All,  
  
This game is a neat illustration that the “threat” is more dangerous than the actual completion of a tactical or positional plan. The phrase “The threat is stronger than the execution” has been attributed not only to Tartakower, but also Nimzowitsch. Whoever actually coined the apt phrase, the principal is valid in any case.  
  
Here, white demonstrates how immediate threats are not needed directly, to put black under tremendous pressure.   
It is of particular note that on move 12, black considered for over 35 minutes, attempting to find an adequate plan of action. Arguably, it could be said that he is already in zugzwang and is unable to formulate an adequate pathway to move forward. One could further state, that black is possibly already lost on move 12, if not strategically, but certainly psychologically.  
  
Enjoy.

[Event "Woodhouse Cup 2013-2014"]

[Site "York, ENG"]

[Date "2013.10.12"]

[Round "2.2"]

[White "Ross, Chris"]

[Black "Daley, Mark"]

[Result "1-0"]

[ECO "E40"]

[PlyCount "87"]

[EventDate "2013.10.12"]

[WhiteTeam "York A"]

[BlackTeam "Harrogate A"]

{D35: Queen's Gambit Declined: Exchange Variation, Minority Attack}   
1. d4 d5   
2. Nf3 Nf6   
3. c4 e6   
4. Nc3 Nbd7   
5. cxd5   
  
{The QGD Exchange variation. A variation I have adopted for the past 12 years or so with much success. The tiny advantages white obtains are the type of setups I enjoy grinding out.}  
  
5... exd5   
6. Bg5 c6   
7. e3 Qa5   
  
{An unusual variation, and not one that I have seen for some considerable time. The briefest of considerations here, attempting to remember all of the learnt-theory. The concept of the queen move is obvious enough. Black is wishing to try and snatch a pawn on the pinned knight on c3. In many ways, this is an attempt to switch into some lines of the Cambridge Springs variation of the QGD. However, white has already exchanged on d5 and the traps that are involved in the Cambridge Springs are now eliminated, due to tactics on c4 not being possible. In that regard, white has a safer and more solid variation of the Cambridge Springs.}   
  
8. Bd3 Bd6

{This is too passive, despite its aggressive outlook. The bishop is placed on a dangerous diagonal, but it has no future along the b8-h2 diagonal. Indeed, there has to be a reason why players of the black pieces always place this dark-squared bishop on e7. The simple answer to that is, the bishop is needed to support the knight on f6, which is equally defended, at the moment, by the queen’s knight. To allow the queen’s knight on d7 to develop, and thereby, developing the light-squared bishop, the knight on f6 requires support.   
In the main then, the black queen and the black bishop on d6 are both misplaced and will soon have to be moved again, leaving black effectively two tempi down. A fatal and irrefutable positional catastrophe.  
8... Ne4 can easily be met by 9. O-O, when black can snatch on c3, giving white the choice of playing slowly with 11. Rb1 or the more aggressive 11. e4. 10... nxg5 only allows white to gather his pieces on the king-side for an attack.}  
  
9. O-O O-O   
10. Qc2   
  
{Continuing development. Black is now not able to develop his king’s knight without leaving the h7 pawn vulnerable. Black could consider Nh5 ideas, with f7-f5 and hacking intensions. All of that is now thwarted with the completion of white’s development.}   
  
10... Re8   
11. Rfe1   
  
{White coolly completes development, centralising the rooks. The white rook is moved away from the king-side in anticipation of any tactics black may launch against h2. The rook stands well on a potentially open file, if white decides to launch through the centre with e3-e4. White is actually making simple development moves, as black is short of responses.}  
  
11... h6   
  
{An obvious move, but in the grand-picture of black’s position, it alters little. In fact, it weakens the g6 square, which will come back to haunt black.}  
  
12. Bh4   
  
{Curiously, black has little to play here. All of his pieces are completely tied up. The knight on d7 cannot move due to the knight on f6 being weak. The knight on f6 has no good square to go to and unless it’s protecting knight on d7 moves, the black queen-side is not coming out. It is a real dilemma for black and he is effectively in a zugzwang position.}   
  
12... Be7   
  
{In order for black to complete development, he willingly loses a tempo to retreat the bishop to its natural square. White has a huge advantage now.   
White can now initiate the “minority attack”, and aim to obtain a weakness on the c6 square. White’s play is so automatic in this position, that little thought needs to be put into it.}  
  
13. a3 Nf8   
14. b4 Qd8

{Frustratingly for black, the retreat to c7 is not possible, due to 15. Bxf6 and then 16. Nxd5 as the c6 pawn is pinned. The loss of the two tempi will soon tell, as white has full development and has already started on his strategic plan of initiating the Minority Attack.}

15. b5 Ne4   
16. Bxe7 Qxe7   
17. bxc6 bxc6   
18. Ne5 Nxc3

{White could consider capturing on c6 here with a gain of tempo, but the potential pin against the loose knight on c6 and the unprotected white queen on c3 is pushing things a little too far. 19. Nxc6 Qc7 leaves white slightly awkwardly placed. 20. Qa5 could pick up two pieces for a rook, but it is not convincing.

The simple recapture is best, as the backward c6 pawn is not running away very quickly.}

19. Qxc3 Bb7   
20. Rac1 c5  
  
{Giving up the pawn immediately, as an attempt to get some counter play. In fact, black is hoping to hold the end-game, a pawn down, but with the objective of exchanging as many pieces as possible and hope to hold a rook end-game, a pawn down. A valid enough attempt, but as long as white does not exchange the minor pieces, this strategy is flawed, in that, he is simply going to be ground out in a long, laborious end-game, which can only be painful.  
20... Rac8 21. Qa5! Make slife impossible for black with all of his weaknesses to protect, including a7, c5, c6 and all of the dark-squares. Bb5 can be played at an opportune moment too to distract the black rooks and to limit the movement of the black pieces.}  
  
21. Qxc5 Qxc5   
22. Rxc5 Ne6   
23. Rcc1   
  
{Again, being ultra solid. The retreat to c3 is possible, but white always has to be wary of tactics on the d4 square with Nxd4. The simple retreat is logical and quickly played. No calculation is required as the extra pawn will inevitably win the game eventually.}  
  
23... Rac8   
24. Bb5 Red8   
25. f4  
  
{here, white commences the series of “preventative” moves, and a number of “threat potential moves”.   
The push of the F-pawn has several purposes. Firstly, it clears the back-rank and gives the white king the f3 square, from where it can support the king-side advance.  
More importantly though, is the g6 square. Black has already played h7-h6 and to evict the strongly outposted white knight on e5, he will eventually have to play f7-f6. In that sense, when f6 is played, the g6 square and the light-squares become weak. The knight on e6 is well outposted, so it only makes sense to put a white pawn on f5, to kick the knight on e6 and to control the e6 and g6 squares. Also, white is securing a new outpost for his knight, as the outpost on e5 cannot be maintained.}  
  
25...  Kf8   
  
{Curiously, black marches the king into the centre of the board, to support his attempt of liquidation and to hold the end-game. With Bc6 ideas on the board and Nxc6/Ne7 tactics looming, it makes sense to move the king out of potential tactics. The king trip into the middle of the board proves incredibly dangerous for him though, despite the lack of material that is on the board. This is neatly illustrated in the tactics that conclude the game.}

26. Kf2 Ke7  
  
{Now the kings have been brought into the game, more “preventative” measures are needed. Black is now poised to evict the knight on e5, which is well outposted. White is wanting to avoid exchanges, and hence, excursions into c6 are not really in his plans. The maintenance of the minor pieces is best for white, as black’s are cramped, especially so, the light-squared bishop. By not exchanging, the white minor pieces can find squares from where to exert pressure, whereas the black ones struggle to find anywhere effective.  
White wishes to play f4-f5 and chase the knight on e6 away, but white cannot allow this knight to wander its way into the e4 square. Hence why white’s next preventative move is important to insert first.}

27. h4   
  
{Denying the g5 square for the black knight, which must now go passive. The threat of f4-f5 is big now. Again, another prepartory move before the actual execution of the tactical/positional plan is illustrated.}  
  
27... f6   
28. Ng6+   
  
{The knight reroutes itself to a better outpost. Since the black knight on e6 is soon to be kicked out, the white knight finds a place on a square to control e6, that now weakened outpost, with black having played f7-f6. The isolated d5 pawn is also a target, but of little consequence, as it is the outposts and the backward G-pawn now which become a point of focus.}  
  
28... Kd6   
29. f5 Nc7   
30. Be2   
  
{There is no rush in the position. The 2nd rank is covered to prevent any checks occurring unexpectedly along that rank. The bishop is retreated to a safe square, as now black must find a way in which he is able to untangle his minor pieces.}  
  
30... Na8   
  
{30... Ba6 allows 31. Rxc7 and the win of two minor pieces for a rook, an advantage and a winning exchange in such a position. Again, black is almost in zugzwang. The text-move attempts to reroute the knight to put pressure on the light-squares on the queen-side, but it is all far too late for such manoeuvres.}

31. Nf4 Nb6   
32. Ne6 Rd7   
33. Nc5    
  
{tactics become an important part of the finish now. White has found all of the ideal outposts for his pieces, and the win of a pawn means that he can cruise his way to victory.}  
  
33... Rdc7   
34. a4   
  
{Once again, demonstrating that positional superiority allows for tactical possibilities. The black knight on b6 is now targeted and it’s eviction is imminent. The knight though, has nowhere effective to go. It’s journey from e6, into the corner of the board, means that he is struggling for an effective approach.}

34... Ba8   
  
{34... Nxa4 35. Nxb7 wins a rook, of course. From now on, the king in the centre of the board becomes a huge tactical liability.

The text-move threatens the capture on a4, as black has superior forces down the C-file.   
Here is another rather curious point. White wishes to challenge the control of the open C-file, and would eventually like to control it himself. Evicting the black rooks is not so obvious though. The one on c7 can easily be chased with a  timely Ne6. The one on c8 is not so obvious.  
35. Ba6 is the move that cries out at one, but is not actually the most accurate. The “threat” of Ba6, to evict the rook is strong enough to worry black. White needs to prevent the Nxa4 tactics, but also, wants to stop the Nd7 idea, liquidating all of the rooks off the board and potentially, giving white a harder end-game to convert.  
Having considered all of this, white’s move is easy enough to find.}  
  
35. Bb5   
  
{The bishop returns from where it was most effective. The A-pawn is protected, but Nd7 is prevented. The threat of Ba6 is still on at some point, and especially so, if the C-file becomes blocked. It is that potential, the potent effect of the threat that crumbles black now. There is not a move on the board to hold black, who is now lost not only positionally, but also tactically.}

35... Bc6   
36. Ba6   
  
{Now the C-file has been blocked and tactical possibilities arisen, it is now time for white to carry out the threat against the rook on c8. Everything just falls neatly into place now.}  
  
36... Re8   
37. a5 Na4   
  
{A spirited attempt, but any other move would fall for a similar theomatic tactic. 37... Na8 is objectively he best, but what a move to have to play in such an horrific position!}    
  
38. Ne6 Rce7   
  
{With all of the positional advantages firmly secured, the tactical finish is simple enough to find.

The combination of the loose knight on a4, the backward G-pawn, the vulnerable black king in the centre of the board and the utter control of the light-squares by white, make the finish easy.}

39. Rxc6+   
  
{Simple and devastating. There is yet another demonstration though, of how the threat is stronger than the actual execution to conclude the game. Rather fitting for the theme of the game has rang from start to finish.}

39... Kxc6

40. Rc1+ Kd6   
41. Bb5   
  
{And the house is coming down for black. The knight on a4 has nowhere to go. The threat of the rook penetrating down the C-file is the most decisive point though. Black is helpless in the position.}

41... Rb8   
42. Rc6+ Kd7   
43. Bxa4   
  
{Again, perfectly demonstrating that the threat of a discovered check is more devastating than the actual execution of the threat. Keeping that discovery there, gives black not a single move in the position. 43. Rc7 is tempting but leads to not very much apart from a simplification. The text-move puts black under so much pressure to find a solution, to the threat, rather than having to deal with the immediate threat, that the finish is much quicker than if white had carried out the threat/discovery immediately. The potential of a threat is not only psychologically more dangerous, but for calculation purposes, more complex for the player facing it.}  
  
43... Rb2+   
44. Rc2+ 1-0

Literature reference:

Tartakower: “*Eine Drohung ist stärker als eine Ausführung*"   
*Schach 2000 Jahre Spiel-Geschichte, by* R. Finkenzeller, W. Ziehr and E. Bührer (Stuttgart, 1989), P138.  
  
Opening references:  
  
A.

10... g6 11. a3 Qc7 12. b4 Kg7 13. Rfc1 h6 14. Bh4 a6 15. Rab1 g5 16. Bg3 Bxg3 17. hxg3 Qd6 18. Na4 Re8 19. Nc5 Re7 20. a4 Nf8 21. b5 cxb5 22. axb5 Ng6 23. bxa6 bxa6 24. Na4 Bd7 25. Nb6

L'ami,E (2565)-Wahono,A (2391)/Turin, Italia 2006/1-0 (41)})

B.

11. Rab1 Qc7 12. Rfc1 a6 13. b4 Be7 14. a4 Qd8 15. b5 Ne4 16. Bxe4 Bxg5 17. Bxh7+ Kh8 18. bxc6 bxc6 19. Bd3 Re6 20. Nxd5 Rh6 21. Be4 cxd5 22. Nxg5  
1-0 Boehm,J (2225)-Rohovoy,D (1969)/Dortmund GER 2012})  
  
C.  
12... Bb4 13. Nd2 g5 14. Bg3 Nf8 15. a3 Be7 16. b4 Qd8 17. Nb3 Nh5 18. b5 Nxg3 19. hxg3 Be6 20. bxc6 bxc6 21. Na4 Rc8 22. Nac5 Rb8 23. Rab1 Bxc5 24. Nxc5 Qa5 25. Bf5 Kg7 26. Rec1 Rb6 27. Bxe6

Maderna,C-Piazzini,L/Buenos Aires 1954/EXT 2003/1/2-1/2 (42)})