc2} \)
17 \( \text{Qc1} \) \( \text{Qf5} \)
18 \( \text{Qb5} \) \( \text{Qh6} \)
19 \( \text{Qc4} \) \( \text{Qe6} \)
20 \( \text{Xa4} \) \( \text{Xd8} \)
21 \( \text{Xxe5} \) \( \text{Xd1+} \)
White initiates a series of exchanges, desiring to end the game peacefully. This policy is wrong, since with every exchange Black improves his situation.

```
9 ... dxc5
10 ♕xd8 ♚xd8
11 ♕ad1 ♖e4!
12 ♖xe4 ♖xe4
13 b3 h6
14 ♖f4 ♖b4!
15 a3 ♖a2
16 ♕xd8+ ♕xd8
17 ♕d1 ♕d1+
18 ♖xd1 ♔c3
19 ♚d2 ♚d3
```

And in view of 20 ♕f3 (20 ♕g4 f5 21 ♕f3 e5 22 ♕g3 e4, or 21 ♕h3 g5 and 22 ... g4) 20 ... e5 21 ♕g3 e4 22 ♕g4 f5 23 ♕h3 ♖e2+ 24 ♕h1 ♖xg3+ 25 hxg3 ♖c3 when the knight is lost, White resigned.

A move that captures one of the opponent's pieces (or pawns) also tends to foster our confidence in a misleading manner.

In the next example, White showed commendable restraint. In diagram 55, however, he didn't...

(diagram 54)

1 ♖xb6 is very tempting: 1 ... axb6? 2 ♖xb6+ or 1 ... ♕g1? 2 ♖xg1+ leads to a White victory.

However, White noticed that Black had prepared a nasty answer.
If 1 \( \text{x}xb6 \) then 1 ... \( \text{a}8!! \) is a winning reply: 2 \( \text{d}d1 \) (to prevent loss of the queen after 2 ... \( \text{g}1+ \)), 2 ... \( \text{f}3!! \) and White can give up.

Having spotted this, White cleverly avoided the danger and played 1 axb6! \( \text{g}1+ \) 2 \( \text{xg}1 \) \( \text{xd}3 \) 3 bxa7+ \( \text{b}7 \) 4 \( \text{g}7+ \) \( \text{c}7 \) 5 \( \text{xc}7+ \) \( \text{xc}7 \) 6 a8=\( \text{w} \) \( \text{fl}+ \) and the players agreed to split the point.

(diagram 55)

White decided on

1 \( \text{d}xg4? \)

based on the conviction that it is generally useful to capture or exchange one of the enemy’s attacking pieces. While this is usually true, in the present situation it leads to a loss by force.

1 ...
2 \( \text{f}3 \)
3 \( \text{h}2 \)

3 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{xd}1+ \) 4 \( \text{xd}1 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 5 exf3 \( \text{g}3 \).

3 ...
4 \( \text{g}1 \)
5 \( \text{f}2! \)
White resigns

5 \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{h}5+ \) 6 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 7 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{e}4+ \) 8 \( \text{xf}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) mate.
5 Common Failures in the Sensing of Danger: Thought-Process-Related Factors

I. Real vs. imaginary dangers

In the process of looking for possible dangers, we are sometimes prone to the mistake of false identification; that is, envisaging a danger which does not exist, or worse still, missing the real threat, the actual source of trouble.

Hence the search for dangers should not stop at the point where one has (ostensibly) been found. It is essential to verify whether this is indeed the crucial danger, or if there are other, more severe threats that should be handled as top priority.

(diagram 56)

Black has taken measures to stop the advanced white g-pawn.

Surprisingly, it is the modest a-pawn which carries the day:

1... $\text{Qxf8}$? 2 g8=$\text{#}$.

1 $\text{Qxf8!}$

2 gxf8=$\text{#}$

3 a4
c5

4 a5
cxd4

5 cxd4

6 $\text{Qd3!}$

Resigns

In the position in diagram 57, the advanced white passed pawn could be expected to play a
crucial role in deciding the outcome of the game. Since Black has blockaded it, he appears to be safe. But again, the danger springs from another source.

57 Gulko-I.Gurevich
Philadelphia 1991

1 \texttt{We8+} \texttt{h7}
2 \texttt{d2!} \texttt{c4}
3 \texttt{g5!!}

The continuation 3 \texttt{g5+ g7} 4 \texttt{xf7 c2 5 h6+ h7 6 c1 xd7 7 xd7 xc1+ 8 xc1 xd7} would not be convincing.

3 \ldots \texttt{xd7}
4 \texttt{e1!!}

So the d-pawn has gone, but suddenly Black is tied up, the pin along the d-file being very annoying.

4 \ldots \texttt{a4}
4 \ldots \texttt{g7} 5 \texttt{xf6+ xf6 6 xd7! or 4 ... xg5 5 xg5+ g7 6 e7.}

5 \texttt{xfs6 e8}

Black finds an ingenious defence, but he cannot hold on for long.

6 \texttt{g5+ h6}
7 \texttt{xf7+ h7}
8 \texttt{g5+ h6}
9 \texttt{f7+ h7}
10 \texttt{d2 xfs6}
11 \texttt{h6+ g8}
12 \texttt{xg6+ f8}
13 \texttt{f1 c6}
14 \texttt{g5 e7}
15 \texttt{d1 g7}
16 \texttt{f5}

16 \texttt{d8+ e7 17 e8+ was simpler.}

16 \ldots \texttt{e7}
17 \texttt{h4 g7}
18 \texttt{h5} Resigns

58 Nezhmetdinov-A.Zaitsev
USSR 1964
Black's position appears to be satisfactory. "Perhaps I should avoid any trouble in connection with 1 b4 followed by 2 a4," mused Black, and he played

1 ... a6

It transpires that his fears were groundless. After 1 ... 0-0 2 b4 a6 3 b5 he is fine. Now, however, having delayed castling and abandoned control of the a-file, he really is in trouble!

2 a4 a6
3 axb5 axb5
4 a5
5 a6
6 a7

Black's discomfort begins to show. 3 ... 0-0 4 a4 a6 5 b5 c6 6 b3 is clearly better for White.

A lovely combination, leading to a ferocious attack on the black monarch:

6 ... cxd4
7 a5
8 a6
9 a7

9 ... c5? 10 cxd8 a6 11 a3.

10 b3!
11 d7
12 e6

Everything is forced.

13 c8+!
14 d1+ e7
15 c8 e8
16 e2+ Resigns

Lasker-Steinitz
59 World Championship 1894 W

Black is a piece ahead, and since his enemy's pride and joy, the advanced h-pawn, is firmly blockaded, he thought that he would soon collect the full point.

1 h6! e7?

Black could have attained a draw by 1 ... e7 2 f8 (2 f8 e6) 2 ... f8 3 e6 g6 4 g8 e3. GM Ludek Pachman writes:

"Steinitz ... was still dreaming about winning ... He saw that 2 f8 e7 was not possible for White but he failed to see the main danger [author's italics] - his exposed king." 22

2 h2! d7
2 ... \textit{Be}6 3 \textit{Wf}2+ \textit{Cc}6 4 \textit{Af}8. Or 2 ... \textit{Wd}8 3 \textit{Wg}1+ \textit{C}b5 4 a4+! \textit{Wxa}4 5 \textit{Wc}5! \textit{Be}1+ 6 \textit{Ca}2 \textit{Wxf}6 7 b3+.

3 \textit{Wg}1+ \textit{d}4
4 \textit{Wg}5+ \textit{Wd}5
5 \textit{Hf}5. \textit{Wxf}5
6 \textit{Wxf}5+ \textit{C}d6
7 \textit{Wf}6+ \textit{Resigns}

Dr. Ehrlich-Shamai
60 Israeli Ch. (semi-final) 1984 W

1 a5 \textit{Cd}1?!

Black decides to ignore White's play on the queenside, assuming that his threats against the white king will be stronger. In retrospect, he should have played 1 ... bxa5 2 b6 \textit{Cd}5.

2 \textit{Wg}2

2 a6? \textit{Cf}2+ 3 \textit{Wxf}2 \textit{Wxf}2 4 a7 \textit{W}e3+! wins.

2 ... \textit{Cf}2+

3 \textit{Wh}4 \textit{We}1

The crux of Black's plan. But he was soon to be disillusioned.

4 a6!! \textit{Ce}4+
5 \textit{Ch}5 \textit{f}5
6 \textit{Gh}6 \textit{Cc}1
7 \textit{Gh}7! \textit{Cc}7+
8 \textit{Gh}8

Black can somehow handle the a-pawn, but not the king! What he imagined to be a weak piece in his adversary's camp has been transformed into a tower of strength.

8 ... \textit{Gg}5
9 \textit{Wa}8+ \textit{Ce}7
10 \textit{Fxg}5 \textit{hxg}5
11 \textit{Gg}8

11 a7 was good enough.

11 ... \textit{Cd}7
12 \textit{Gf}7! \textit{Cc}8
13 \textit{Wxc}8+ \textit{Cxc}8
14 \textit{Wxe}6

The king alone has annihilated Black.

14 ... \textit{f}4
15 \textit{Cd}6 \textit{f}3
16 e6 \textit{Resigns}

In diagram 61 White saw a danger in the variation 1 f7 \textit{We}5+!, when 2 \textit{Wxe}5 or 2 \textit{Wf}5+ will be defeated by 2 ... g6 mate.

Consequently, he chose
White has identified the black e- and g-pawns as dangerous. Since in the diagram position they are safely blockaded, he allowed himself the move

1 a5

Question 8: Show the defect in White’s concept.

II. Paying insufficient attention to the other side’s plans

The importance of objectivity in a chessplayer’s approach is stressed in many instruction manuals. It is imperative, so we are told, to assess the position as it is, without letting our desires and emotions interfere. We must neither become over-optimistic nor downright pessimistic.

Well, we certainly must try to do that. However, being only human, we do have some biases, and it is better to recognise them and try to improve, rather than pretend to be saints.

One of the most common biases is the tendency to concentrate on our own possibilities while underestimating the opponent’s counterplay. According to Mark Dvoretsky, this trait is already shaped during childhood.23

Even the problemists and study composers, who are supposed to be free from emotional involvement
and from preference for the 'White' or 'Black' sides of their creations, have difficulties in maintaining objectivity. They too are interested parties, just like competitive players. They want White to win (or draw, or mate in four, or whatever).

A player with a good sense of danger should put himself in his adversary's shoes, looking at things from his angle, insisting on finding good moves for him as well.

Here is a good demonstration of the not uncommon error of calculating a variation without seriously considering various possibilities for the enemy.

Black concluded that he should not fear 1 \texttt{Wh}6 because of 1 ... \texttt{Wc}5+ and 2 ... \texttt{Wf}8. Notice that on the second move no White alternatives were analysed in this reasoning. Black focuses on his own moves, neglecting to delve into the mind of his rival. In the present case, Black's error is exposed at once:

1 \texttt{Wh}6 \texttt{Wc}5+
2 \texttt{Hd}4!!

Loss of a piece is unavoidable. White wins.

Anand-Timman
Tilburg 1991

One does not have to be a grandmaster to realise the superiority of the White position. The pawn structure on the kingside guarantees that a bishop ending will be won for White (1 ... \texttt{Ec}8? 2 \texttt{Exc}8+ \texttt{Exc}8 3 \texttt{Exg}6) and meanwhile White intends to create a passed pawn. Above all, what can Black do?

1 ... \texttt{g}5
2 \texttt{h}5 \texttt{Hd}8
3  f3
3  b4!  d4  4  Hc5.

3  ...  d4
4  Hc5  A d5
5  H f2  H b7
6  g4  Hb6
7  Hc2  a5
8  H g3?

White is oblivious to his enemy’s plans. He sticks blindly to his own plan, and does not sense the approaching danger.

8  ...  a4!
9  bxa4  Hc4!

Suddenly the black d-pawn reveals its power. If 10 Hxc4 bxc4 11 Hxc4* d3 12 Hc1 d2 13 Hd1 Hc5 the white king is too far away. Of course, if he had only had the faintest suspicion that such a turn of events was possible, White would have kept his king in the centre . . .

10  H e4  d3
11  Hd2  Hc5
12  H f2  H d4
13  a5  b4
14  H b7  H d7
15  a6  H d5
16  Hb2  Hc3

White resigns

Diagram 65 is a quiet position, in which the issue revolves around whether the backward c6 pawn can be held. The lack of material makes it difficult for Black to organise an aggressive action against the white king.

Csom-Davidovic
Israel 1989

1  ...  Hf6
2  H a4  H e6
3  H d1  H g5
4  H h2  H h4
5  H e2  H f6
6  H a1  g6
7  H a2  h5
8  H g1  H g7
9  H b2  H g5
10  H f1  H h4
11  H b3?

Black has made a lot of progress, while White has just waited, in the belief that he cannot be touched.

11  ...  H g4!

“Incredibly” – writes eyewitness IM Malcolm Pein – “all the spectators had seen this coming,
but it came as a big surprise to the grandmaster.”

12 e4

There was nothing to be done.

12 ... \textit{\textdagger}xf3
13 \textit{\textdagger}xf3 \textit{\textdagger}xf3
14 \textit{\textdagger}xf3 \textit{\textdagger}xe4
15 \textit{\textdagger}c3 \textit{\textdagger}b1+
16 \textit{\textdagger}e2 \textit{\textdagger}h4

And Black won.

\textbf{Tamari-Porath}
\textit{\textdagger}66 Israeli Ch. (semi-final) 1971 W

\textbf{Crushing. After 8 ... \textit{\textdagger}h8! 9 \textit{\textdagger}xf8+! \textit{\textdagger}d7 10 \textit{\textdagger}xd8+ \textit{\textdagger}xd8 11 \textit{\textdagger}d5+ it is all over. In the game Black allowed a shortcut:}

8 ... \textit{\textdagger}xg5?
9 \textit{\textdagger}f7 \textit{\textdagger}mate

Black’s whole set-up is directed towards creating a strong, advanced d-pawn. His previous moves, including ... c6-c5 and ... \textit{\textdagger}a8-d8, lend support to this assumption.

1 \textit{\textdagger}d2 d4?

Consistent, but wrong. Had he been more alert, trying to penetrate into his opponent’s mind, he would have preferred the less ambitious 1 ... \textit{\textdagger}xd2.

2 \textit{\textdagger}xe4 fxe4
3 f5!!

Completely changing the picture. Black is now subjected to a violent attack.

3 ... \textit{\textdagger}xf5
4 \textit{\textdagger}b3+ \textit{\textdagger}e8
4 ... \textit{\textdagger}e6? 5 \textit{\textdagger}f1+ \textit{\textdagger}e7 6 \textit{\textdagger}g5+.

5 \textit{\textdagger}f1 \textit{\textdagger}d7
5 ... \textit{\textdagger}g6 6 \textit{\textdagger}g3.

6 \textit{\textdagger}xh7! \textit{\textdagger}xh7
7 \textit{\textdagger}g8 \textit{\textdagger}e7
8 \textit{\textdagger}g5!

\textbf{Rudserfer-Dvoretsky}
\textit{\textdagger}67 Odessa 1972 B
Black is completely lost, owing to the powerful white e-pawn. Observing the futility of 1 ... \( \text{c7} \)
2 \( \text{xch8+ xch8} \) 3 e7, Black came up with one last trick before capitulating:

1 ... \( \text{b7!} \)
2 \( \text{xch8??} \)

Again, such a mistake stems from forgetting to ask oneself a simple question: "What is the enemy up to?".

2 ... \( \text{g2+!} \)

It was only now that White discovered that he cannot escape from the checks, since his king must not set foot on the e-file – e.g. 3 \( \text{e1? xg6!} \) 4 e7? \( \text{e6+} \). Hence, a draw was agreed.

A healthy pawn up, White underestimates his adversary’s chances:

1 \( \text{h5?} \)

1 \( \text{c5} \) was correct. White is too preoccupied with his own plan.

1 ... \( \text{c6!} \)
2 \( \text{xh7+} \)
3 \( \text{c5+} \)

3 \( \text{h8+ e7} \) 4 \( \text{g5+ d7} \) 5 \( \text{d4+ c8} \) 6 \( \text{d8+ c7!} \) wins.

3 ... \( \text{xc5} \)
4 \( \text{g1} \)

4 \( \text{h8+ e7} \) 5 \( \text{e4+ d6!} \) provides a nice echo of the previous note.

4 ... \( \text{e1} \)
5 \( \text{xh8+} \)
6 \( \text{d4} \)
7 \( \text{h3+} \)

And White resigned because he is mated after 7 \( \text{h2 h1+!} \) 8 \( \text{xh1 c6+} \).
This position is a plain draw. However, some moves ago White had made a crude error, and now he is chasing the win that is no longer there!

1 b5  
2 Bb4  
3 g3?

Perhaps acting on the premise that his half point is guaranteed any time he so wishes; 3 b6 g4 4 Ba8 was an elementary draw.

3 ... h4+
4 f2 g4
5 b6? Bb2+
6 f1 g3
7 b7 g4!

Not 7 ... Bb1+ 8 e2 xg2 9 g8! =.

8 e1 Bb1+
9 e2 xg2
10 g8 g3!
11 b8= w Bxb8
12 Bxb8 h3

White resigns

III. Neglecting defence while attacking

One is likely to remain vigilant when obliged to defend a difficult position. However, when a player is attacking the opponent's king he is usually in a party mood. He tends to become optimistic about his chances, and as a rule does not expect something vicious to happen to his own position.

Alapin-Marshall
Ostend 1905

B

70

1 ... f2+
2 d1 0-0
3 d2 xc3+
4 xc3 xd5+
5 c1 d8

We have not attached question marks to Black's moves, since what is wrong here is not a specific move but the whole concept: Black has been operating under the impression that he holds the initiative and that White is defending.

6 b4!

Renewing the threat of 7 wxf2, while preventing the defensive 6 ... c5.

6 ... b6
7 \( \text{We7} \) Resigns

7 ... \( \text{d7} \) 8 \( \text{c4+} \) \( \text{h8} \) 9 \( \text{xg7} \) mate.

With his queen and two bishops placed in threatening posts, White believed he was the aggressor.

1 ... \( \text{f6} \)
2 \( \text{xf6?} \) \( \text{d5!} \)

Not 2 ... \( \text{xf6} \) 3 \( \text{xc5} \).

3 \( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \)
4 \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{xf2!!} \)

Suddenly it appears that Black has a crushing attack. If 5 \( \text{d1} \) (5 \( \text{xf2??} \) allows mate in one) 5 ... \( \text{xf1+} \) 6 \( \text{xf1} \) \( \text{xd5} \) followed by 7 ... \( \text{e3} \); or 5 \( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{e1+} \) 6 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{dxc3+} \). So White resigned. [Perhaps this was premature in view of 7 \( \text{d4!} \) \( \text{xf1+} \) 8 \( \text{xf1} \) \( \text{g4!} \) 9 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{xf8+} \) 10 \( \text{xe1} \) when White emerges with a winning position - Ed.]

Commentator P. Schmidt remarks perceptively:

"The reason for this error must be psychological. Black has not been able to move by his own free-will since his 33rd move (the first after the diagram). Rather, his moves have been forced. And when one believes that an opponent can make only forced moves, one becomes careless." 25

Correct was 7 \( \text{f4} \).

7 ... \( \text{b4} \)
8 \( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{a6!} \)
Now, if 9  \textit{\texttt{b7 b5}} wins. Were White’s rook on \textit{\texttt{f4}} he could counter 7 ... \textit{\texttt{a6}} with 8 \textit{\texttt{f6! b4}} 9 \textit{\texttt{b6}}, drawing.

9 \textit{\texttt{f8+ h7}}
10 \textit{\texttt{f7+ g8}}
11 \textit{\texttt{d7}}
12 \textit{\texttt{d1}}
13 \textit{\texttt{f3}}
14 \textit{\texttt{b1}}

And after a few more moves, White resigned.

Black is lucky to have this defence; 4 ... \textit{\texttt{exe8}} 5 \textit{\texttt{exe8+ f8}} 6 \textit{\texttt{fxg4}} was winning for White.

5 \textit{\texttt{a4}}
6 \textit{\texttt{xd8}}
7 \textit{\texttt{d4}}
8 \textit{\texttt{xf5}}

8 \textit{\texttt{c6 xd6}} probably gives Black sufficient counterplay.

8 ... \textit{\texttt{xd1}}
9 \textit{\texttt{xd1}}

9 \textit{\texttt{e7+ g7}} 10 \textit{\texttt{xd1 xe7}}.

9 ... \textit{\texttt{gxf5}}
10 \textit{\texttt{d7}}
11 \textit{\texttt{b6}}
12 \textit{\texttt{xc4}}

And after some thirty more moves the players agreed to a draw.

(diagram 74)

Black has an overwhelming attack, and by 2 ... \textit{\texttt{xb2! 3 xb2 d5+}} he would have achieved a beautiful victory; but thinking only about his own attack (3 \textit{\texttt{fxg4? xc3!}}, he now allowed his opponent a miraculous shot:

White’s pawn structure leaves much to be desired. Capturing on \textit{\texttt{e4}} with either the queen or rook was good enough for equality; but Black felt that he was dictating the course of the battle, and overestimated his chances:
1 ... \textit{?}e5?! \\
2 0-0! \textit{?}xb2 \\
3 \textit{?}a4

Perhaps Black only now saw that 3 ... \textit{?}xg3 fails to 4 \textit{?}xf7+!! \textit{?}xf7 5 \textit{?}d7+ winning.

3 ... \textit{?}e7? \\

Correct was 3 ... h4!, e.g. 4 \textit{?}d7 \textit{?}xg2! = .

4 \textit{?}a7 \textit{?}b7 \\
5 \textit{?}a1!

A marvellous winning move. The double threat of 6 \textit{?}xh8+ and 6 \textit{?}a8+ is decisive. \textbf{Black resigned.} (diagram 75)

White had every reason to feel happy. A pawn ahead with the better position, he seemed on his way to scoring his fourth consecutive victory in the tournament.

\textbf{Grunfeld-Stepak} \\
\textit{Israeli Ch. 1982}

1 \textit{?}c5 \\
Simpler was 1 \textit{?}f4 or 1 \textit{?}xe6 \textit{?}axe6 2 \textit{?}c3.

1 ... \textit{?}d5 \\
2 \textit{?}f5? \textit{?}ae6 \\
3 \textit{?}c3?

White continues to operate under the impression that he holds the initiative. His moves are all very natural, but ...

3 ... \textit{?}e5! \\

Incredibly, White is now losing a piece and the game! For instance, 4 g4 \textit{?}xc7! is curtains.

4 \textit{?}d1 \textit{?}xf5 \\
5 b3 h5 \\
6 \textit{?}xb7 \textit{?}g5 \\
7 \textit{?}b5 \textit{?}e6

And \textbf{Black won}.
It is not easy to spot the exact moment at which the initiative changed hands in the next position.

Manin-Ruderfer
Tashkent 1979

In the run-up to the diagram Black has played ... e4-e3 and ... f5-f4, restricting the mobility of the white bishop on g2. However, in order to achieve this he has had to open his king position, and he must now play very carefully.

1  gxf4  gxf4
2  \text{\&}h1  \text{\&}f6
3  \text{\&}g1  \text{\&}h8
4  \text{\&}ad1  \text{\&}d5?  
5  \text{\&}d4!  \text{\&}e5
6  \text{\&}d3  \text{\&}d7
7  \text{\&}h3!

The white bishop has freed itself with great effect.

7 ...  \text{\&}xh3
8 \text{\&}xf4!  \text{\&}xf3+
9  exf3  Resigns

IV. When victory is in sight

Perhaps the most dangerous moment in a game is, paradoxically, just before victory is achieved.

When the game seems to be over, when everything is apparently decided and the resignation of our rival seems only a matter of time, many players ease up, drop their level of alertness, and expect the game to win itself.

But, as chess sages have repeatedly emphasised over the centuries, it is possible to ruin every position, no matter how strong it is.

"There is a temptation to relax when you are winning. Resist it!," advises IM Simon Webb, "Until he resigns, you have work to do." 26

A version of the same theme occurs when the game reaches a "dead drawn" position, but our rival refuses to stop the clock and split the point.

"If you start asking yourself the question 'Why is he playing on?', be warned! This is always a dangerous state of affairs as it's easy to relax, lose concentration and let him play the 'sneaky' trick that he prepared while you were killing time." – GM Glenn Flear 27

Mark Dvoretsky made the point with lucid simplicity: "There are neither absolutely drawn, nor absolutely hopeless positions." 28
5 \( \text{Ke}5 \)  \( \text{Kh}3 \)
Suddenly White is mated . . .

6 \( \text{c6} \)  \( \text{Exh}2+ \)
White resigns

Ivanov-Dolmatov
Novosibirsk 1976

78

Why is Black continuing the struggle?

1 ...  \( \text{e}3 \)!
2 \( \text{Exb}4? \)

Amazingly, this greedy collecting of further material gains throws away the win. After \( 2 \text{fxe}3 \) Black would probably resign.

2 ...  \( \text{e}2 \)
3 \( \text{Ze}4 \)  \( \text{Lxf}5 \)
4 \( \text{gxf}5 \)  \( \text{h}4!! \)

An incredible position. A rook up, White cannot win. His king is shut in the corner, and his rook must stay guarding the e-pawn. Draw!

1 \( \text{wc7} \)

Expecting — not without justification — Black’s resignation.

1 ...  \( \text{Ed1}+! \)
2 \( \text{Exd1} \)  \( \text{Eg2}+! \)

Some players become more ingenious and more resourceful when they are up against the wall. But of course, if White does not fall for \( 3 \text{wxg2? wc2}+ \) his victory will be assured.

3 \( \text{wh1} \)  \( \text{wc2} \)
4 \( \text{wd6?} \)

Holding a vast material advantage, White fails to sense any danger. \( 4 \text{Ed2!} \) would put an immediate end to the game, and \( 4 \text{Ec1 wd3 5 wd6} \) is also quite sufficient.\textsuperscript{29}

4 ...  \( \text{h}5 \)
When the position is totally won, one tends to become blasé.

Three pawns down, White's resistance seems to be futile.

Black now discovers that his intended 4 \( \text{\texttt{a7}} \) 5 \( \text{\texttt{b5}}! \) \( \text{\texttt{xc1+ 6 \text{\texttt{xc1}}}} \) will not secure the win, owing to the double threat 7 \( \text{\texttt{c8+}} \) and 7 \( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \). "During my game against Miles, I was playing Space Invaders," recalls Short with embarrassment.
8 \( \text{Qf5!} \) \( \text{Ke8} \)

Searching for a win that has already slipped away. If 8 ... \( \text{gx}f5 \)
9 \( \text{wx}f5+ \) draws by perpetual check.

9 \( \text{Qx}g7 \) \( \text{wd}7 \)
10 \( \text{wx}e8 \) \( \text{wx}d5 \)
11 \( \text{Qe}6 \) \( \text{wb}3+ \)
12 \( \text{Qc}1 \) \( \text{wc}3+ \)
13 \( \text{Qd}1 \) \( \text{wf}6 \)
14 \( \text{Qg}5+! \) \( \text{wx}g5 \)
15 \( \text{wF}7+ \) \( \text{Qh}8 \)
16 \( \text{wF}8+ \) \( \text{Qh}7 \)

Draw

Rogers-Korchnoi
Biel 1986

elementary win for him, and although these moves were played shortly after an adjournment resumption he produced the appalling sequence

1 ... \( \text{wd}4 \)
2 \( \text{wd}8+ \) \( \text{Qc}5?? \)
3 \( \text{Qc}7 \) mate!

Heinicke-Rellstab
Oeynhausen 1939

Question 9: White has to be on guard in this winning position. Can you see what dangers await him?

With his last move (1 c4!) White created enough counterplay to ensure the draw. 1 ... \( \text{we}1 \)
2 \( \text{wb}6+ \) gives a perpetual check, since 2 ... \( \text{we}5?? \) 3 \( \text{wc}5+! \) \( \text{Qf}6 \)
4 \( \text{wg}5 \) is mate.

Korchnoi erroneously considered the position to be an

(diagram 83)

White is two pawns up. His queenside pawns’ road to glory is free. The knight’s post at e5 is formidable. . . Everything seems very pleasant.

Now watch:
Iorkov-Chistyakov
Moscow 1961

1  \( \text{Qd3?} \)  e5!

Obtaining some slight chances. 2 \( fx e 5 ?? \) \( \text{Wf1} \) mate, or 2 \( \text{Exe5?} \) \( \text{Wxd3} \), or 2 \( \text{Qxe5} \) \( \text{Cc8} \) with an initiative.

2  \( \text{dxe5} \)  \( \text{Cc8} \)
3  \( \text{Wd4} \)  \( \text{Cc2+} \)
4  \( \text{Qf2??} \)

Clearly he has not adjusted to the changed situation.

4  ...  \( \text{Exf2+!} \)
5  \( \text{Qxf2} \)  \( \text{Cc2+} \)
6  \( \text{We1} \)  \( \text{Cc1+} \)

White resigns

In diagram 84 Black is apparently continuing the fight in the hope of a miracle. An experienced White player should \textit{actively search} for the reason behind Black’s decision to battle on. He should ask himself: “What traps might I fall into? Where are his chances? What possible errors on my part might enable the enemy to find salvation?”

Peli-Oratch
Israeli Ch. 1974

1  \( \text{We7+} \)  \( \text{Ff7} \)
2  \( \text{Wf5+} \)  \( \text{Wh6} \)
3  \( \text{f5} \)  b2
4  \( \text{Qc3} \)  \( \text{Adf1} \)
5  \( \text{Qb1??} \)

White walks right into it!

5  ...  \( \text{Wh1+!} \)

Draw

6  \( \text{Qxh1} \)  \( \text{Ff1+} \)  7  \( \text{Qh2} \)  \( \text{Wh1+} \)  8  \( \text{Qxh1} \) stalemate.

(diagram 85)

1  ...  \( \text{Cc8} \) is simple and strong, after which Black would increase his advantage. Instead, there came
1 ... \( \text{Ha2?} \)
failing into the only trap available to his enemy!

2 \( \text{c4!} \) \( \text{Hxd2?} \)

After 2 ... bxc3! e.p. 3 \( \text{Hxa2} \) \( \text{Hd3} \) 4 \( \text{Hf2} \) e4 he would still be in business; but demoralised after his former blunder, he errs again.

3 \( \text{cx}b5 \) \( \text{Hcc2} \)
4 \( \text{Hxd2} \) \( \text{Hxd2} \)
5 \( b6 \) Resigns

\text{(diagram 86)}

Just as in the last example, the simple solution would do: 1 ... \( \text{Hxf6} \) followed by 2 ... \( \text{We5/d4} \) or 2 ... axb2. But Black wanted to get fancy, and chose

1 ... \( \text{We5?} \)

\text{Question 10: It looks gloomy for White, but if you think for a while you will find enlightenment!}

87 Torre-Maninang
Jakarta 1979

White has a big plus in the above diagram, as Black is cramped, with no serious counterplay.
This evaluation induced the White player to launch an attack without taking precautions against possible dangers:

1  h5?  gxh5
2  Wh4  h6!
3  Axh6  Axh4!

What a transformation!

4  Ag6?!  fxg6
5  Axh4  Ae7!
6  Axh8  Axh8
7  Af1  Axd2
8  Ag3  Axd4+
9  Ah2  h4
10  Ae1  Af4+
11  Ah3  Ac6
12  Ae2  We3+
13  Axh4  Af3

White resigns

V. When the danger seems to be over

Imagine the following situation: your game has developed in an unsatisfactory way. You are under a lot of pressure. After great efforts you succeed in repulsing your opponent’s waves of attack. The clouds seem to have lifted, you take a deep breath, and face the future with optimism . . .

Be careful! This could be a very awkward moment for you, since you are not prepared to meet any new dangers devised by your sly enemy . . .

Blunders caused by relaxation are likely to appear “When one has just emerged intact from a period of difficult defence”, write Hartston and Wason.11

Likewise, the chess psychologist Victor Malkin observed that the opponent may take advantage “not only of negative emotional influences, but also of positive ones”,32 such as euphoria or relaxation.

Greenfeld-Rechlis
Israel 1988

A serious mistake at an early stage had left Black in deep water. Defending stubbornly, he achieved the position above, which is the best he could hope for under the circumstances. White’s extra pawn is doubled and the black knight is placed on a strong, central post. After 1 ... Ad6 Black would have chances of holding the position.

But believing that the main
dangers were behind him, Black relaxed and played

1 ... $\text{Ze}c8$?

This was countered powerfully with:

2 $\text{Ag}4!$ $\text{Ea}8$

2 ... $\text{Ec}7$ 3 b6 axb6 4 $\text{Exb6}$ is difficult for Black: 4 ... $\text{Ed}6$? 5 $\text{Exd6}\text{ Exd6}$ 6 $\text{Ef}6+$ $\text{Ee}7$ 7 d6+; or 4 ... h5 5 $\text{Ef}6$!

3 $\text{Le}6!!$ $\text{Ef}8$

4 $\text{xf}7!$ $\text{Dxf}7$

5 e5

Murderous.

5 ... $\text{Dxe}5$
6 d6+ $\text{Ed}7$
7 $\text{Exf}8$ $\text{Exf}8$
8 $\text{Exf}8$ $\text{Dxd}6$
9 $\text{Eh}8$ h5
10 $\text{Eh}7$ b6
11 b3 Resigns

Black had managed to get out of an unpleasant situation to reach the position above. GM Lev Psakhis relates:

"For the first time in the game I could utter a sigh of relief. Black has a reasonable organisation of his pieces, keeps a pawn advantage, and forces an exchange of queens. Moreover, White was left with only 15 minutes to reach the time control . . . Kasparov was of the opinion that his initiative was enough only for equality, but he felt that Black sighed in relief too early [author's italics] and decided to press on." 33

1 $\text{Wxc}7$ $\text{Xxc}7$
2 $\text{Ff}1!$ $\text{Ef}7$?

2 ... h6!.

3 $\text{Db}5!$ $\text{Ff}8$
4 $\text{Exe}7$ $\text{Dxe}7$
5 $\text{Ah}3!$ $\text{Ec}8$

Here and on the next move it was better to occupy $\text{c}8$ with the knight.

6 $\text{Dxc}8$ $\text{Dxc}8$?
7 $\text{Dxa}7$ $\text{Ec}2$
8 b4 $\text{Ef}8$
9 $\text{Le}3$ $\text{Df}5$
10 $\text{xb}6$

And a few moves later Black resigned.

Diagram 90 shows the adjourned position after 40 moves. On his
Combining Various Signals: The Concept of Discrepancy

So far we have been dealing with specific danger signals, from one source or another. However, in real life we sometimes encounter many fragments of data from several sources which are not always consistent.

For instance, we may be playing what we believe to be a very quiet and uneventful game. Strangely, the opponent looks very pleased and satisfied. There are no butterflies in our stomach, but people are beginning to crowd around the table, staring and whispering.

How should conflicting signals like these be interpreted?

Before trying to answer that, let me quote from Dutch chessplayer and psychologist A.D. De Groot. Considering the question “When does a chessplayer look for an improvement to his intended move?”, he reached the conclusion that it is when the result of his analysis is at variance with the player’s expected outcome – “The discrepancy being a signal that something is probably amiss.”

De Groot further observed that “Omissions and errors in calculation tend to remain undiscovered especially in situations where a discrepancy is lacking.”

Relating the notion of discrepancy to our topic leads us to formulate a simple rule: when pieces of data (chessic or psychological) are supplied from several sources, any discrepancy between them should be regarded as an indication of a potential danger.

If we are winning, the opponent is supposed to look unhappy. When the enemy is in grave danger, we expect him to become anxious. If our position is strong, we should have a good feeling. If there is nothing interesting in the position, spectators are likely to move away to other boards.

If that is not so, something may be “fishy” and a danger signal should appear in our mind’s eye.

Descriptions of such discrepancies are not widespread in chess literature, but that does not mean that the phenomenon is...
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If that is not so, something may be “fishy” and a danger signal should appear in our mind’s eye.

Descriptions of such discrepancies are not widespread in chess literature, but that does not mean that the phenomenon is
unfamiliar. In a game against Hort in 1970, Petrosian chose a different move from the one he had intended, because “[he] was surprised to see a look of confidence on Hort’s face”. 36

In another reported instance, Fischer refrained from playing a strong move against Tal (in 1959) because when he wrote it down before actually playing it, Tal made a gesture that Fischer mis-interpreted as a laugh! 37

Miles-Peters
Lone Pine 1976

While waiting for his opponent’s reply White had analysed some variations connected with the moves 1 ... £h7 and 1 ... £f8.

1 ... £h7

According to Miles’s previous calculations, this was supposed to lose in a straightforward manner to 2 £d8+ £xd8 3 £xd8+ £g7 4 £f6+ £g8 5 £e8+ £f8 6 £xf8+ £xf8 7 £d8+ £g7 8 £f6+ £h6 9 £f8+ £g6 10 £g8+! mating.

“I quickly wrote down his move . . . and then spent a few minutes wondering why he had played the ‘easy’ line” – Miles. 38

The fact that his adversary had voluntarily entered a losing line switched on White’s alarm signal. It didn’t take him long to spot that 2 £d8+ £xd8 3 £xd8+ £f8! 4 £e8 (4 £e7 £g7+) fails to 4 ... £f5+ 5 £h3 £xf3+!! 6 gxf3 £f1 mate!

Realising the danger, White played 2 £h6! £f8 3 £de7 £g6 4 £g5! and won the battle.

Since authentic material on the issue of discrepancy between signals is scarce, I shall draw on my own humble experience for the next two examples:

Grunfeld-Avni
Israeli Ch. 1984
Black is better, and the move 1 ... g3 suggests itself. Indeed, I was about to play this, when I suddenly sensed that grandmaster Grunfeld’s body had become tense, and that his arm was positioned as if he was ready to answer my move at once.

Since my evaluation of the position was not consistent with the signals I received from my opponent, I decided to have another look at the position. Soon I found the variation 1 ... g3? 2 ∇xe6!! ∇xf2+ (2 ... ∇h6 3 g7!!) 3 ∇f1 ∇xe6 4 ∇h5+ ∇xg8 5 ∇xd5 (or 5 ∇xd5) which, if anything, is in White’s favour. By playing 1 ... ∇xg6 Black side-stepped the pitfall and kept his advantage (though the game ended in a draw).

Avni-Gutkin
93 Israeli Team Ch. 1990

White is a pawn up but his pieces lack harmony. Black reacts vigorously, before White can consolidate:

1 ... ∇h8!
2 ∇d3 ∇f5
3 ∇c4 ∇e6!

I was quite surprised by this. Surely 4 ∇xb4 (not 4 d5? ∇xd5) 4 ... a6 5 ∇d6 ∇xb4 6 ∇xb4 ∇xd4 7 ∇a3 was advantageous for White, wasn’t it? But my opponent had stayed very cool. Somehow, this behaviour didn’t seem to fit together with his allegedly precarious position!

So a careful examination was called for; and then the truth appeared:

4 ∇xb4? a5!!

And White is losing material: 5 ∇a4 ∇d7 or 5 ∇xa5 ∇xa5 6 ∇xa5 ∇c4 when both 7 ∇d6 ∇xf1 8 ∇xf1 ∇xb2 and 7 ∇c1 ∇xb5 are better for Black.

The game continued 4 ∇d3 ∇f5 5 ∇e2 and after many vicissitudes it ended in a draw.

In order to compare various danger signals, one has in the first place, to acquire the ability to perceive these signals.

I believe that chessplayers should open their eyes and ears to absorb signals from outside the chessboard. Of course, forming a strategic plan is important; calculating tactical variations is important;
but there is additional data that can be derived from other sources and that might be very handy in making decisions.

To illustrate the point, here is a vivid description by D. Schweitzer, a leading Israeli football coach, which I think is applicable to chess as well.

“A professional person can see, in the players’ eyes, before the game starts, if they are facing defeat or victory. In the dressing-room, before the game starts, if every player is mustering his concentration and there is a healthy tension in the room, then all is well... But if they are chatting about every possible subject except the game, that attitude is bound to continue... and a loss is on its way...

I once saw [a certain team] entering the stadium. I noticed that the players were not calm... they were impatient, they could hardly wait for the referee to signal the beginning of the contest... I knew that they were going to tear the other team apart, which they did...”

Danger signals can be detected in the opponent’s appearance, his body language, his gestures... We just have to tune ourselves to perceive these signals.

However, drawing conclusions from off-the-board signals should not be taken to extremes. It is not the only source of data that should be considered:

Rabinovich-Romanovsky
Moscow 1925

White

1...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\texttt{\texttt{g5}}}}!

Obviously Black is in a bad way, facing the double threat of 2 e5 and 2 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{xd3}}}}.

To understand what happens next, one has to take into account the following information:

1) Romanovsky (the player of the black pieces) played the game in a state of illness that showed in his appearance.

2) He was very late for the start of the game, and was forced to move quickly in order to manage the time control.

These two factors probably led Rabinovich to believe that the game had already been decided. However, he forgot to pay attention to one vital piece of data:
3) There is still plenty of play in the position. Romanovsky at that time was a very strong player indeed, and dangerous even in such a desperate state of affairs. Ignoring this last consideration proved costly:

1 ... \( \text{Hfd8} \)
2 e5?

Later analysis proved the superiority of White's position after the correct 2 \( \text{Qe5}! \).

2 ... \( \text{Qa3!} \)
3 exf6 \( \text{Wc5} \)
4 \( \text{Qd2} \)

Defending against the threat of 4 ... \( \text{Wxc3+} \) and intending to win by 5 \( \text{Wg5} \).

4 ... \( \text{Qg6!} \)
5 \( \text{Wxa4} \)
5 g4? \( \text{Wb4} \).
5 ... \( \text{b5!} \)
6 \( \text{Wxa3?} \)

Or 6 \( \text{Wxb5? Hab8!!} \) 7 \( \text{Wxc5 Qxb2} \) mate. The lesser evil was 6 \( \text{Wb3} \), although after 6 ... b4 Black retains winning chances, e.g. 7 bxa3 \( \text{Hdb8!} \).

6 ... \( \text{Wf5!} \)

With a two-piece advantage White cannot prevent mate! 7 \( \text{Wb3 Qac8} \) and there is nothing White can do about 8 ... \( \text{Wb1} \) mate.

White resigns
Now that we have discussed some of the various forms in which danger signals may appear, and are familiar with the difficult task of detecting them in good time, we can move on to the central question: how should one go about developing this skill of identifying dangers and recognising critical moments?

The author does not regard the sense of danger as some gift that one either has or does not have. Like other skills in chess, the art of sensing danger in time can be acquired and developed by training.

Here are some useful ways:

I. Shaping the right attitude

A) Adopting a paranoid approach

In chess, it is very useful to adopt what I shall call a “paranoid approach”.

Seeing the world as a dark, unfriendly place where one is fighting for survival; being distrustful and cynical; always trying to find out where the “catch” is; assuming that enemies are haunting us; all these are usually regarded as negative qualities in real life.

They are, however, splendid qualities to possess as far as chess is concerned.

In a widely quoted article, Lord Taylor writes:

“There is only one place where, as a temporary expedient, a paranoid approach is a positive advantage – on the chessboard.”

Hartston and Wason, too, refer to the difference between behaviour on the chessboard and outside it, when they say:

“The chessplayer might well be advised never to trust his opponent, but we should be loath to offer such advice, for fear of possibly detrimental transference effects in real life.”

While the question of drawing the line is important (more than a few chessplayers are known to confuse chess with real life – Fischer and Kamsky are prominent followers of a “The world is
against us” attitude), it is undeniable that being distrustful and suspicious has clear benefits, chesswise.

GM Valery Salov, from the former USSR, opined:

“Probably this Soviet habit of always looking for enemies, this persecution mania, is not so bad when you are playing chess... Maybe this was one of the special features that helped the Soviets to play better chess.”

An empirical study, conducted by the author and others, revealed similar findings. A group of strong and experienced chess players differed significantly on the paranoia scale of the MMPI psychological test from both weaker players and non-players. They emerged as more suspicious persons, with greater mistrust and more guardedness.

To exercise the paranoid approach, take a look at the three positions above, and then read the explanatory text that follows.

The three diagrams are very much alike. In all of them White enjoys an advantage of a knight, but that piece is pinned and its loss is unavoidable. Therefore, Black can achieve a draw in these
positions, as follows:
In No. 95, 1 \( \text{Wf4} \) \( \text{d6} \) and the draw is evident.
In No. 96 White should be satisfied with 1 \( \text{Wxd4} \) rather than 1 \( \text{Wa5?} \) \( \text{g6} \).
No. 97 is more complex, since White can enter an advantageous pawn ending, but it is still insufficient for the full point: 1 \( \text{Wb3} \) (1 \( \text{Wf8+} \) \( \text{h7} \) 2 \( \text{Wxg7+} \) leads to a similar position) 1 ... \( \text{g7} \) 2 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{xe6+} \) 3 \( \text{xe6+} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 4 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{f7} \) 5 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 6 \( \text{xg6} \) \( \text{g8} \) and White cannot make progress, for instance 7 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{f8} \) 8 \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{gxh6} \) 9 \( \text{gxh6} \) \( \text{f7} \) 10 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{g7} \) and Black has the opposition.

**Question 11:** You don't have to trust every piece of nonsense you read! Take another look at diagrams 95-97 and form your own opinion about what's going on.

Wharton-Kotliar
98 New York Ch. (Open) 1988 B

Black's rook is in a precarious position: 1 ... \( \text{b3} \) 2 \( \text{c3} \), or 1 ... \( \text{a2+} \) 2 \( \text{c2} \) followed by \( \text{c1-b1} \) are in White's favour.

1 ... \( \text{f4} \)
2 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{a2+} \)
3 \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{fxg3} \)
4 \( \text{hxg3} \) \( \text{h5!} \)

Annotating the game, the Black player remarked: "My opponent should have wondered why I did not rescue my rook." Instead, naively believing that everything was fine, he played

5 \( \text{c1?} \) \( \text{h4} \)
6 \( \text{gxh4} \) \( \text{gxh4} \)
7 \( \text{b1?} \) \( \text{h3} \)
8 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{xc2!} \)
9 \( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{e6} \)
10 \( \text{b8} \) \( \text{f5} \)
11 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{g4} \)

And White resigned, anticipating the variation 12 \( \text{e2} \) a3 13 \( \text{e5} \) (or 13 \( \text{f2} \) \( \text{f5!} \) 13 ... \( \text{h2!} \) 14 \( \text{xh2} \) \( \text{f5} \) 15 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{e4} \).

Both contestants strove to reach the position in diagram 99. The white centre pawns seem to give him a promising position, but as Petrovian remarked, "Portisch... ought to have been alerted by my decision to play this position." 45

In other words, the very readiness of the opponent to enter into a seemingly bad situation for him should arouse our suspicion.
Something along the lines of “It’s too good to be true”.

1 ...  \text{\textit{\textsf{Qc5!}}}

2 \text{\textit{\textsf{Qc4?}}}

An error, but he was in a bad way already: 2 dxc5? \text{\textit{\textsf{Qxc5+}} and 3 ... \text{\textit{\textsf{Kxd2; or 2 d5 \textit{\textsf{Kree8 with the threats 3 ... \textit{\textsf{Qd3 or 3 ... gff4; or 2 e5? \textit{\textsf{Qxe5; or 2 Ke2 \textit{\textsf{Qa4 3 Qc4 Qxb2 4 Qxb2 Qf8.}}}}}}}}}}}

2 ...  \text{\textit{\textsf{Qxe4}}}

3 \text{\textit{\textsf{Qac1}}  \text{\textit{\textsf{Qf8!}}}\\4 \text{\textit{\textsf{Qe5}} .  \text{\textit{\textsf{Qd6}}\\5 a4  \text{\textit{\textsf{f6}}\\6 \text{\textit{\textsf{Qf3}} \text{\textit{\textsf{Qxe1+}}\\7 \text{\textit{\textsf{Qxe1}} \text{\textit{\textsf{Qd7}}\\8 \text{\textit{\textsf{Qf3}} \text{\textit{\textsf{Qf5}}}}}}}}}

And in due course Black succeeded in converting his advantage into victory.

Black should now have realised that his plan was refuted, and return his queen to d8. Instead, he interpreted White’s last as an error and continued

3 ...  \text{\textit{\textsf{Qb4+?}}}\\4 \text{\textit{\textsf{Qd2!}}}

Now Black is in deep trouble. Amazingly, he still thought that the blunders that have been made were on White’s part:

“He played what I thought to be a horrific blunder ... I could not believe this – giving me a piece for nothing ...” - Norwood.\textsuperscript{46}

3 ...  \text{\textit{\textsf{Qxc4}}}

3 ... \text{\textit{\textsf{Qb5 4 e4 0-0 5 a4 is unpleasant, so this third consecutive}}}
oversight may be the best.

4 \textbf{Ec1} \textbf{Bxc1}

It was only now that the truth dawned upon Black: moving the queen allows mate.

5 \textbf{Axc1} \textbf{Cc6}
6 \textbf{Af3}

And in this winning position White agreed to a \textbf{draw}, which was sufficient for him to become his country’s champion.

\textbf{B) Maintaining a self-critical attitude}

Not only has one to be suspicious of one’s opponent, one must also remain sceptical of one’s own conceptions.

A healthy dose of doubt, and double-checking of major decisions, can help to prevent awkward surprises.

GM Nikolai Krogius writes:

"I advise you to discipline yourself during the game, by mentally posing the question – 'Have I appraised the position/play/idea too hastily? Did I stop examining this variation too soon?'" \textsuperscript{47}

Black’s position is cramped, so his intention to gain some freedom through the advance... e6-e5 is understandable. In retrospect, however, it was better to play this move right away.

2 \textbf{Ae1!} \textbf{e5??}

He should have double-checked his plans, and asked himself what the idea might be behind White’s last move.

3 \textbf{dxe5} \textbf{Axe5}
4 \textbf{Axe5!} \textbf{Axe5}
5 \textbf{Cc4!} \textbf{dxc4}
6 \textbf{Axc7+} \textbf{Bxc7}
7 \textbf{Bxd6} \textbf{Resigns}

\textit{(diagram 101)}

1 ... \textbf{Bfe8?}

\textbf{C) Actively searching for possible dangers}

Dangers can be found by accident,
or brought to light in a methodical searching process. It is the second way that we recommend. An active search for danger signals enhances the probability that a danger will be spotted (if one does exist).

Relating to a nasty pin a player found himself in, GM Andrew Soltis wrote:

"This kind of surprise pin can only be anticipated by a good sense of danger. 'Where are the potential pins?' 'If I'm pinned... how easy is it to get out of it?' These are the questions to ask yourself."\(^{48}\)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Mortensen-Karlsson} \\
\text{Esbjerg 1989}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
1 \text{\textit{A}}d\text{h1} & \text{h6} \\
2 \text{\textit{A}}h3? \\
\end{array}
\]

A natural continuation of the attack. 2 \textit{A}g3 is on its way, while Black seems to be short of counter-

\[
\begin{array}{c}
2 \ldots & \text{\textit{A}}xf3! \\
3 \text{\textit{A}}xf3 & \text{\textit{Q}}b4!!
\end{array}
\]

Astounding. After 4 axb4 \textit{Q}a4 we realise that the double sacrifice has cleared the way for the queen and bishop to attack c2. Wherever the white king tries to escape, he will be mated.

\textbf{White resigns}

The search for dangers is an ongoing process. Even when one source of danger has been recognised, the search must continue.

The following diagram is a case in point.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Böök-Skold} \\
\text{Finland 1956}
\end{array}
\]

103

Black's threats change constantly in the ensuing play. At every turn White has to face a new danger. In such a situation it is easy to miss something.
1 ... $g4!  
2 $bd2  
  d4 was hanging, and 2 $e3 was no good on account of 2 ... $xc5!.

2 ... $h6  
3 $e1  
  Defending against the threat to win a piece by 3 ... $xf3; but the removal of the queen from the queenside enables Black to stir up more trouble.

3 ... $xd2  
4 $xd2 $b4  

Things are looking gloomy, but White finds a defence (at least he thinks he does!).

5 $f3! $c2  
6 $e5 $d7!!

6 ... $xe5? 7 $xe5 $e2 8 $xd5 would give White a lot of compensation. The text move creates yet another new threat, which White overlooks.

7 $ad1  
  He should have given up the exchange, since Black’s reply gains something even more valuable.

7 ... $e3!!  
  White resigns  
8 ... f6 is not to be denied.

D) Thinking for the other guy as well

Finally, as was repeatedly mentioned in previous chapters, it is most helpful to look at things from the opponent’s point of view. “Prophylactic thinking” is the term used by Dvoretsky.49 It is this factor that differentiates the really strong players from the average ones.

Translated from words into action, it is clear that one ought to invest a considerable amount of one’s allotted time in trying to fathom what is in the enemy’s mind.

104 Karolyi-Gelfand  
Amsterdam 1988  

1 c6

Black has several obvious advantages in this diagram: better king position, better pawn structure and queenside majority.

Still, alertness is always required. White’s first move contains a cunning threat which Black misses:
Developing a Sense of Danger

1 ... a4?
2 Qe6!!

All of a sudden a white queen is going to appear on the board! Luckily for Black his position is so strong that he is able to hold the draw comfortably.

2 ... Exd2
3 c7 Ef2+

Simpler was 3 ... Ed3+ with a perpetual.

4 Qxf2 Qxe4+
5 Qe3 Qd6

Draw

Lautier-Hebden
105 French League 1990 B

So the situation on the queenside has clarified, which is what 1 ... a6 was all about. But look at the a5 rook: it has more freedom than it did three moves ago. One has to watch out!

4 e3? Qxb7
5 Exb7
5 exd4? exd4.

5 ... wc8!
6 wb1 e4!!

Suddenly the plan of ... Eh5 and ... wh3 becomes very powerful: 7 exd4? Eh5 wins, or 7 gg2 Eh5 8 Eh1 Exh1 9 Exh1 wh3+ 10 gg1 Qf3+ and Black collects a piece.

7 Qd5 wh3
8 exd4

All the tactics work in Black’s favour: 8 wd1 Ea1!!.

8 ... Qxd4
9 Eb8

A beautiful variation could have occurred after 9 Qxe4 Exe4 10 dx e4 wg3+ 11 gh1 wh3+ 12 gg1 Ea3! 13 Qe3 Qe5!.

9 ... wg3+
10 gh1 wh3+
11 gg1 wg4+
12 gh1 Ea8
13 Exa8 Exa8
14 wd1 wh3+
15 gg1 Qe5

White resigns
All this advice concerning the player’s mental attitude originates from the basic precept of *treating the enemy with respect*. Easier said than done.

To take an analogy from military combat, here is what Brig. General R.W. Williams from the US army says:

“Assume, and honestly try to believe, that your opponent *is as smart as you* . . . As a corollary to this rule, recognise that your opponent, being at least as smart as you, *always has a plan*. Not only does he have one, *he intends to win*. His objectives might be incomprehensible to us, but they *are very real* to him . . . Somehow, we must eliminate the popular concept . . . that the enemy is little more than a temporary impediment located between us and our objective.” 50

It is not easy to accept all this. As a matter of fact, it must be admitted that the aforementioned view is not always valid. It does happen that the opponent is *not* very clever, not playing with a certain plan in mind, etc.

However, having respect towards one’s adversary is an essential prerequisite to forming a developed sense of danger. Indeed, if the enemy is assessed as worthless, what’s the use of guarding against his plots?

### II. Coaching techniques

When teaching others, it is essential to instil in them the apprehension that even in a seemingly secure or promising position a shocking and unpleasant danger *could* be lurking under the surface.

#### A) Demonstrating that every position is capable of being ruined

Black’s plan to push his two extra pawns all the way is simple, crushing and unavoidable. It is difficult to think of any conceivable measure of counterplay that White can implement . . .

```
1 h4 b4
2 h5 a xe4
```

Unnecessary, but it does no harm.
3 fxe4 b3
4 Qad1 Qc7
5 Qg5 b2
6 Qh6 We7
7 Qg5 Wf8
8 Qh6 We7

Repeating moves, probably to avoid – or to get out of – time trouble.

9 Qg5 Wc5
10 hxg6 fxg6
11 Qd8!

Of course, this should not bear fruit, but the fact that one can find some chances even in a hopeless position like this is instructive.

11 ... Qxd8
12 Qxd8

Now 12 ... Qe3 or 12 ... Qd7 are decisive. In his defence, one has to say that Black’s choice also looks good enough...

12 ... Qb7??
13 Wf6! Qxe5
14 Qc7!!

But it’s not!

14 ... Qxc7
15 Qd8+ Qg7
16 Wf6+ Draw

resigning”. Indeed, 1 Wd8+ Qg7
2 Qc1 Qd7 3 Qc7 is one convincing reason for Black to give up.

Black has certainly improved his position a great deal, but White is still winning, of course.

1 Wd8+ Qg7
2 h4? Wf3!
3 Qc1 Qb7

6 g4+ Qe5 7 Qc5+ still wins by force: 7 ... Qd6 8 Wf8+ Qd7 9 Qf7+ Qd8 10 Qc7+ Qe8 11 Wb8+ Qf7 12 Qc7+ with 13 Wxb7.

6 ... Qg4!

It transpires that after 7 Qxb7 Qh3! White is mated... White
resigned, probably shaking his head in disbelief.

In a rotten position, Black tries to confuse the issue:

1 ... g4
2 Qe5  Qc8
3 gxf4  b5

Intending to put pressure along the a8-h1 diagonal.

4 cxb6 e.p axb6
5 f5

From now on, White chooses second-best moves, allowing his cunning opponent to create counterchances. 5 fxg4 or 5 Qd7 would have been safer and clearer.

5 ... Qe7!
6 Qb5

6 Qe2!.

6 ... gxf3+

7 Qxf3  Qa8

Things are getting more and more complicated.

8 Qxf6  Qxf6
9 Qxe3  Qg8+

Suddenly it is difficult to find a safe haven for the king.

10 gh1  Qeg7!
11 a4??

The crowning piece of carelessness, probably due to time shortage. 11 Qe2 would have left the result in doubt.

11 ... Qd4!
12 f6  Qxf3+

White resigns

B) Showing the effect of minor details on the overall outcome

Grasping the significance of small details in the appraisal of the overall situation helps us to develop the cognitive faculty that tells us when and where a danger is likely to emerge.

One possible coaching method is to show students a set of positions that are very similar in appearance but which conceal important differences.

Take a look at diagrams 109 to 112. What do you think of the White position (note that it is Black's turn to move)?
Question 12: The four diagrams look very much alike. White's position appears safe and solid in all of them. But if one looks closely enough, it transpires that in one of the diagrams this is not the case.
Black has two options at his disposal, both of which appear to be winning: 1 ... $\text{c8} 2 \text{e7} $d8 3 $\text{e5}$ (or 3 $\text{e6} $d7) 3 ... $\text{d3+}$; or 1 ... $\text{c6} 2 \text{e7} $xe4 3 $\text{xe4} $d5! 4 $\text{xd4+} $xd4, and in the ensuing race Black will come first, promoting with check.

**Question 13:** Examine these variations carefully. Pay attention to minute details.

**C) Using the “worst case” technique**

Another way to improve the quality of young players’ “danger-detectors” is to encourage them to look at their games from a somewhat different angle. In addition to asking oneself the usual questions like “What is the best move?” or “What is the plan I should choose?”, they should implement “the worst-case technique”, by posing themselves questions such as “How could my position become ruined?” or “How could I lose?” [GM Andrew Soltis5].

Were the following position a fairy chess problem, it would probably be entitled “White to play and lose in the shortest way possible”. As it happened, White actually accomplished this in a serious tournament game between two of the world’s best players.

1 $\text{d5}$
2 $\text{c8}$

mate (!!)

Naturally, GM Nigel Short was mated because he did not suspect anything remotely like a mating
possibility could occur in such a simplified position. Similar accidents do take place from time to time, and if we are looking for prevention methods, rather than being content with the comforting sympathy of others, then searching for a possible catastrophe is as reliable a method as any.

Take the following diagram as an example. It is Black to move, and it looks very safe and equal for him (and boring). Try to examine all sorts of possible moves, with the intention of finding some vicious traps, a cunning pitfall or concealed threats.

Did you find anything?

D) Maintaining a dynamic evaluation of the ever-changing situation

Another technique that can be used is to demonstrate to students games characterised by many tactical twists. Says John Littlewood:

"It is important for our students to witness as early as possible the influence of tactics in the opening stages, so as not to be lulled into a false sense of security when apparently following the basic principles of opening play."\(^{52}\)

Looking at the following short game, one could get the impression after nine moves that it is heading towards a peaceful conclusion. However, some inaccurate play by Black enables White to launch a brilliant sacrificial attack at lightning speed.

Godena-De Eccher
Italian Championship 1987

```
1 e4 e5
d5
3 exd5 wxd5
4 d4 \(\triangle c6\)
5 \(\triangle f3\) e5
6 \(\triangle xe5\) \(\triangle xe5\)
```

**Question 14:** To make it simple, skip over the "obvious" bad moves, like 1 ... \(\triangle e5\)? and concentrate on "normal" responses like 1 ... b5, 1 ... \(\triangle c4\), 1 ... \(\triangle c3\), 1 ... a6, 1 ... \(\triangle g2\), or 1 ... \(\triangle a6\).
Only eight moves have been played, and the queens are already going to be exchanged. The position will probably soon better resemble an ending than an opening...

8 ... \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textit{\textbf{d6}?}}}
9 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textit{\textbf{a3}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{e2}}}}
10 \textit{\textit{\textbf{xe2}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{a6}}?}
11 \textit{\textit{\textbf{c4}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{c7}}}
12 \textit{\textit{\textbf{e3}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{b6}}}
13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{b4!}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{b5}}}
14 \textit{\textit{\textbf{f3}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{b8}}}
15 \textit{\textit{\textbf{xc5!}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{bxc4}}}
16 \textit{\textit{\textbf{c6+}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{d7}}}
17 \textit{\textit{\textbf{0-0-0!!}}}

Hard to imagine, but true! From a “boring” position, White has developed (with the help of his opponent ...) a fascinating sacrificial attack within only a few moves! The picture after 17 ... \textit{\textit{\textbf{xc6}}} 18 \textit{\textit{\textbf{he1+}}} is lovely.

17 ... \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textit{\textbf{f6}}}}
18 \textit{\textit{\textbf{he1+}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textit{\textbf{d8}}}}
19 \textit{\textit{\textbf{e7}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{d6}}}
20 \textit{\textit{\textbf{xf7}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{xc5}}}
21 \textit{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{f8}}}
22 \textit{\textit{\textbf{b5+}}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{Resigns}}}

Such a turn of events is not infrequent, and the sooner one recognises that, the sooner one will learn how to accustom oneself to changing circumstances.

The position in diagram 118 looks innocuous. No real confrontation between the two armies has yet occurred. Black is slightly better because of the backward white pawn at e3 and the potential “hole” at e4. White should continue 1 \textit{\textbf{f3}} and if 1 ... \textit{\textbf{f5}} then 2 \textit{\textbf{e1}}, and he is holding his own.
van Scheltinga-Pirc
Dubrovnik Ol. 1950 W

118

E) Implementing a search for danger as a regular procedure

Still another valuable and proven method is to teach the need to be alert and suspiciously-minded as an integral part of the thinking process.

Dividing the thought process in a given position into specified and structured stages, Lev Alburt and Larry Parr categorise the last stage under the heading “Remain alert, snuff out counterplay”.53

“In chess,” the authors stress, “there is often one last mountain to climb.” The opponent’s moves will be easier to find if only we look for them.

A tremendous move. The whole picture of the battle has changed dramatically: White is completely tied up and Black is in total command.

1  e4?
2  exd5?
3  dx e6
4  vh1

Even stronger was 6 ... vh3!.

5  exf7+
6  wc2

Not 7 ... vhxd2 8 vhxd2 vhxd2 9 vhf1.

7  vh7

8  vhf1

White’s burst of initiative has come to a halt. Now there is no salvation.

Sanguinetti-Liberzon
Biel izt 1976 W

119
It is difficult to imagine that this position will be decided abruptly, in only one move, but that is what actually happened. By trying to fathom Black’s intentions White could have avoided disaster, but his next move shows that he totally missed the fact that Black had a serious threat.

1 \&f3?? d5!

White resigns

Since the loss of a piece cannot be averted.

Fostering a paranoid way of thought can be done by emphasising “rules of thumb” such as:

- Not every move that looks good is in fact so.
- Try to find out what is concealed behind the opponent’s apparently innocuous moves.
- If the enemy deviates from his usual approach (such as his regular opening systems, or a familiar set of habits), be careful.

F) Studying double-edged positions

Working with players who focus too much on their own plans, while underrating the adversary’s intentions, Mark Dvoretsky uses as learning material studies that contain resourceful play by Black, thus forcing the solver to think hard for “the other side”.

A. Herbstman

Axaglazdara Komynisti 1954

120 1st prize W

White wins

The diagram seems to be an easy win for White after 1 \&xa2. Strangely, 1 ... f5!! forces a draw, in a fantastic way: 2 f8=\& Ea5+ with perpetual check along the a- to d-files. Alternatively, 2 Ea7 Ee5!! and there is no way to prevent a perpetual along the fifth to the first rank.

Only by looking at things from the other side’s point of view can a remarkable and well-hidden saving idea like this be exposed.

The solution is

1 \&b2!! a1=\& +
2 \&xa1 Ea5+
3 \&b2 \&b5+
4 \&c3 \&c5+
5 \&d4 f5
Developing a Sense of Danger

6 a7  a d5+
7 g c3  c5+
8 h b2  b5+
9 a a1!  e5
10 a a2+!  White wins

It was White’s first move that made his tenth(!) possible.

from M. Liburkin
64 1935
121 joint 2nd prize B

White wins

This diagram resembles the previous one, in that the situation looks virtually resignable for Black. The sequence 1 ... e4 2 g e6 e3 3 d d4 seems to put an end to Black’s faint hopes. But... wait a minute! Taking the variation a little further we suddenly realise that after 3 ... e2+! 4 x e2 f1! Black is saved: 5 a moves e3+ 6 d2 f1 (c4)+ draws. Only now, after the danger has been identified, is it possible to find a way to thwart it:

1 ...  e4
2  e e6  e3
3  c5!!  e2+
4  d d2  f f1+
5  e e1!  x e1
6  d d3  mate!

Kazantsev, Liburkin & Staroverov
Shakhmaty v SSSR 1933
122 5th H.M. W

White wins

The advance 1 b7 queens the pawn. Black can do nothing about it, but astonishingly, he can still get a draw if White is not alert: 1 b7? b5! 2 b8=  f1! and despite White’s huge material advantage there is no win!

(diagram 123)

3 b b1 x h 2 4 x f1 is stalemate, and other White fourth moves will be countered by 4 ... h 3, followed by 5 ... g 2 with an impregnable position.
123 White has achieved two important things: he has brought his own king closer to the black king, and has avoided the stalemate trap.

123

4 ... \( \text{xf}1 \)
5 \( \text{xb}1 \) \( \text{g}2 \)
6 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{c}4 \)
7 \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \)
8 \( \text{b}6 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
9 \( \text{h}6! \) \( \text{c}8 \)
10 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
11 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{xf}2 \)
12 \( \text{xg}4 \)

The correct move in diagram 122 is, therefore

1 \( \text{c}5! \) \( \text{g}6 \)
2 \( \text{d}4! \) \( \text{e}8 \)
3 \text{b}7 \( \text{b}5 \)
4 \text{b}8=\#!!

In comparison with diagram 122, this was the aim of the previous moves. White liquidates into a winning pawn ending.

12 ... \( \text{xg}4 \)
13 \( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{g}2 \)
14 \( \text{g}1! \)

And wins.
There is probably no aspect of warning so unpredictable, but so potentially difficult and damaging, as the efforts of the opponent to conceal his intentions... The deceiver may attempt either to lead his enemy to a totally erroneous decision, or to confuse him, by presenting him with a number of alternatives, thus promoting indecision” – C.M. Grabo.  

These are not the words of a chessplayer, but they could have been. Understanding the importance of danger signals inevitably leads us to search for means that will mask or conceal our plans from the opponent, and thus deceive him about our real intentions.

A cunning player may “plant” misleading clues in his play and/or in his overt behaviour, attempting to manipulate his enemy’s conceptions, with the aim of leading him astray.

There is a thin line between carrying out a clever misleading operation and behaving in an unethical way.

Chess players and psychologists Elliot Hearst and Michael Wierzbicki describe, under the headline of “Tricks and Gamesmanship”:

[masters that] “developed the habit of thinking for 15 or 20 minutes on a move they had planned long before, [to] deceive their opponent as to the surprise value of his last move and perhaps lull him into a false sense of security.”

Other players, according to these authors, when realising that they have committed a blunder “get up and walk around happily” or “sit still and smile serenely”.

On the other hand, IM Simon Webb regards such behavioural ploys as perfectly legitimate, and he actually encourages them:

“If you are on the defensive, try to look completely dejected and uninterested, in the hope your opponent will get careless... When you set a trap, try to look normal, or even to appear nervous.”
Trying to draw the line between the legitimate and the unethical, GM and psychologist Nikolai Krogius wrote:

"Camouflage is an acceptable method of struggle in chess. By 'camouflage' we mean trying to hide one's own feelings, not putting on deceptive scenes to upset one's opponent..." 

Techniques for allaying the opponent's sense of danger

A) Masking

Luring the enemy into the heavy fog of ambiguity is not an easy task. The relevant chess data is all there in front of his eyes: how can one hide the obvious?

By way of disguise, the player makes a move or some moves that are not in accordance with his plan. He does not rush straight to his target, but rather approaches it indirectly. Metaphorically, it can be said that by the use of masking one walks sideways, backwards, maybe in circles... rather than straight ahead. Thus one makes it difficult for the enemy to predict the exact part of the board where things are going to happen, or the exact time when actions will take place, or the form they are going to assume.

1 \textit{c2!}

White has been conducting a long manoeuvring battle, but the text move, as Shereshevsky correctly indicates,\textsuperscript{59} is a camouflage for his true plan of action.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c|c|c|c|c|c}
1 & \ldots & \textit{c7} \\
2 & \textit{b5} & \textit{a7} \\
3 & \textit{d2} & \textit{e7} \\
4 & \textit{e2} & \textit{d6} \\
5 & \textit{e4} & \textit{b6} \\
6 & \textit{f1!} & \textit{d5?} \\
7 & \textit{h3} & \textit{c7} \\
8 & \textit{g4} & \textit{a8} \\
9 & \textit{c1!} \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

From the diagram position, had White played directly to attack the a4 pawn, Black could have defended successfully. But now, after confusing his enemy with seemingly aimless moves, White returns to the basic plan, at
the most inconvenient moment for Black.

There is no doubt that placing the white king on c2, where it reduces the effectiveness of such a plan, contributed to the fall off in Black’s alertness to danger.

9 ... e6
10 d4 b5
11 e4 d4
12 d3 f5
13 g4

And White won.

Konstantinopolsky-Ragozin
125 USSR Ch. 1940

1 ... e6
2 h4 c7
3 h5 e6
4 d3

White seems to have all the play, with the black king’s defences about to crumble. Black’s moves appear almost irrelevant.

4 ... f6
5 h6 e6
6 xg6

6 h2+ h7 7 xg6 h8+ 8 xh2 wh4+ 9 g2 h7 is no better.

6 ... f6!

It transpires that Black’s heavy pieces, which have apparently been acting as defensive forces, are also able to assume a major offensive role! If 7 xg7 w4+ 8 g2 xg7+ 9 f1 w3+ winning. Another possibility is 7 h6+ h7 8 gg6 hag7!! and White is powerless: Black threatens 9 ... xg6 and if 9 g1 then xh6! is a beautiful echo. 9 xh7+ xh7+ 10 g2 h4 is also losing.

All in all, an amazing “ambush”: White played to open lines, but when that occurred he was doomed! The way Black had organised his heavy forces was one of the reasons for White’s nonchalance.

7 xg5 e4
8 h5+ h7

White resigns

Hiding one’s inner feelings

Observing their opponent’s faces and body language is an important “intelligence-gathering” technique for chessplayers.
An outside spectator, even one ignorant of the finer points of the royal game, can usually recognise which side has the superior position simply by watching the expressions and the conduct of the contestants. The best players take care to mask their behaviour. We must remember that a player mostly does not know how well things are going, he only assumes. The opponent’s reaction can confirm or disprove this assumption, so it is therefore vital not to show the behavioural signs of defeat; rather, we should even try to confuse the antagonist as to our real feelings.

Former world champion Boris Spassky was reputed to have a “poker face”. Looking at him, it was impossible to say whether he was winning or about to be mated.60

The motto seems to be “Do not give your opponent voluntarily any information”.

For instance, learning to sit still after making a blunder, not giving one’s feelings away, is an important skill for a chess player. “While awaiting his opponent’s move, he remained absolutely calm. Not a muscle twitched on his face...” is how Roshal describes Karpov’s behaviour during an embarrassing moment in a game against Gligorić.61

“Yet once he had seen [his blunder]... with self-confident expression, just as if nothing had happened, he sat up before the table, showing his readiness to make his next move instantaneously” is a picture of Kasparov (vs. Kupreichik) drawn by Alexander Nikitin.62

Kagan-Partos
Biel 1977

126

1 $\text{Nb}7$ $\text{Qxb7}$
2 $\text{Ng}1!$ $\text{Wd}7$
3 $\text{Nxg6+??}$

3 $\text{Wxb7+}$ leaves White with an advantageous ending. The text is a horrible oversight, intending 3 ...
$\text{Wxg6}$ 4 $\text{Wxb7+}$ and $\text{Wxc8}$, but missing the refutation 3 ...
$\text{Wxg6}$!

IM Kagan related the incident as follows:

“Realising the disaster at once, I sat at the board motionless. My rival, with twenty minutes for three moves to reach the time control, contemplated the position
for three minutes, finally playing 3 ... $\text{wxg6??}$ and resigning two moves later."  

Disguising his feelings was White's only chance. Otherwise, Black would certainly feel that something was amiss. And this is in fact the usual behaviour of strong players. For example, in the game Weinstein-Rohde, Lone Pine 1977, White liquidated into what he thought to be a winning pawn ending, only to find out that the endgame was lost. According to annotator Kaplan:

"Even after noticing (his error), Weinstein kept a poker face and played his moves with great (apparent!) confidence. This is probably what saved the day for him!"  

B) Misleading

Here, the idea is taken one stage further. Not only is the opponent kept in ignorance about our real intentions, he is actually led to believe that something else is going on.

Ex-world champion Mikhail Botvinnik was pre-eminent in this respect. In one famous incident, he advised his compatriot Efim Geller in a complicated adjourned game against Fridrik Olafsson: "Rock about on your chair several times, as many players do in a vain attempt to find a plan."  

In another instance, competing against Tal for the world championship, he side-stepped his usual habit of bringing a coffee thermos to the second session, and put about a rumour as well that he himself regarded his position as desperate. All this was intended to fill his adversary with a false sense of confidence, as Botvinnik himself revealed later.

He thus raised the art of misleading the opponent to new heights, although the ethics involved are debatable.

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127  
Fuchs-Bronstein  
Berlin 1968  

B

\[ \text{1 ... Zf6!} \]

The greatest merit of this move is that one can easily miss the idea behind it, as White did, mistakenly believing it to be an overprotection
of the e7 pawn.

2  \( \text{\&e3?} \)  g5!
3  \( \text{\&h5?} \)

Still ignorant of what is to come. Naturally 3 \( \text{\&h3?} \)  g4 is futile, but 3 \( \text{\&d2 \&c2} \)  4 \( \text{\&c1} \) would have cut White’s losses.

3  ...  g4!
4  \( \text{\&xf6+} \)  exf6!
5  \( \text{\&f4} \)  \( \text{\&d5} \)

Only now did it dawn on White that the real purpose of 1 ... \( \text{\&fe8!} \) was to weave a devious trap for White’s queen. Alas, by now it was too late to do anything about it. Black won.

Nimzowitsch-Leonhardt
San Sebastián 1911

128

1  \( \text{\&h1g2} \)  \( \text{\&d6} \)
2  \( \text{\&c1} \)

How would you comprehend White’s last two moves? Probably he wants to triple his heavy pieces on the g-file, to reinforce the advance g4-g5; or maybe he aims to initiate an attack through g4-g5 followed by \( \text{\&c1-d1-h5?} \)

2  ...  \( \text{\&d4??} \)
3  \( \text{\&d5!} \)

Nothing of the sort! It was all a plot to invite the black queen to settle at the central post d4, where it will now be captured!

White wins, since no satisfactory reply against 4 \( \text{c3} \) is available.

Spassky-Gligorić
Baden 1980

129

White’s two bishops give him an edge, but Black’s position is quite solid and hard to break down.

1  \( \text{\&h5!} \)  \( \text{\&d8} \)
2  \( \text{\&f2} \)  \( \text{\&b8} \)
3  \( \text{\&a1} \)  \( \text{\&c8} \)
4  \( \text{\&h2} \)  b6?!
5 a3 a5?

White has built up some pressure on the kingside, and Black has been led to believe that it is there that things will be decided. But it is Black’s carelessness on the other wing which will prove costly.

6 c3 ♙d6
7 ♙d1! ♙e8
8 b4 axb4
9 axb4 cxb4
10 cxb4 ♙d4

Or 10 ... ♗xb4 10 ♗a1!.

11 ♗a2 ♗c6
12 ♗xd4 exd4
13 ♗a1

Now it is clear that moving the pawns in front of his king was a grave error on Black’s part.

13 ... ♙e7
14 ♗a7! ♗c2+
15 ♗h1 ♗xd3
16 ♗c1

Black could perhaps have spared himself the remainder.

16 ... ♗c6
17 ♗a8+ ♗b7
18 ♗xh8 ♗b8
19 ♗c8 mate

(diagram 130)

1 ♗db1!

By protecting his rook on b3 White appears to threaten 2 ♗xe5 (which he does). But the “simple” threat is not the only danger Black is facing; identifying one danger does not necessarily indicate that this is the main one to guard against.

1 ... ♗d8?

1 ... ♗f2 was correct, and if 2 ♗xe5 ♗f1+!.

2 ♗c4!

New dangers emerge out of the blue: 3 ♗b8+, winning the queen, and 3 ♗a6+!, mating. Black cannot handle both threats at the same time. White won.

C) Provoking

Adopting a policy of marking
(chess) time and waiting for the other side to become active, making outrageous weakening moves, imitating the opponent’s manoeuvres (symmetrical play) – these are a few ways to provoke the enemy, of trying to make him “let loose”

In a way this can be considered as a special type of misleading.

A good piece of provocative play will convey to the opponent a deceptive message to the effect that we are playing weakly or aimlessly, while in reality the situation is quite different. When provocative play succeeds and the rival is driven to throw all caution to the winds, the provoker can reap his reward.

4 a3 \( \text{\#d7} \)
5 \( \text{\#h2} \)

An interesting moment. Black has a slight but clear superiority. He controls the d-file and has secured an excellent central post for his knight. But now, instead of carrying on with his plan (5 ... \( \text{\#d2} \), 6 ... \( \text{\#d4} \)), he makes a move which gives an impression of hesitancy.

By this he induces White to take some action to prevent Black from occupying the excellent outpost at d4 with his knight.

5 ... \( \text{\#e7}! \)
6 b5? \( \text{AXB5} \)
7 \( \text{\#xb5} \) \( \text{\#d2}! \)
8 \( \text{\#xc6} \)

Black has willingly given his opponent the opportunity to exchange his bishop for Black’s magnificent knight. White has been tempted only to be floored by the following combination, made possible because of the white bishop’s sortie.

8 ... \( \text{\#xg2+!!} \)
9 \( \text{\#xg2} \) \( \text{\#d2+} \)
10 \( \text{\#h1} \) \( \text{\#h4} \)
11 f4 \( \text{\#f2} \)

White resigns

The next game began with White giving his rival odds of queen’s rook and queen’s knight.


16 1 ḋe1!

What is this?! But remember that White is playing against a weak opponent. If he plays straightforwardly 1 ḋd1 Black might become suspicious . . . so, let’s lead him to believe that White was in fact executing a gross blunder, and provoke the following sequence:

1 ... cxb2
2 ḋd1! bxc1=♕?
3 ♕xf7+! ♗xf7
4 ♕xf7+ ♗d8
5 ♗e6 mate!

A remarkable game is Schlechter-Nimzowitsch, Carlsbad 1907:

1 e4 e5
2 ♘f3 ♘c6
3 ♘b5 a6

One remarkable commentator called Black’s last moves “a grandmasterly manoeuvre”. The reader is invited to form his own judgment.

11 ... ♗e7
12 d4 ♗g6
13 ♗e3 ♗h7
14 ♗d2 ♗e6
15 ♗c2 ♗e7
16 d5 ♗d7
17 ♗h2 ♗h8
18 ♗g1

Amazing. Whose nerve will be the first to crack!

18 ... g5
19 g3 ♗g6
20 ♗d1 ♗g7
21 ♗f3 ♗a5
22 ♗e2 ♗b5
23 a4 ♗d7
25 h4?

Well, White is finally losing his patience.

25 ... $\text{w}c8$!
26 $\text{d}d3$ $\text{g}g4$
27 $\text{w}g2$ $\text{gxh}4$
28 f3 h3
29 $\text{w}f1$

The crux of the plan begun on his 25th move. White was now expecting 29 ... $\text{d}d7$ 30 g4 followed by 31 $\text{w}xh3$ with a terrific attack.

29 ... f5!
30 fxg4 $\text{fxe}4$
31 $\text{w}xh3$ exd3
32 $\text{\&}xh6$!! $\text{\&}h8$!!

Black inflicts the ultimate humiliation: an echo of White's 24 $\text{e}h1$.

White resigns

The position in the above diagram was reached after the moves

1 e4 g6
2 d4 $\text{\&}g7$
3 $\text{c}c3$ d6
4 $\text{f}f3$ $\text{f}f6$
5 h3 0-0
6 $\text{e}e3$ a6
7 a4 b6
8 $\text{c}c4$ e6

What would you feel playing against someone who puts five pawns on the sixth rank in the first eight moves? Probably a strong urge to punish the impudent fellow.

9 0-0 $\text{\&}b7$
10 e5 dxe5
11 $\text{\&}x e5$ $\text{\&}bd7$

(diagram 134)
Remarkably, one mistake on White's part now turns his position into a lost one.

12 ♘f4? ♘h5!
13 ♘h2

13 ♧xd7? ♧xd7 14 ♘e5 ♧c6!

13 ...
14 dxe5

14 ♧xe5 ♧xe5 15 dxe5 ♧g5 is of no help.

14 ...
15 ♧xe5

15 ♧xd8 ♧xh2+.

15 ...
16 g4 ♧xe5
17 gxh5 gxh5!

Simple and effective. A deadly check is threatened at g5 (g7).

18 f4 ♧c5+
19 ♘h2 ♧xc4
20 ♧xh5 ♧d4

And Black won.

The game Pomar-Petrosian, Siegen Olympiad 1970, provided a good example of provocative opening play:

1 d4 g6
2 c4 ♘g7
3 ♗c3 d6
4 ♗f3 ♘g4
5 g3 ♧c8!?
or is he trying to shy away from well-trodden paths? Does he have in mind a long, manoeuvring battle, or is it short, sharp skirmish on “today’s menu”? The answers to these and other questions can be deduced from the information inherent in the first few moves.

Shrewd players sometimes mask their real intentions by playing certain types of openings that do not give away their intentions.

Playing a reversed opening (i.e. playing a Black system with the White pieces) is one possibility. GM Ludek Pachman, opening a game with 1 e4 e5 2 d4 f3 d6 3 d2 d6 4 d3 referred to his play as “White’s seemingly tame opening”.

Later, after playing the moves c3, b3, and a3 in the first twelve moves he added: “White’s passive-looking pieces have in reality great latent power.”

Such play can lead the adversary to underestimate White’s position, and induce him to play too ambitiously in his desire to take advantage of it. However, reversed set-ups are perfectly playable, the attempt to “punish” them being an inappropriate response.

Other plots are also possible. Playing the aggressive Muzio Gambit with the aim of getting a better ending, or employing the sharp Sicilian Dragon with the purpose of engaging in a purely positional contest, may prove quite confusing to the opponent.

Some opening systems certainly create false impressions. In an interesting remark to one position from his games, GM Lev Psakhis wrote: “Black’s position is very solid. The main danger is that one could overestimate its possibilities.”

Another interesting option is to play a quiet opening that develops suddenly into a fierce combinative battle. Examples are the Colle system, or some variations of the Caro-Kann Defence, among others.

In an article entitled “Deceptive Calm”, the late ex-world champion Mikhail Tal wrote:

“[Some chessplayers] are silent till the time comes, unassumingly developing pieces and apparently without serious threatening intentions. The board is dozing, the opponent is calm, and as always in similar situations, an imperceptibly prepared explosion proves extremely effective.”

Levenfish-Konstantinopolsky
Leningrad 1947

1 e4
2 d4
3 f3
c6
d5
dx4
White is in great difficulties: 16 \( \text{d}d3 \) fails to 16 ... \( \text{xe}3! \) 17 \( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{xd}3 \) 18 \( \text{xd}3 \) \( \text{c}4 \); and 16 \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 17 \( \text{xc}5 \) succumbs to 17 ... \( \text{h}6+ \) 18 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{xe}3 \). These variations illustrate the power of the Black position (which arose from the modest Caro-Kann!).

16 ... \( \text{cxd}4! \)
17 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \)
18 \( \text{d}2 \)

Capitulation, but 18 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 19 \( \text{c}4 \) (19 \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \)) 19 ... \( \text{b}5 \) does not help (20 \( \text{xb}5 \) \( \text{xd}4 \)).

18 ... \( \text{c}5 \)
19 \( \text{b}4 \)

19 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 20 \( \text{bxc}3 \) \( \text{a}5 \) is also hopeless because of the white king’s shattered position.

19 ... \( \text{d}3+ \)
20 \( \text{xd}3 \) \( \text{xb}4 \)
21 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{dxc}3 \)
22 \( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{xd}3 \)
23 \( \text{xb}4 \) \( \text{xc}3+ \)

White resigns

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Portisch-Petrosian

Moscow 1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>d4</th>
<th>d5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>c4</td>
<td>c6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>cxd5</td>
<td>cxd5</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>( \text{c}3 )</td>
<td>( \text{c}6 )</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>( \text{f}4 )</td>
<td>e6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most players would consider this a very boring position.

8 \text{\&}g3 \quad 0-0
9 \text{\&}d3 \quad \text{\&}e8?!
10 \text{\&}e5 \quad \text{\&}xe5
11 dx\text{e}5 \quad \text{\&}d7
12 f4 \quad \text{\textbf{\&}}b6? \\
13 0-0! \quad \text{\textbf{\&}}xe3+
14 \text{\&}h1 \quad \text{\&}b6
15 \text{\textbf{\&}}h5 \quad \text{\&}f8
16 \text{\textbf{\&}}f3 \quad \text{\&}g6
17 \text{\&}f2 \quad \text{\&}d8
18 \text{\&}b5 \quad \text{\&}e7
19 \text{\&}d6 \quad \text{\&}d7
20 \text{\&}h4 \quad \text{\&}b6
21 \text{\&}h3 \quad h6
22 \text{\&}f6

Quite a change from the previous diagram! White is executing a slaughter. Black has been paralysed for some moves now.

1 ... \text{\&}f5?
2 \text{\textbf{\&}}d2 \quad h6
3 \text{\textbf{\&}}ad1 \quad \text{\&}1e7?

GM Bojan Kurajica recalls:
"I opted for a quiet, deceptively simple line... Lulled into a false sense of security... Hort played an inferior move, after which all my pieces came to life with a vengeance... Caught off guard, Hort did not defend well." 70

4  g4  h7
5  h4!  g6
6  g5  h1xg5
7  h1xg5  e7
8  g2  d7
9  h1  g4+
10  f1  e6
11  h2!  b6
12  g2  g4+
13  h1  e6

Black has been reduced to a very passive position.

14  g1  bxc5
15  dxc5  d8ad
16  d4  d4xd
17  xd4  f6
18  d3!  f1xg5
19  g4  c6
20  d1  h4
21  d7!  d3xd
22  d7g7+  g8h8
23  d7g5+  f1f6
24  d7h4+  Resigns

obtained good results by following in his footsteps.

There are some other strange characters around. Take a look at this:

Hickl-I. Shrentzel
Tel Aviv 1988

1  f3  f6 2  g3  d6 3  g2  e5 4  c4  e7 5  c3  c6 6  0-0 0-0 7  d3  bd7 8  b1  d5 9  cxd5  cxd5 10  e4!?  d4 11  e2  a5

Have you wondered what future White has in mind for his knight on e2?

12  h3?!  g6 13  g2  e8 14  egl!?

But of course! A manoeuvre that would cause anger and anxiety to most opponents.

Kadas-Pliester
Budapest 1985

1  h4!?  e5 2  d4  exd4 3  f3  f6 4  c3!?  dxc3 5  dxc3  d5 6  e4!?

Very strange... The fact that White won this game probably has nothing to do with the opening...

The author recalls a game between two young players that followed one of the silliest gambits on record: 1  e4  f5? 2  xf5  f7? 3  h5+  g6 4  xg6+  g7 5  gxh7  f6. Apparently nowadays people
have names for everything, and according to Benjamin and Schiller they sequence is the "Fred" Variation, or "the Mao Tse-Tung Attack".

All I know is that when the White player saw this he laughed for quite some time, and thereafter played so badly that it was only with great effort that he saved half a point.

In the majority of cases, however, such wild experiments fail. Correct provocative play must take place within strict limits. Too much provoking can lead to disaster.

Let us sum up this chapter with the words of Znosko-Borovsky, one of the very few chess writers to have acknowledged the importance of deception in chess:

"All is for the best ... when our combination is so forceful, or our opponent's position so weak, that we have only to go ahead without fear ... More frequently we have to disguise our intentions, to lull our opponent to sleep, or even entice him into error. It is often necessary that he should not suspect our plans ... The real art consists in creating the belief, logically, that our intentions are otherwise than they seem."
It is time to sum up. I would like to repeat and emphasise some of the points that I have tried to make:

- In chess, *just as* in other games and pursuits, there are moments and situations that are dangerous, and when the wrong reaction may well lead to defeat.

- In chess, *unlike* most other sports, the dangerous moments are not always evident, and may easily be overlooked.

- It follows that guidance on how to develop a warning-system, and the systematic classification of potentially dangerous situations, may be of great use to players of all levels.

- Danger-signals may originate from various sources. The advice I have tried to give is structured around three main sources: *outside* (the opponent); *inside* (our own thought-process); and the *stimulus* itself (the board position).

- Each signal may indicate the probability that a dangerous moment is about to arrive. In practical play, several danger-signals can often be present at the same time. Thus it is vital to be able to *integrate* these signs in order to form an accurate assessment.

- A methodical search for danger is recommended. Identified dangers can be actual or potential, real or phony. The searching process does not come to a halt when a danger has been spotted. It could be that more dangers are waiting to be uncovered.

- Sensing danger is treated throughout the book as a skill that can be developed. Some techniques have been suggested, within the framework of a sustained paranoid approach.

- Finally, recognising the relevance of danger-signals has two applications: not only can we more successfully detect these signals from our own *defensive* point of view, we can also use this knowledge for
attacking purposes. That is, we can conceal our intentions from our opponent by conscious deception.

The importance of possessing a good sense of danger cannot be exaggerated. I hope that this message has been taken, dear reader. To strengthen your alarm system, a "do you smell a rat?" quiz (in contrast to the usual "spot the winning move" tests) follows on the next few pages, to enable you to check your ability to identify dangers.

Keres-Czerniak
140 Buenos Aires 1939 W

1. Qfxd6 Qxf1 2. Qc5 seems to win right away (2 ... Wb6 3 Qd7+). Does it?

01 01

Afek-R. Lev
141 Tel Aviv 1987 B

Black played what appeared to be the natural realisation of his positional advantage: 1 ... Qf6+ 2 Ke5 Qxb4+ 3 Qxb4+ Qxb4. Is there something wrong in his assessment?
Against White’s threat of 1 \( \text{Qf4} \)
Black can choose between 1 ... \( \text{Qxb5} \) (1 ... \( \text{Qg6} \) ? 2 \( \text{Qxg6} \) wins) 2 \( \text{Qxb5+} \) \( \text{Qc6} \) 3 \( \text{Wxd5} \) \( \text{Wd6} \) after which 4 \( \text{Wg5!} \) still keeps the initiative, and 1 ... \( \text{f6} \) intending to demonstrate that White does not have enough for his two pawns deficit.

What would you play?

We can be sure that Black knew the famous three pawns against three pawns position (1 \( g6! \) \( fxg6 \) 2 \( h6! \); or 1 ... \( hxg6 \) 2 \( f6! \)). But here Black is equipped with an extra bishop!

Surely this must make a difference! Or does it not?
Black can restore material equilibrium by 1 ... dxc5. In the game he counted on 1 ... g4 2 hxg4 \( \text{wxg4} + 3 \text{xf1 wxf3} 4 \text{h2 dxc5.} \)

Zapata saw that his queen was in danger, but trusted that after 5 \( \text{e2 wxe3!} \) he would emerge from the dust a piece ahead. Was he right?

1 ... \( \text{e1} \) would have forced White's resignation in a short while. Instead, Black played the "brilliant" 1 ... \( \text{e2} + 2 \text{xe2} a2, \) oblivious to his enemy's counterchances.

What was the snare?
White’s only problem seems to be Black’s d- and h-pawns. 1 \textit{g3}? h4+ or 1 \textit{g2}? h4 2 a6 h3+ are bad, but 1 \textit{g1}! seems to do the trick. Is everything clear now, or should we search for other dangers?
Answers to Questions

1.

2 h3! wins a piece. For instance, 2 ... \( \text{\underline{\text{\textit{d7}}} 3 \text{\textit{g4 \textit{g7}}} 4 \text{\textit{g5}}} \).
The game concluded 2 ... \( \text{\textit{cxd4 3 g4 \textit{d7}}} 4 \text{\textit{cxd4 \textit{h4}}} 5 \text{\textit{e2}} \) and White won.

2.

1 ... \( \text{\textit{b2}} \) 2 \( \text{\textit{g6+!!}} \) \( \text{\textit{fxg6}} (2 \ldots \text{\textit{xg6}}. 3 \text{\textit{fxg6+ \textit{gxg6}}} 4 \text{\textit{xf7+}} \)
restores material equilibrium) 3 \( \text{\textit{g8+ \textit{h8}}} 4 \text{\textit{b3+!}} \) draws. Likewise, 1 ... \( \text{\textit{e4?}} \) 2 \( \text{\textit{g6+!!}} \) draws in a similar fashion: 2 ... \( \text{\textit{xg6}} 3 \text{\textit{fxg6+ \textit{gxg6}}} 4 \text{\textit{c2}} \).

By way of elimination, we must conclude that only 1 ... \( \text{\textit{d2!}} \) is correct. That is the move Karpov played, and his opponent resigned at once.

3.

In the game, Black chose 5 ... \( \text{\textit{e6??}} \) and after 6 \( \text{\textit{exd5 \textit{cxd5}}} 7 \text{\textit{f3!}} \) he was totally lost! The game concluded 7 ... \( \text{\textit{c3}} (7 ... \text{\textit{c7}} 8 \text{\textit{xb7 \textit{d7}}} 9 \text{\textit{b5!}} \) is no better) 8 \text{\textit{bxc3 \textit{c6}}} 9 \text{\textit{xb7 \textit{c8}}} 10 \text{\textit{xc6+! \textit{xc6}}} 11 \text{\textit{xc6+ \textit{d7}}} 12 \text{\textit{xd7 \textit{g5}}} 13 \text{\textit{f3 \textit{f5}}} 14 \text{\textit{d5+ \textit{e7}}} 15 \text{\textit{xe5+ \textit{xe5}}} 16 \text{\textit{xe5}} \).

Black resigned.

Black’s faulty fifth move made White’s 2 \( \text{\textit{b1}} \) very handy!

4.

It is very wrong! 2 ... \( \text{\textit{f3+!!}} \) led to a crushing defeat for White: 3 \( \text{\textit{h1}} (3 \text{\textit{gxf3 \textit{g5+}}} 4 \text{\textit{h1 \textit{h5}}} \) 3 ... \( \text{\textit{d6}} 4 \text{\textit{gxf3 \textit{flf4}}} 5 \text{\textit{g2 \textit{h3+!}}} 6 \text{\textit{a3h3 \textit{xf3+}}} 7 \text{\textit{h4 g5+}} 8 \text{\textit{vxf5 \textit{h8}}} 9 \text{\textit{h3 \textit{g8+}}} 10 \text{\textit{a3h4 \textit{f6+}}} 11 \text{\textit{h5 \textit{g5}}} \text{\textit{mate}}.

5.

I’m sure you saw the folly of 1 \( \text{\textit{xf3?? \textit{g4+!!}}} \) 2 \( \text{\textit{vxc4 \textit{h5+!}}} 3 \text{\textit{exh5 \textit{g5}}} \text{\textit{mate!}} \) GM Bent Larsen didn’t . . .

6.

In fact, only 1 \( \text{\textit{h2}} \) draws. Other moves (like 1 \( \text{\textit{h1??}}, \) which occurred in the game) lose to 1 ... \( \text{\textit{h3!}} \) and White will lose through zugzwang: 2 \( \text{\textit{g1 \textit{c5+}}} 3 \text{\textit{h1 \textit{b6}}} 4 \text{\textit{g4 \textit{hxg4}}} \) etc. 1 \( \text{\textit{h2}} \) prevents this, for if 1 ... \( \text{\textit{f3}} 2 \text{\textit{h3! \textit{vxc3}}} \) stalemate.
7.

1 \textit{Ec8??} (1 \textit{Hh8+! \textit{gf4 2 Ec8 draws}) 1 \ldots \textit{Ac3!!} and one of the black pawns promotes (2 \textit{Exc3+ \textit{g2}).

8.

1 \textit{Ad2 was correct. After White’s 1 a5? Black replied strongly 1 \ldots \textit{xb3!! 2 Exf3+ \textit{a4! 3 Eg3 b3 4 Eg4+ \textit{xa5 and White is helpless after both 5 Exg2 b2 and 5 \textit{xe2 b2 6 Eg8 \textit{a6 7 Ha8+ \textit{b7. Surprisingly, it was the modest b-pawn that played the crucial role.}

9.

1 f5?? would be criminal (1 \ldots \textit{Wf4 mate). 1 \textit{Af3?} was White’s choice, which threw away half a point: 1 \ldots \textit{Wf2+! =.

Interestingly, nor would 1 \textit{e4? (1 \ldots \textit{We3+ 2 \textit{Af3 \textit{Wf2+!) or 1 \textit{Af7? (1 \ldots \textit{We3+ 2 \textit{gh2 \textit{Wf4+) achieve the goal. However, 1 \textit{Wg5+ \textit{g7 2 h4! (not 2 \textit{Af3 \textit{Wf1+ 3 \textit{gh2 \textit{We3!) seems to do the trick: 2 \ldots \textit{h6 3 \textit{Wg4 \textit{xd5 4 h5 or 2 \ldots \textit{we1+ 3 \textit{gh2 \textit{Wxh4+ 4 \textit{Wxh4 \textit{Axh4 5 \textit{Axe4 and wins.

10.

2 \textit{Wc3!!} saves the day. The game continued 2 \ldots bxc3? 3 fxe7 \textit{Wb5 4 e8=\textit{W+ \textit{Wxe8 5 \textit{Axe8 cxb2 6 \textit{Ae1 \textit{Ab7 7 \textit{Axe4 \textit{Axh2 and ended in a Draw, after White had failed to convert his advantage.

11.

The solution of No. 95 is correct, but the “solutions” of the next two diagrams contain bad errors.

In No. 96 White can win with 1 \textit{Wh1+! \textit{g6 2 \textit{Wc6!! an idea based on a study by K. Eucken, 1947.

In No. 97 White wins by 1 \textit{Wf8+ \textit{h7 2 \textit{Wf5!!}, an idea first shown by Pogosyants, 1972.

Notice how a slight change in the position has resulted in the creation of new and brilliant ideas.

12.

In No. 111 1 \ldots \textit{g5! wins material: 2 \textit{Ag3 g4 3 \textit{Ag1 \textit{Axg2. That is how the game Nurnberg-Rodl, Riedenburg 1947, ended.

13.

The second variation is correct, though it should be carried on a little further: 5 \textit{Af3 \textit{ad3 6 \textit{Af2 (6 a4 c4 7 a5 c3 8 a6 c2 9 a7 c1=\textit{W 10 a8=\textit{W \textit{h1+) 6 \ldots c4 7 \textit{Ae1 \textit{Ac2! 8 a4 c3 and wins.

The first one contains a serious flaw: 1 \ldots \textit{Ac8? 2 \textit{Ad7 \textit{Ee7 3 \textit{Ed8 3 \textit{Ee6!! \textit{Ed7 4 \textit{Ee5! \textit{Dd3+ 5 \textit{Be3! \textit{Axe5 6 \textit{Dxc5+ drawing.

14.

The worst possibility lies in the variation 1 \ldots \textit{a6?? 2 \textit{He5!! as actually happened in the game. Mate is unavoidable.
Answers to “Do You Smell a Rat?” Quiz

140.

According to Czerniak, Keres was in serious time trouble. He wrote 1 Qxf6 on his score-sheet but then changed his mind and played another move.

The intended 1 Qxf6? Qxf1 2 Qc5 would fail to 2 ... Qg3+! and here the various continuations are in Black’s favour: 3 Qxg3? Wfl+; or 3 Qgl Wb6!; or 3 Qh2 Qf1+ 4 Qxf1? (4 Qg1? Qxg2+!, but he can draw by repetition with 4 Qh1) 4 ... Qxg2+! 5 Qxg2 Wf2+, winning.

Keres probably felt that 1 Qxf6 was too good to be true, and played the strong 1 Qxe3! fxe3 2 Wxe3 Qe5 3 Qxf6 Qxf6 4 Qxf6 Wxa2 5 We5+ Qa8 6 Qxf7. The rest of the game is noteworthy if only because of its aesthetic “finale”: 6 ... Wc4 7 b3 Wc2 (7 ... Wxb3? 8 Wxh8) 8 Qf2 Wc5 9 We7 Wxe7 10 Qxe7 Qd8 11 Qf5 h4 12 Qg1 Ac8 13 d6 Qc1+ 14 Qh2 Qd1 15 d7 Qd8 16 Ae8 Q1xd7 17 Qf8! Black resigned.

141.

He was dead wrong. 1 ... Qf6+ 2 Qe5 Qxb4+?? 3 Qxb4+ Qxb4 4 g5! led to Black’s immediate resignation!

The reason is that in the ensuing pawn ending White will create a passed pawn on the king’s flank: 4 ... Qxe5+ (forced) 5 fxe5 with the plan 6 h4 followed by 7 h5 gxh5 8 g6!. Black is helpless: 5 ... c5+ 6 Qxd5 c4 7 Qd4 c3 8 Qd3 Qc5 9 e6 fxe6 10 Qxc3 ± ±.

Had he been suspicious, Black could have kept his winning chances with 2 ... Qxe5+ 3 fxe5 g5!.

142.

1 ... f6?? led to a quick finish. Black did not sense the clouds that had gathered around his undeveloped position:

2 Qxe6!! Qxe6 3 Qf4 Wd8 4 Qc7!

Pretty and original. Either the king or queen has to go. White won.
143.
Yes, it does make a difference. Being alert and careful does not mean that we should be afraid of ghosts!
1 g6 hxg6! 2 f6 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{e}}5!} led to Black's victory: 3 \textit{\texttt{xe}}5 gxf6+ with 4 ... gxh5.

144.
This is a case of one danger making the player blind to the other possible dangers in the position. It is true that after 5 ... \textit{\texttt{we}}3! the queen is temporarily saved, but in the long run the queen cannot find a safe haven: 6 \textit{\texttt{wc}}2! \textit{\texttt{wd}}4 7 f3! (7 \textit{\texttt{ed}}1? f3! \textit{\texttt{ff}})! 7 ... \textit{\texttt{bs}}5 8 \textit{\texttt{ed}}1 bxc4 9 d6! \textit{\texttt{de}}6 10 \textit{\texttt{eb}}5 \textit{\texttt{we}}3 11 \textit{\texttt{wx}}e4 \textit{\texttt{wh}}8 12 \textit{\texttt{ed}}3 (finally capturing the imprisoned lady) 12 ... \textit{\texttt{dg}}5 13 \textit{\texttt{xe}}3 fxe3 14 \textit{\texttt{gg}}2 and Black's further resistance did not change the obvious outcome. White won.

145.
White had an undeserved lucky escape: 3 \textit{\texttt{eh}}6+! \textit{\texttt{we}}5 4 \textit{\texttt{eh}}5+ Draw since Black dare not play 4 ... \textit{\texttt{ff}}4?? 5 \textit{\texttt{f}}5+ and 6 \textit{\texttt{ff}}1, nor 4 ... \textit{\texttt{dd}}4?? 5 \textit{\texttt{dd}}2! a1=\textit{\texttt{w}} 6 \textit{\texttt{dd}}5 mate, nor 4 ... \textit{\texttt{ee}}6 5 \textit{\texttt{hh}}6+ \textit{\texttt{ee}}7?? 6 \textit{\texttt{hh}}7+ and 7 \textit{\texttt{aa}}7. Black missed victory because he did not bother to look for his enemy's possible replies. Let that be a lesson for us all!

146.
It is not over yet. 1 \textit{\texttt{gg}}1! d3 2 \textit{\texttt{ff}}1!! (2 \textit{\texttt{ff}}2 g5!! 3 a6 g4 4 a7 g3+; the far-away g-pawn can be a source of trouble!).
If 1 ... \textit{\texttt{cc}}4 2 \textit{\texttt{ff}}1 \textit{\texttt{c}}3 then only 3 \textit{\texttt{ee}}1! assures the victory: 3 \textit{\texttt{ee}}2? \textit{\texttt{ff}}5!! 4 a6 f4 5 a7 f3+ and we realise that the f-pawn could also prove to be a menace.
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