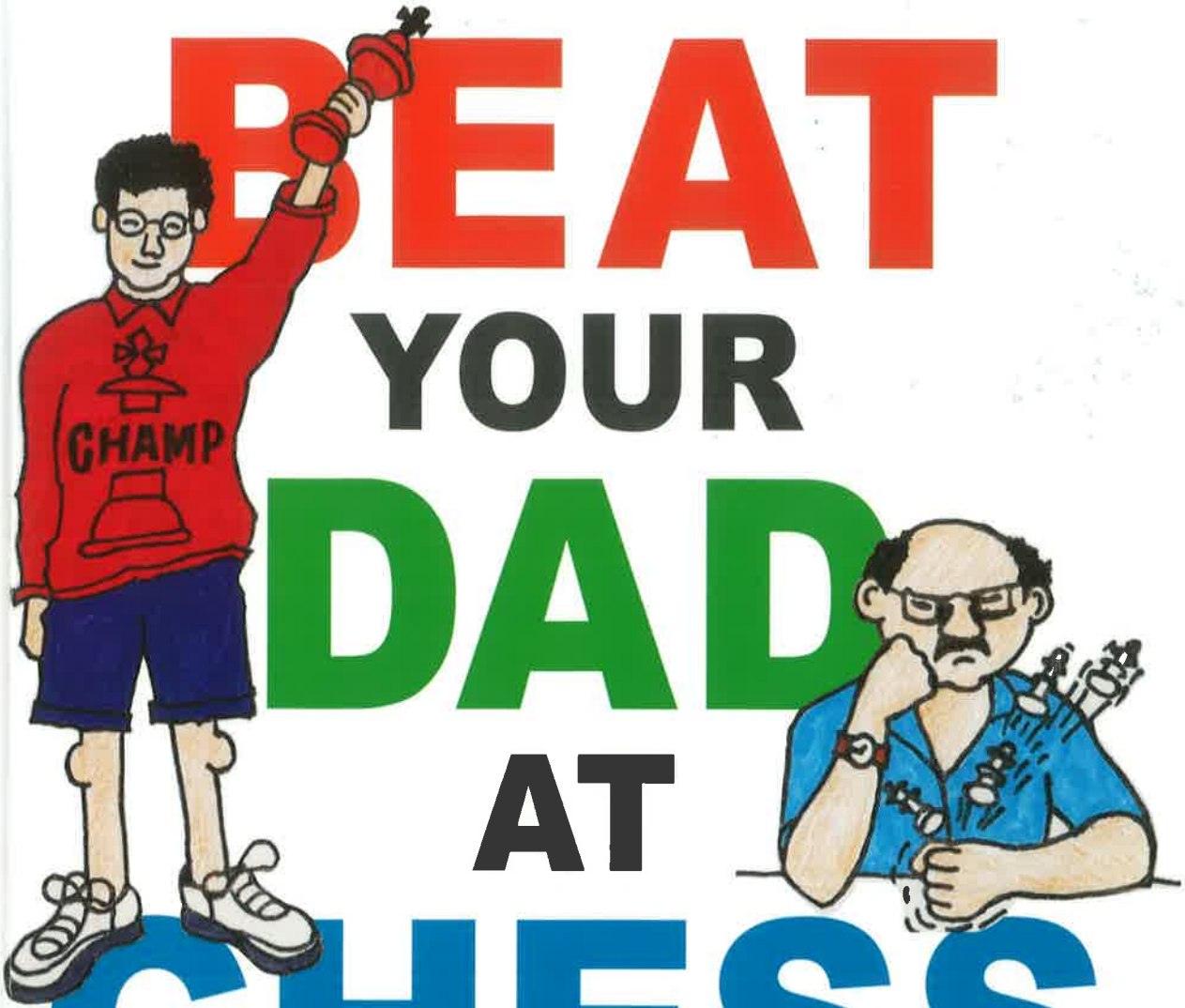
HOW TO BEAT YOUR DAD AT CHESS



Including the 50 Deadly Checkmates

Murray Chandler

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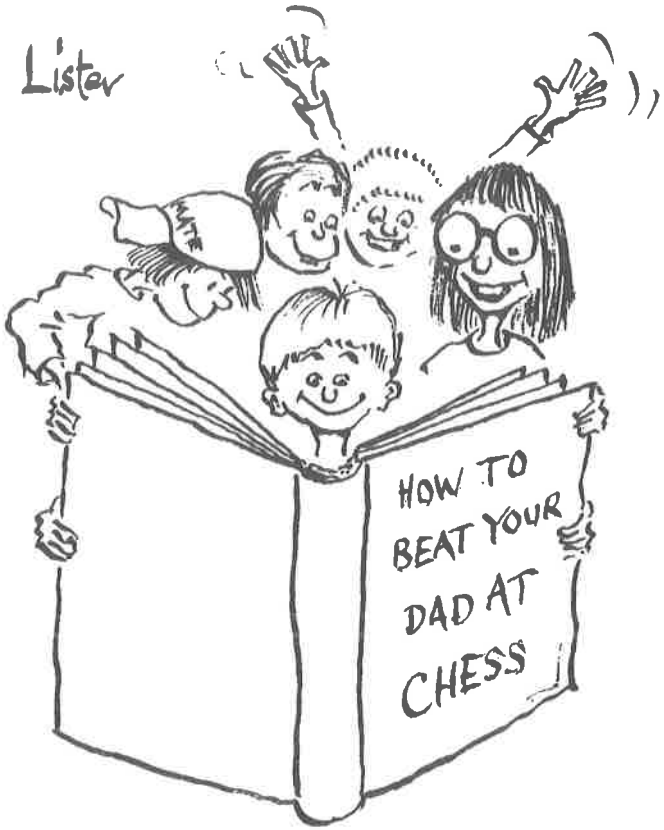

GAMBIT

First published in the UK by Gambit Publications Ltd 1998.
Reprinted 2000, 2001, 2002 (twice), 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 (2), 2018 (2), 2020, 2021 (4), 2022
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ISBN-13: 978-1-901983-05-0
ISBN-10: 1-901983-05-6

DISTRIBUTION:
Worldwide (except USA): Central Books Ltd, 50 Freshwater Road,
Chadwell Heath, London RM8 1RX, England.
Tel +44 (0)20 8986 4854 Fax +44 (0)20 8533 5821. E-mail: orders@Centralbooks.com

Gambit Publications Ltd, 27 Queens Pine, Bracknell, Berks, RG12 0TL, England.
E-mail: info@gambitbooks.com
Website (regularly updated): www.gambitbooks.com

Edited by Graham Burgess
Typeset by John Nunn
Printed in the USA by Sheridan MN

This book is dedicated to Graham Chandler (my Dad of course!), and also to my brother Keith, who checked all the positions.

Gambit Publications Ltd
Directors: Dr John Nunn GM, Murray Chandler GM and Graham Burgess FM
German Editor: Petra Nunn WFM
Bookkeeper: Andrea Burgess

Acknowledgements: David Stanley (cover), Harvey Lister (drawings), Tim Wall, Sheila Jackson, Ken Whyld, Alex Meynell, Keith Chandler, Paul Harrington.

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Introduction

This book is for every chess-player who regularly faces – and loses – to opponents stronger than themselves. This could be at work, down the chess club, at school, in tournaments, or, as for many youngsters, at home, playing Dad. In fact for 'Dad' read anyone who constantly outplays you, grinds you down, takes your pieces and checkmates you.

Each of the '50 Deadly Checkmates'[1] catalogued here explains a specific *theme* used to attack the opponent's king. These themes are recurring, and crop up again and again in chess games – virtually regardless of the level of the players, or the precise placement of the pieces. Top chess players are very skilled at recognizing these basic patterns. By learning the key elements it becomes much easier and quicker to find winning combinations.

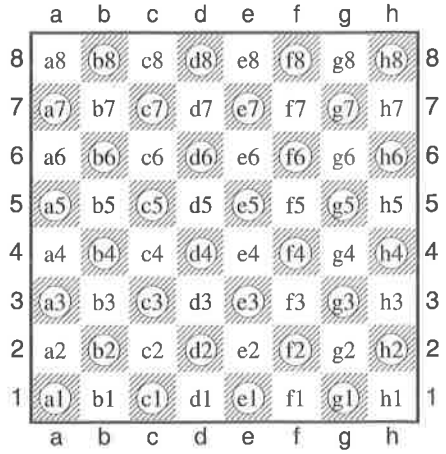
One qualifying criterion for the 50 Deadly Checkmates was that each theme should arise at least fairly frequently in actual practice. Some of the themes occur all the time. Whatever your level of play, there will be many opportunities to employ these attacking concepts.

So, if you really want revenge over Dad – here it is!

Murray Chandler

1 To be completely accurate, there are 47 *checkmating* strategies. Number 11 shows how to save a difficult game with perpetual check, and Numbers 10 and 12 are themes to win material.
Only a fraction of these attacking themes had existing names (even though chess history dates back several hundred years). To describe previously uncategorized themes, poetic licence has been used where a famous game illustrates the concept. These are *The Petrosian Draw* (Checkmate 11) *Taimanov's Knight Check* (Checkmate 9), *The Korchnoi Manoeuvre* (Checkmate 28), *Blackburne's Other Mate* (Checkmate 38), and *The Fischer Trap* (Checkmate 50).

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.

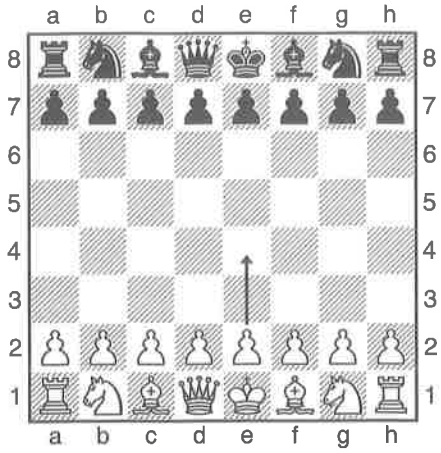
As you can see from the chessboard above, the files are labelled a-h (going from left to right) and the ranks are labelled 1-8. This gives each square its own unique reference point. The pieces are described as follows:

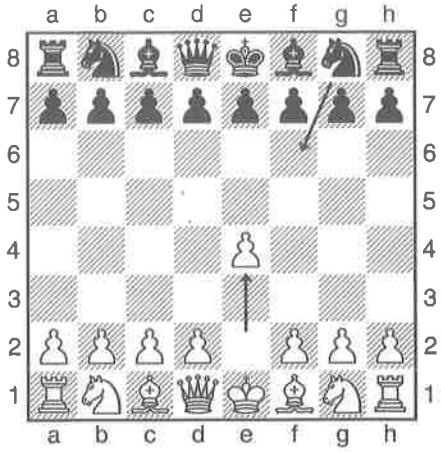
Knight = ♘
Bishop = ♗
Rook = ♖
Queen = ♕
King = ♔

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

The following additional symbols are also used:

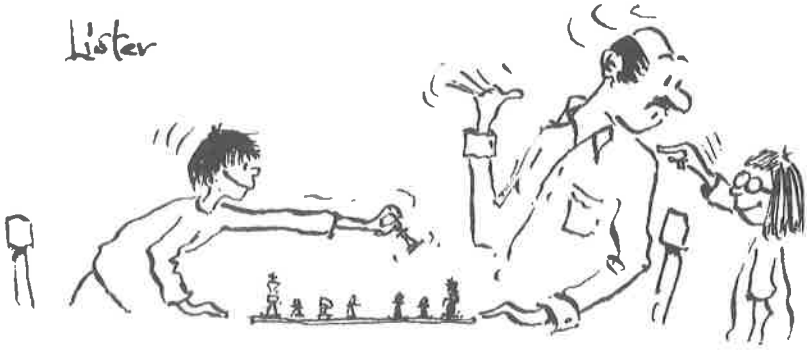
Check	=	+
Double Check	=	++
Capture	=	x
Castles kingside	=	0-0
Castles queenside	=	0-0-0
Good move	=	!
Bad move	=	?





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*).



How Chess Masters Think

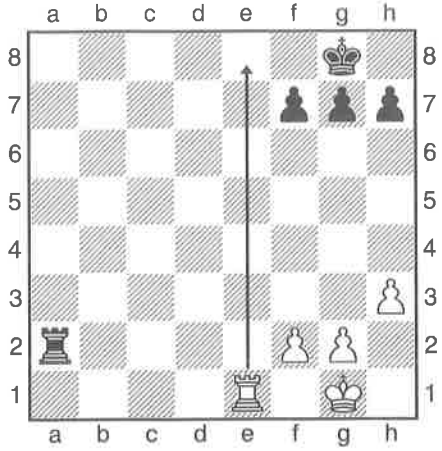
If you were to visit a chess tournament and watch a grandmaster in action, you would be able to observe a surprising range of emotions. Sometimes, in apparently simple positions, the grandmaster might lapse into lengthy periods of concentration, where ten minutes or more might be spent on a move. At other times the moves will come very quickly, even in complicated positions. You might even be shocked if the grandmaster suddenly wins the game with a lengthy and brilliant mating sacrifice – after thinking for just a few seconds. Clearly the analytical process is not always directly related to how complicated the position is on the surface.

The reason for this is pattern recognition. If the grandmaster can recall similar positions encountered in the past, the same themes and concepts *might* be applicable to the game in hand. This makes it much easier and quicker to analyse a position. It especially applies to the most basic attacking formations around the enemy king. Once a known motif is spotted, the moves of the potential combination are analysed to check that it does indeed work in the particular position on the board.

It is clear then that chess analysis is a mixture of *calculation of individual moves* and *pattern recognition.*

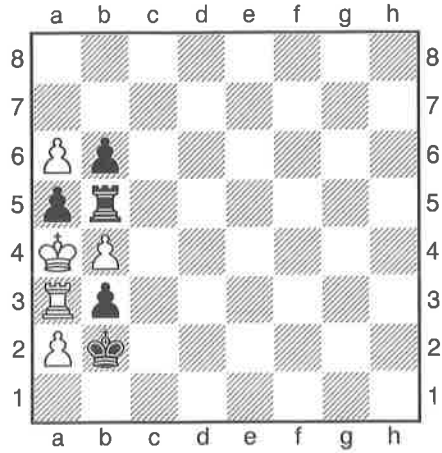
Effectively *all* chessplayers think in this way (consciously or otherwise!). However, the ratio between these two methods of thought is different for players of varying strengths. Although no scientific tests have been done, inexperienced players use perhaps 95% calculation and 5% pattern recognition. For master-strength players the figure is more like 40% calculation and 60% pattern recognition. Logically, therefore, learning to recognize more key patterns could help dramatically improve your chess strength.

In this book we will shortly cover the 50 most deadly checkmating patterns, all of which involve direct attacks on the enemy king. But first of all, a little illustration of how we recognize and remember chess 'patterns'.



1) White moves

In the simple position above White plays 1 ♖e8 checkmate, as indicated by the arrow. If you tried, could you remember this position tomorrow? Quite likely. Even if you could not recall exactly where each white pawn was, you would almost certainly remember the essence of the combination – White giving a checkmate on the back rank with his rook.



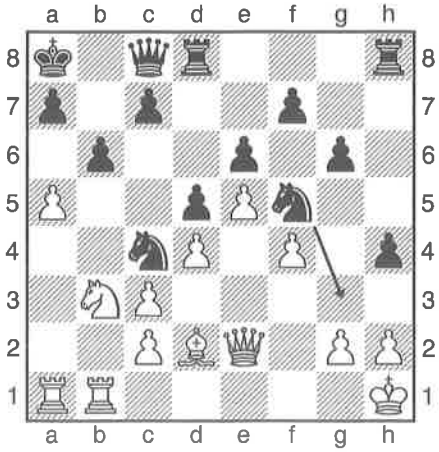
2) White moves

This position is very artificial and would never occur in a real game. Although it contains the same quantity of pieces and pawns as the previous diagram, it is hard for a chess-player to memorize this illogical position. Unlike diagram 1, there are *no familiar patterns* to assist, and each piece must be remembered individually.

If asked, some strong chessplayers would be able to recall the logical position number 1 perfectly, weeks or even months after being shown it. However, the bizarre nature of position number 2 would make the same task very difficult, and even a master might struggle to recollect it a day later. Over the years a number of psychological experiments have been conducted, using players of varying abilities, which have reaffirmed this point. The results have proved strong chess players are not very much better than ordinary players at recalling totally random positions. However, where it comes to reconstructing positions from actual games, the strong chess players are sensational. Their ability to remember *patterns* – familiar formations or clusters of pieces and pawns – is exceptionally highly developed.

Anatomy of a Combination

A big advantage of knowing the most common middlegame mating themes is that it makes the calculation of the variations so much easier. The combination below was found in a rapidplay game by a strong club player. It is very long, and can be seen illustrated with more diagrams in Deadly Checkmate 8.



3) Black moves

In the above diagram the win goes 1...♘g3+ 2 hxg3 hxg3+ 3 ♔g1 ♖h1+ 4 ♔xh1 ♖h8+ 5 ♔g1 ♖h1+ 6 ♔xh1 ♕h8+ 7 ♔g1 ♕h2+ 8 ♔f1 ♕h1 checkmate.

An eight-move combination, sacrificing a knight and two rooks to force mate. Fantastic! Yet when shown the position, the famous Grandmaster John Nunn found the combination *in just two seconds*. Interestingly the PC Program Fritz 5, running on a Pentium, took several minutes to find the forced win. It is remarkable that a human brain is able to