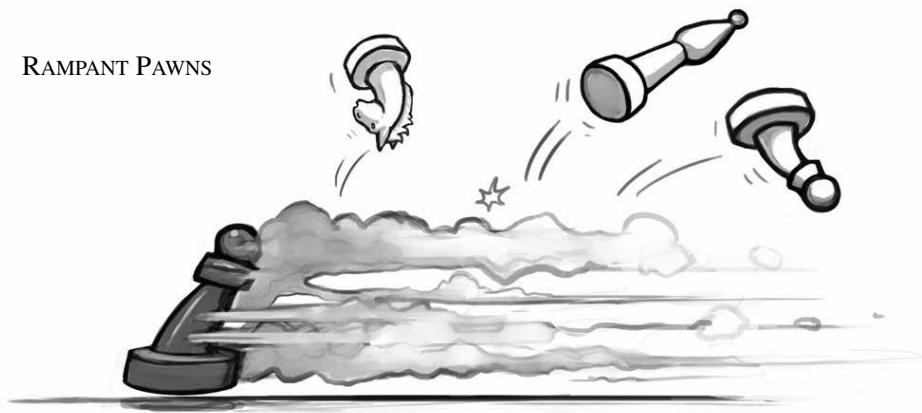


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RAMPANT PAWNS



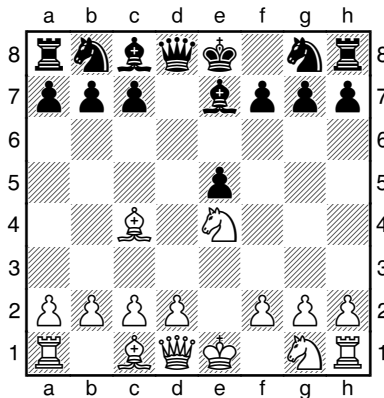
TRAP 9

Attack on f7: No Way to Defend

Why complicate? Just stroll in and take the thing!

Some tactics are too simple to be considered tactics by most books! What if we just attack a key pawn, and there is no way to defend it? This can and does happen, and it decides many games.

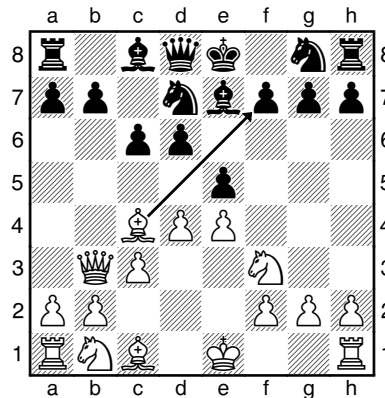
1 e4 d5 2 ♘c3 dxe4 3 ♗xe4 and with **3...e5** Black grabs central space but is inviting hand-to-hand combat. After **4 ♕c4** White has rapid development and is eyeing f7. That's two red flags, so Black must be alert and check everything carefully before choosing his move. **4...♗e7??**. Or not! Players learn not to fear cheap threats of mate on f7 in the opening, but that's only because there is normally a good defence to them. Here there isn't! **4...♗f6?** is also bad, because of the simple **5 ♖g5**. **4...♗c6** is a good way to prepare **...♗e7**.



5 ♖h5! ♗h6 6 d3! The threat of ♗xh6 is the finishing touch. Black will lose material and have a broken position. Instead **6 ♖xe5?** lets Black off the hook, since after **6...0-0** he can expect some compensation for the pawn due to White's now disorganized pieces.

In our second example, the threat is just as simple, but better hidden. **1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 d6**

(this opening is called Philidor's Defence) **3 ♕c4** (**3 d4 ♗d7 4 ♕c4 c6** is the same) **3...c6 4 d4 ♗d7** and now **5 c3** is a sly move. It looks like White is just supporting his d4-pawn, but there is a far nastier idea. **5...♗e7??** (**5...♗gf6** is a better defence, when Black can avoid any immediate disaster: **6 ♗g5 d5!, 6 ♖b3 ♖e7** or **6 dxe5 ♗xe4**) **6 ♖b3!**



It's that simple. There is no good way to prevent ♗xf7+. **6...♗h6?** **7 ♗xh6** obviously doesn't help Black at all, while **6...♗gf6?** is simple surrender – some games had a nice finish after **7 ♗xf7+ ♔f8 8 ♗g5 ♖b6 9 ♗e6+! ♔xf7 10 ♗g5++**, a double check that forces mate. After **6...d5 7 exd5** Black has tried various moves, but the basic truth is that he is a pawn down and desperately trying to avoid losing even more. One game went **7...b5 8 ♗d3 exd4 9 cxd4 c5 10 ♗xb5 ♗f6 11 ♗c6** and Black could only hope for a miracle.

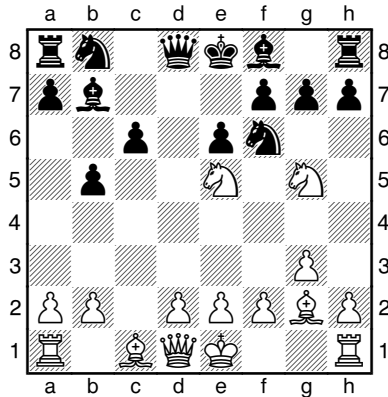
TRAP 10

f7: Sacrifice or Simply Attack

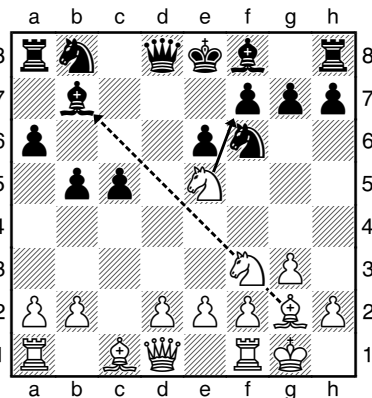
Violence is the last refuge of... those who want to win chess games!

In some positions, all we need to do is attack f7 (or f2), but in other cases – even with just a slight change in the position – we might need to sacrifice.

Take a look at 1 ♖f3 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♕g2 dxc4. After 5 ♗a3 c6?! 6 ♗xc4 b5 7 ♗ce5, the careless move 7...♕b7?? allows the simple 8 ♗g5.

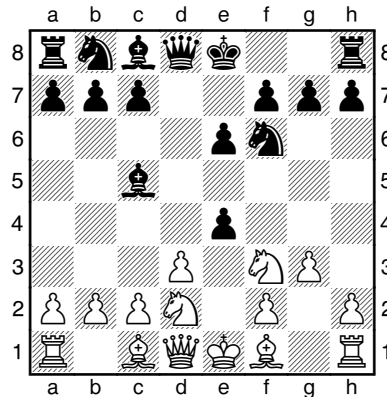


There is no way to defend f7 – no sacrifice is needed to win here! But think about the position after 5 0-0 a6 6 ♗a3 c5?! 7 ♗xc4 b5 8 ♗ce5 ♕b7??.



Then 9 ♗g5? is no good due to 9...♕xg2 10 ♕xg2 ♖d5+. But there is another way: 9 ♗xf7! ♕xf7 10 ♗g5+. The knight check discovers an attack on the b7-bishop. After 10...♕e7 11 ♕xb7 White is a pawn up and Black's position is in ruins.

An attack on f2 can suddenly appear when it looks like both sides are quietly developing: 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♗d2 ♗f6 4 ♗gf3 (4 g3 dxe4 5 dxe4 ♕c5 6 ♗gf3?? ♗g4 is another way for White to fall victim to the same idea) 4...♕c5 and now 5 g3?? has been played more than 50 times. Perhaps it seems not much is going on in the position, so White just continues with his planned development. But then comes 5...dxe4! (not 5...♗g4? 6 d4).



After 6 dxe4?! ♗g4 the crude attack on f2 not only wins a pawn but shatters White's position. White can limit the damage to a pawn with 6 ♗g5 or 6 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 7 dxe4 ♕xf2+!, but it's a horrible way to start a game.

TRAP 11

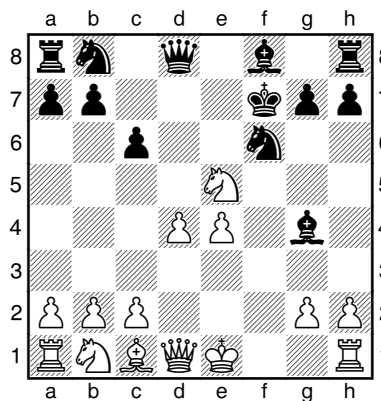
A Violent Unpin

Discovering how to turn a pin on its head

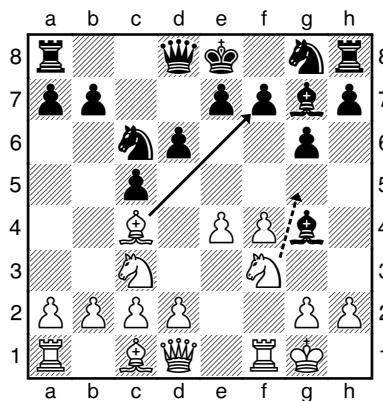
Pinning a piece against a queen can be double-edged. Suppose a knight is pinned by a bishop. If the knight can suddenly give check, then the queen can take the bishop. This is a very common theme that has helped win thousands of games. In this section we look at a couple of common set-ups, but remember this is a general idea rather than a specific trap. We shall see more examples of it later in the book.

We shall look at the tricky opening line **1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 f3 dx e4 4 fx e4 e5 5 ♖f3** in more depth in Trap 75. Here we shall just see what happens if Black carelessly plays his two most active-looking developing moves: **5...♗g4 6 ♖c4 ♗f6??**. Black has pinned the white knight and attacked the central e4-pawn. But there is a problem. Instead both **6...♗d7** and **6...♗h5** defend against White's threat. **7 ♗xf7+! ♕xf7 8 ♗xe5+**.

This tactical idea can work in many different structures. As long as White can follow up the sacrifice on f7 with a knight check that wins a bishop on g4, it can be devastating, even if the rest of the pieces are on other squares. Here is one from the Sicilian Defence: **1 e4 c5 2 ♗c3 d6 3 f4 g6 4 ♗f3 ♗g7 5 ♖c4 ♗c6 6 0-0 ♗g4??** (if Black wants to put the bishop here, he should play **6...♗f6** first).



The g4-bishop is defended once but attacked twice. After **8...♗e8 9 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 10 ♗xg4 ♗xd4 11 ♗c3** White is a pawn up. He can also expect to launch an overwhelming attack on the black king, which – let's not forget – cannot castle any more.



7 ♗xf7+! wins a pawn and forces the black king to wander. After **7...♕xf7** the knight cannot fork on e5, but **8 ♗g5+** is good enough since the bishop is undefended on g4. **8...♗e8 9 ♗xg4** is a position White should win with good play.

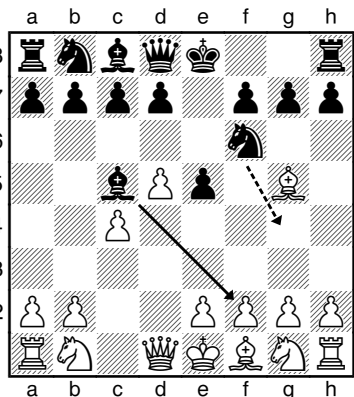
TRAP 12

More Disasters on f2/f7

A club-player version and a master version!

The sacrifice on f7 to unleash a discovered attack is so important and so often missed that we should look at some more examples. First of all, let's not forget that Black can also use this idea – that is, against White's f2-square.

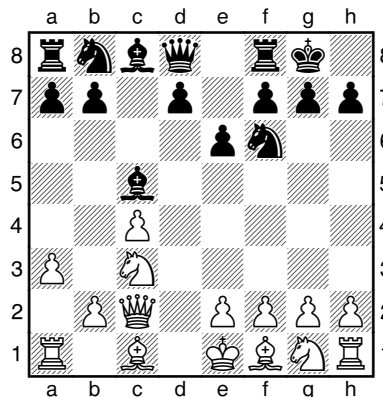
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e5 3 d5?! Hoping to play it safe, White declines Black's gambit. But some gambits really have to be taken. This move wastes time and lets Black develop his pieces to ideal squares. **3... ♗c5 4 ♕g5??**. White pins the knight, again hoping to limit Black's tactical options. This move has been played hundreds of times, but is a catastrophic blunder. **4 ♖f3 d6 5 ♕g5?? ♗xf2+!** **6 ♗xf2 ♖e4+** is another version of the idea.



4... ♗xf2+! Black seizes his opportunity. **4... ♖e4!** is also strong: if White grabs the queen with **5 ♕xd8?**, he is mated on the spot by **5... ♗xf2#**. After **5 ♕e3 ♗xe3 6 fxe3**, White hasn't lost material yet, but his position is a wreck. **5 ♗xf2 ♖g4+!** Only this knight check is good! **5... ♖e4+?** **6 ♗e3** isn't clear, since **6... ♖xg5?** **7 h4** traps the knight and after **6... ♗xg5+ 7 ♗xe4** the king survives his trip to the centre of the board – this time! **6 ♗e1** (**6 ♗g3?** is now a suicide

mission since **6... ♗xg5** defends the knight) **6... ♗xg5** and Black is a pawn up with a great position.

That trap has claimed vast numbers of victims at club level, but not at master level. Surely that's because masters would never miss such a simple idea? However... **1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 ♗b4 4 ♗c2 c5 5 dxc5 0-0 6 a3 ♗xc5** is a quiet-looking position in an opening called the Nimzo-Indian.



White normally plays **7 ♖f3** and decides on his next move whether to play **♕f4** or **♕g5**. But the immediate **7 ♕g5??** is a terrible mistake because of **7... ♗xf2+!** **8 ♗xf2 ♖g4+**, winning a pawn and leaving White's position a broken mess. Oddly, this version of the idea *has* claimed some very strong victims, including masters. That's true in both this exact position and in very similar ones. If you think there aren't tactics, you are far more likely to miss them!

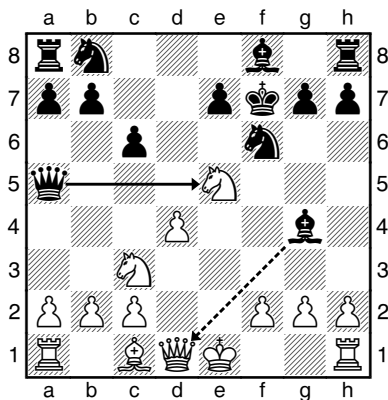
TRAP 13

Failed ♖xf7+ Discovery Trick

Yes, it is legal for a queen to take a defended knight

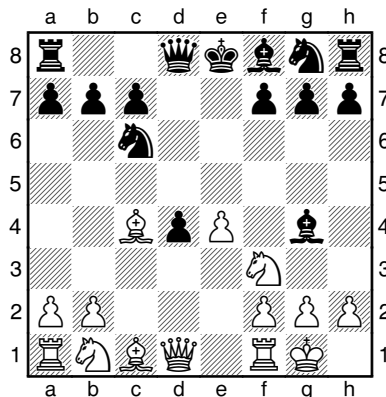
Hold your horses! (And your bishops!) Before you start smacking that bishop down on f7, check it actually works.

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♖xd5 3 ♘c3 ♗a5 4 ♖c4 ♘f6 5 d4 c6 6 ♘f3 and now 6...♗g4 is a normal developing move, but it invites a blunder that has claimed more victims than most 'real' traps have. With 7 ♖xf7+?? White thinks he has caught his opponent with a knight-fork trick. If he's right, he will be winning. In moments like this, pause to make sure it isn't you who has missed something important. Here he has. 7...♗xf7 8 ♘e5+.



If the black king retreats, White takes on g4 with a huge advantage. But 8...♗xe5+! 9 dxe5 ♖xd1 leaves Black a piece up. There is nothing complicated about this sequence, yet it has occurred in more than 30 games, including ones between high-rated players. Similar ideas in other openings have claimed many victims too. We are so used to ignoring moves that leave the queen *en prise* ('in a position to be taken') that we mentally filter them out, even when they win on the spot.

In one of my first club matches I made a similar mistake: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 ♘f3 exd4 5 ♖xc4 ♘c6 6 0-0 is a well-known opening line where White is a pawn down but has very active pieces. 6...♗g4? is not a good reply.



Black's careless bishop move can be punished by 7 ♗b3!, attacking both f7 and b7. However, I played instead 7 ♖xf7+?? ♗xf7 8 ♘g5+, when Black could have replied 8...♗xg5!. Again, the queen captures an apparently well-defended knight, but it wins because White's queen is under attack too. 9 ♖xg5 ♖xd1 10 ♗xd1 leaves Black a piece up, 9 f3 ♗g6 10 fxg4+ ♖e8 gives White nothing like enough for the piece, and 9 ♗b3+ ♖e6 10 ♗xb7 doesn't help because White is two pieces down. Fortunately my opponent missed his chance and after 8...♖e8?? 9 ♗xg4 I won the game quickly. But I had learnt a valuable lesson!