

TACTICAL IDEA 1: THE FATAL DIAGONAL

You've already seen how you can win quickly and easily against opponents who move their king-side pawns early on. FOOLS MATE is the simplest example of this.

Here are some more examples. Play through these games on your chessboard to see how they work. Putting your pawn on f6 and your knight on h6 is a really bad idea. The knight should go to f6, not the pawn.

This is what might happen if you get it wrong.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4

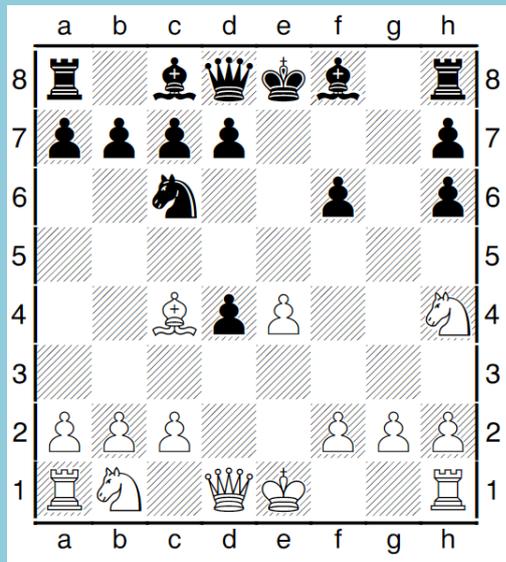
This is called the SCOTCH GAME. Black's best reply is to capture the pawn on d4.

- 3... f6
4. Bc4 Nh6
5. Bxh6 gxh6
6. Nh4

Breaking two rules: moving a piece twice and putting a knight on the side, but it's still a good move.

White wants to open a line for the queen.

- 6... exd4



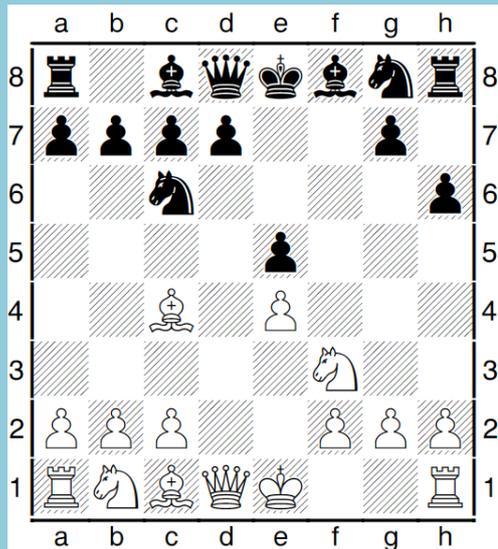
7. Qh5+ Ke7
8. Nf5#

Playing Nh4 in this sort of position is not always the best move, but it sets a few traps. This game has happened on several occasions.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 f6
3. Bc4 Nc6
4. Nh4 g5
5. Qh5+ Ke7
6. Nf5#

In the next game, 3... h6 is a bad move and 4... f6 is even worse. White SACRIFICES the knight on move 6 because he's seen that if Black captures it he'll use a FORK to win the rook.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 h6
4. d4 f6
5. dxe5 fxe5



6. Nxe5 d6

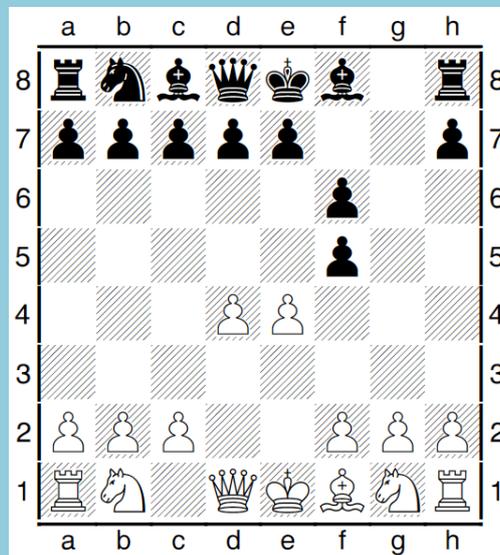
(If 6... Nxe5, 7. Qh5+ g6 8. Qxe5+ Qe7 9. Qxh8. White plays a FORK on move 7 and another FORK on move 8.)

7. Qh5+ Ke7

8. Qf7#

In this game Black had a nasty surprise. White's 4th move set up a DISCOVERED ATTACK on the h5 square and he/she didn't see it coming.

1. d4 f5
2. Bg5 Nf6
3. Bxf6 gxf6
4. e4



4... fxe4

5. Qh5#

This game uses a similar idea:

1. d4 f5
2. Bg5 h6
3. Bh4 g5
4. Bg3 f4

Black's TRAPPED the white bishop, but White has some sneaky ideas in mind.

5. e3

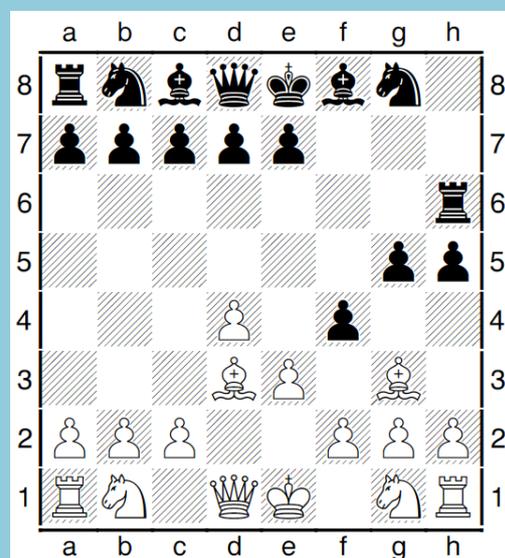
Planning Qh5#, which Black prevents by playing...

5... h5

6. Bd3

Now planning Bg6#, which Black prevents by playing...

6... Rh6



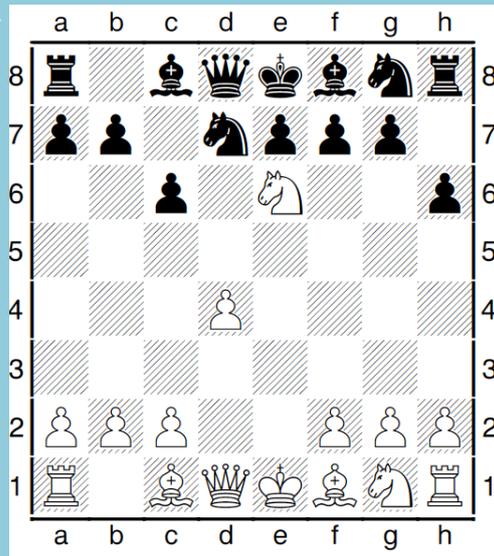
The black rook on h6 is an OVERWORKED PIECE. White now plays a QUEEN SACRIFICE to force the rook to capture on h5 and DEFLECT it from defending g6.

7. Qxh5+ Rxh5

8. Bg6#

In the next game, White set a clever trap on move 6. Black fell headlong into the trap: he/she should have played 6... Qa5+ or Qb6 instead.

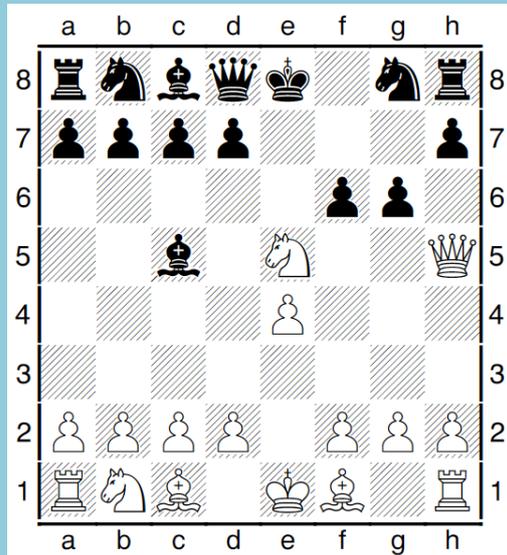
1. e4 c6
2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 dxe4
4. Nxe4 Nd7
5. Ng5 h6
6. Ne6



- 6... fxe6
7. Qh5+ g6
8. Qxg6#

Here's another idea based on the FATAL DIAGONAL which is well worth remembering. Black's 2nd and 3rd moves are both poor choices. White's 5th move is EXPLOITING THE PIN on the hfile: if 5... hxg6 then 6. Qxh8.

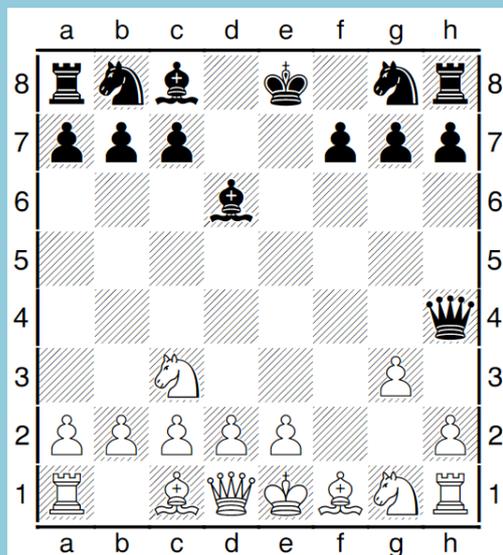
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Bc5
3. Nxe5 f6
4. Qh5+ g6



5. Nxc6 and whatever Black does next, White will win the rook on h8.

Now for some games where Black does the same sort of thing. Black's first move is a GAMBIT, giving up a pawn to get a quick attack. It worked well here: White moved the wrong knight on move 4. Black then played a QUEEN SACRIFICE to get checkmate.

1. f4 e5
2. fxe5 d6
3. exd6 Bxd6
4. Nc3 Qh4+
5. g3



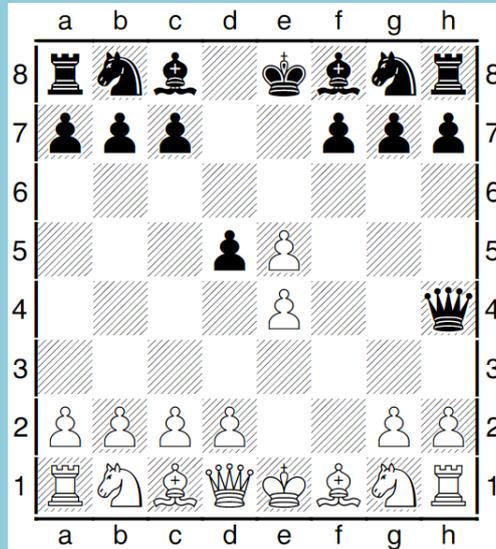
5... Qxg3+ (Bxg3+ will work just as well, but it's always good to SACRIFICE your queen!)
6. hxg3 Bxg3#

In this game the same GAMBIT led to an even quicker CHECKMATE.

1. f4 e5
2. g3 exf4
3. gxf4 Qh4#

The KING'S GAMBIT (1. e4 e5 2. f4) is a very exciting opening in which White often gets a strong attack, but you also have to be careful.

1. e4 e5
2. f4 d5
3. fxe5 Qh4+



After only three moves White is in a lot of trouble.

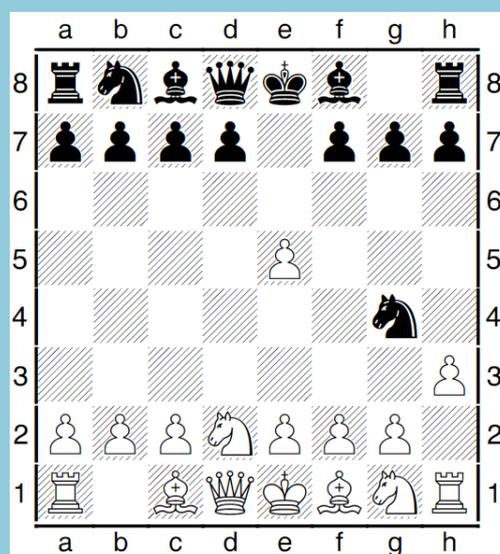
After 4. g3 Qxh4+ (FORK) Black will win the rook on h1.

And after 4. Ke2 Qxe4+ 5. Kf2 Bc5+ White will have to give up the queen to avoid mate.

Instead White should play the other pawn capture: 3. exd5, when, after 3... Qh4+ (now not the best move) you can just play 4. g3 safely.

Finally, here's a game you'll find in a lot of chess books, although it probably didn't happen quite like this.

1. d4 Nf6
2. Nd2 e5
3. dxe5 Ng4
4. h3



4... Ne3

This move traps the white queen, but, you may ask, why can't White play 5. fxe3. The answer of course, is that the FATAL DIAGONAL is now open for Black to play 5... Qh4+ 6. g3 Qxg3#