Chess Tactics for Kids

Murray Chandler

THE SKEWER

GAMBIT

A copy of the British Library Cataloguing in Publication data is available from the British Library.

Dedication: better be to my Mum! Plus, of course, her grandchildren: Alex, Sam, Ben, and Lara, Matthew and Olivia.

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The 50 Tricky Tactics

DEFLECTION

Introduction

The best way to confound and confuse a chess opponent is by using *tactics* - a forcing sequence of moves that gain an advantage. This book aims to help you do this, by showing combinations that arise from typical piece formations. Recognizing these patterns will improve your tactical ability, enabling you to win your opponent's pawns and pieces with ease when such possibilities arise.

This collection of 50 Tricky Tactics deals with tactical manoeuvres (such as forks and pins), and also with thematic combinations that win material. It is written as a complementary sequel to my previous book, *How to Beat Your Dad at Chess,* which covered checkmating patterns. From the amazing reception the DAD book received, it seems the coverage of pattern recognition has really touched a chord amongst ordinary players. There is no reason why juniors, home or club players can't learn these patterns, and so make the same - sometimes astonishing - mental shortcuts that the top masters do.

Only themes which arise fairly frequently in actual practice have been included[1]. Before too long I'm sure that you will be springing many of these tactical traps on your friends and club mates, or perhaps even on your long-suffering Dad.

Murray Chandler

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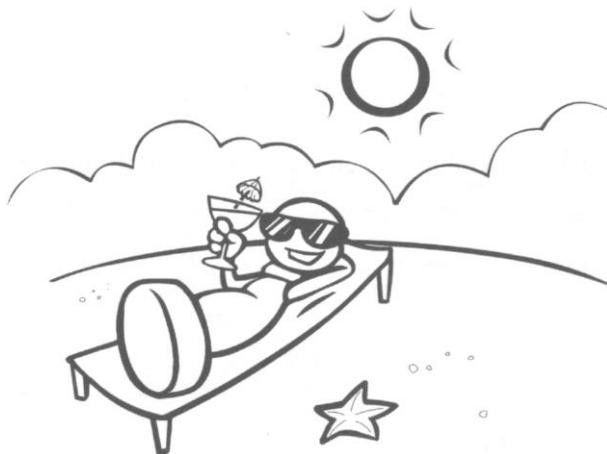
1 OK, I confess to one exception, Tricky Tactic 29 (Kamikaze Queen and Rampant Rook). This motif is rare, but is so fantastic I just couldn't resist putting it in.

Algebraic Notation
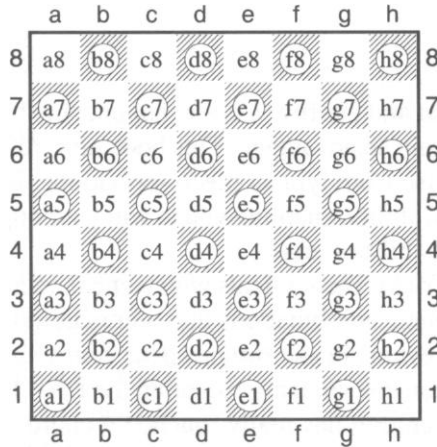
The chess notation used in this book is the simple, algebraic notation in use throughout the world. It can be learnt by anyone in just a few minutes.

As you can see from the chessboard above, the files are labelled a-h (going from left to right) and the ranks are labelled 1-8. This gives each square its own unique reference point. The pieces are described as follows:

Knight   =
Bishop   =
Rook   =
Queen   =
King   =

Pawns are not given a symbol. When they move simply the *destination square* is given.

The following additional symbols are also used:

Check   =   +
Double Check   =   ++
Capture   =   x
Castles kingside =   0-0
Castles queenside =   0-0-0
Good move   =   !
Bad move   ?   =

6
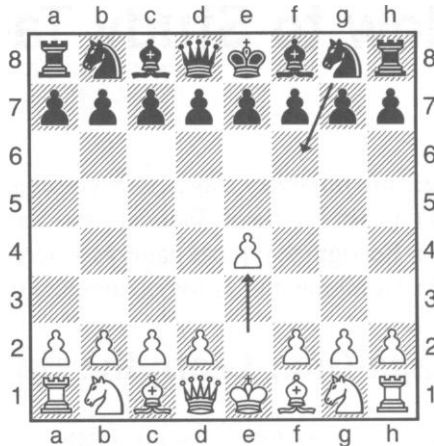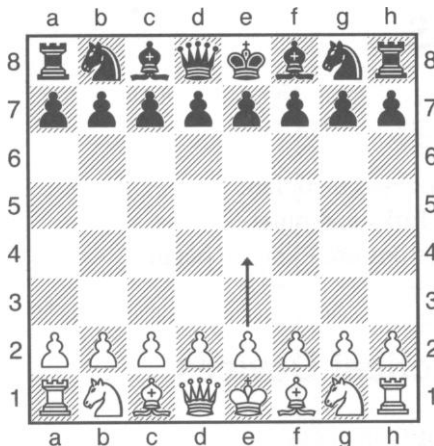
In the left-hand diagram above White is about to play the move **1 e4.** The **1** indicates the move number, and **e4** the destination square of the white pawn.

In the right-hand diagram White's **1 e4** move is complete. Black is about to reply **1...♘f6** (moving his knight to the **f6-square** on his *first move)*.

THE PIN

How to Study Tactics

There are three key stages to becoming a master chess tactician:
1) Learn the Basic Tactical Devices (such as forks and pins).
2) Recognize typical patterns where combinations are likely to occur.
3) Combine motifs to outcalculate the opponent.

Stage One: Learn the Basic Tactical Devices

In this book we cover the most basic tactical motifs in chess:

Forks	**Discovered Checks**
Pins	**Double Checks**
Skewers	**Desperado Sacrifices**
Decoys	**Stalemates**
Deflections	**Zwischenzugs**
Overloads	**Perpetual Checks**
Discovered Attacks	**Breaking the Pin**

Being familiar with these motifs is helpful when it comes to finding combinations. In fact these themes are quite easy to learn, and even beginners will already have encountered some of the ideas. Each of these themes is explained and covered as a Tricky Tactic in this book.

Stage Two: Recognize Typical Patterns

Perhaps the biggest secret to becoming an expert at chess tactics is to *recognize positions where combinations are likely to occur.* Strong players know that certain piece formations make some tactical combinations much more common.

REMOVING A DEFENDER

Here is a typical example, giving the bare minimum of pieces to illustrate the theme:
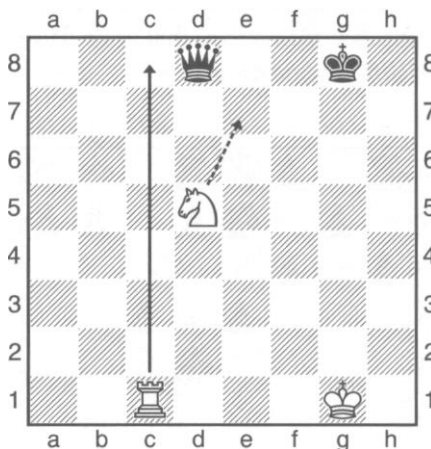
1) White moves

Experienced players will instantly spot that White wins the black queen with 1 ♖e8 ♛xc8 2 ♘e7+. This rook decoy sacrifice, followed by a knight fork, is easy to see, as the key pieces form a known pattern. You can see similar combinations in Tricky Tactic 13.

There are many such recurring tactical traps amongst the 50 Tricky Tactics in this book. One of the simplest, yet most elegant, is the Rook Endgame Skewer (Tricky Tactic 35):
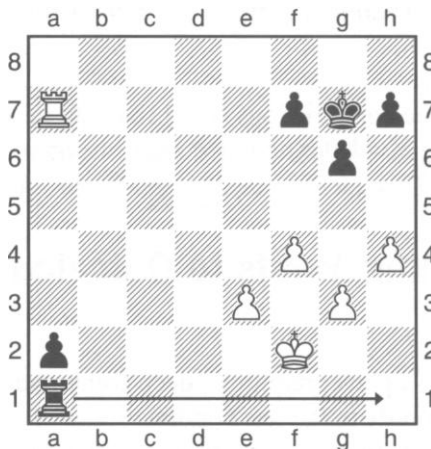
2) Black moves

The win goes 1...♖h1 (threatening to promote the pawn) 2 ♖xa2 ♖h2+ winning the white rook. Even if you do not get to play such a combination on the board, knowing the theme could be important when deciding whether or not to enter certain rook endings.

Chess Tactics for Kids is intended to show themes, not specific traps. However, a number of the Tricky Tactics do feature some very devious traps that occur via specific openings, due to the pawn or piece formations that arise. However, all of these traps can be sprung/ram *a variety of different positions.*
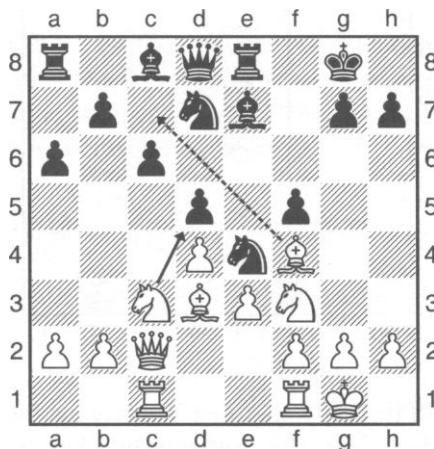
3) White moves

1 ♘xd5 wins, due to 1...cxd5 2 ♗c7 trapping the black queen.

This idea (from Tricky Tactic 49) typically arises from a Queen's Gambit Declined. Over the years, players of the black pieces have found wonderfully inventive ways to fall victim to this ♘xd5 motif! Therefore I regard this combination as a motif, rather than an opening trap.

Any of the previous three combinations could snare an inexperienced or unwary opponent. However, you might wonder how two alert, strong players, playing each other, could use a tactic to win. This question takes us on to our third stage.

Stage 3: Combining Motifs to Outcalculate the Opponent

Outcalculating a good chess-player requires a deep combination. The key is to combine several different tactical motifs in the one combination. Actually, most combinations - even simple ones - already feature more than one theme. Some brilliant and well-disguised combinations can contain a fantastic mixture of themes, making the trap easy to miss - until it is too late.

Here is a combination played in a United States Amateur Team competition. The question is: was the pawn capture with 1 ♘xe5 a good move?