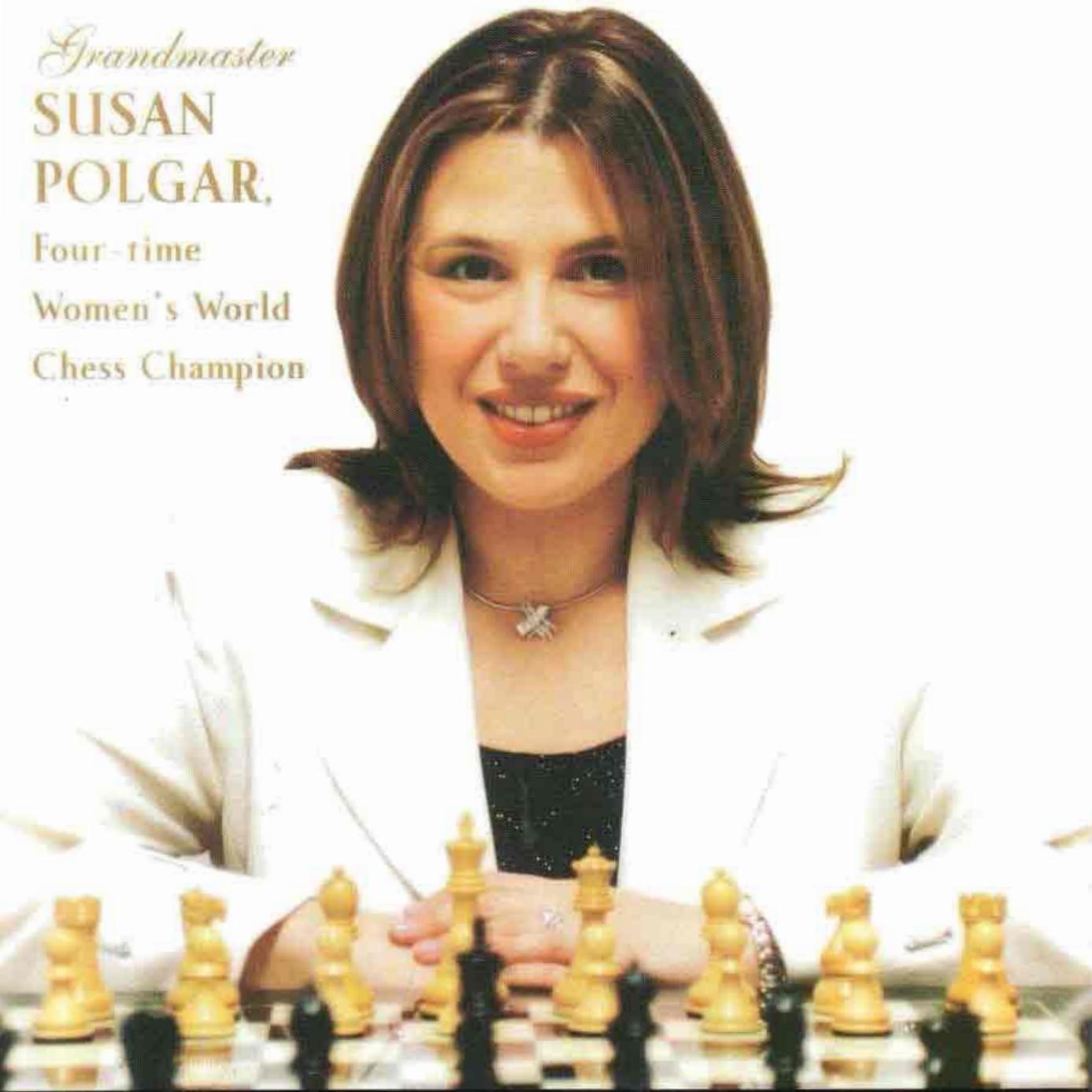


Grandmaster
**SUSAN
POLGAR.**
Four-time
Women's World
Chess Champion



CHESS TACTICS FOR CHAMPIONS

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO USING TACTICS AND COMBINATIONS THE POLGAR WAY

SUSAN POLGAR and PAUL TRUONG

Chess Tactics for Champions



**A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO
USING TACTICS AND COMBINATIONS**

by Susan Polgar and Paul Truong



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New York Toronto London Sydney Auckland

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FOREWORD

By Grandmaster Anatoly Karpov
World Champion 1975-1985

It is a pleasure for me to make a contribution to this important work by grandmaster and world champion Susan Polgar.

Thanks to the unique method of chess training Susan and her sisters, Judith and Sofia, received as children, Susan grew into one of the world's most formidable tacticians. Her daily practice on tactical problems sharpened her skill to an extraordinary degree and helped her reach the pinnacle of chess. Here in this book she shares with you what she has learned.

The hundreds of tactical exercises here range from very simple one-move checkmates to more difficult mates in four. Susan also covers such important topics as trapping pieces, decoys, stalemate combinations, intermediate moves, and others. These are not "problems" but practical situations as are to be found in actual games. The positions have been chosen or created to have maximum instructive value. The author stresses the importance of recognizing patterns, which is the best possible advice for the player who wishes to see combinations and threats with greater accuracy.

Every player who aspires to improve his or her play—and results!—will benefit greatly from the study of Susan Polgar's vital book.



PREFACE

What Are Tactics in Chess?

When we talk about a tactic, we refer to a tool that helps us gain some kind of advantage. It can lead to material gain or even to checkmate. In this book I will show you many examples of the tactical elements in both of those groups: combinations that aim to win material, and others that lead to checkmate.

In some combinations, a player sacrifices a valuable piece or two to achieve checkmate. In others, a player makes a temporary sacrifice to win material. We will often see a player create multiple simultaneous threats, which the opponent cannot meet all at once. But all the examples in this book have one thing in common: one side (usually White) makes a forcing move, and regardless of Black's reply, White either wins material or checkmates.

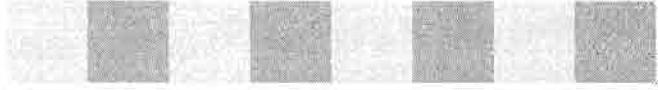
It is usually not a good idea to gamble and set up unsound traps in the hope that your opponent will fall into them. You should always assume that your opponent will find the best possible move. Only then can you objectively find the sound and correct combination.

For example, say you have a choice between:

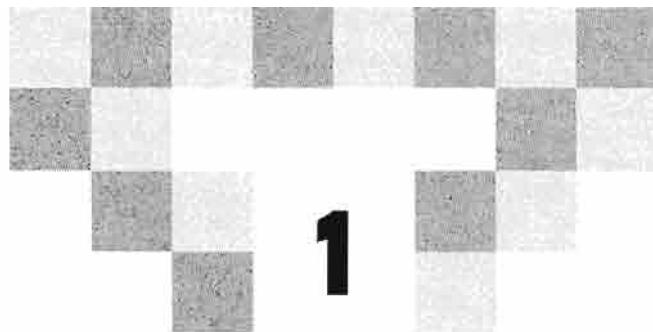
- a) winning a pawn and transposing to a clearly better endgame that is likely, however, to stretch out to a long game; or
- b) making a tricky move where the opponent loses immediately in all variations, unless he finds the only good move, in which case you lose.

Chess Tactics for Champions





TACTICAL ELEMENTS TO WIN MATERIAL OR CHECKMATE



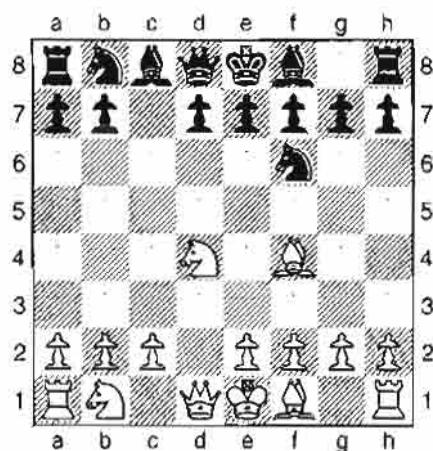
FORKS AND DOUBLE ATTACKS

A double attack (or fork) is an attack against two or more enemy targets at the same time. It may be a simultaneous attack on two different enemy pieces or it may be a threat of checkmate combined with an attack on an enemy piece.

All pieces are capable of forking, but the most powerful forking piece is the knight. Usually, the fork is a very deadly tactical tool, but in some cases it can be met successfully.

Here are a couple of basic examples of double attacks. First, a miniature game that demonstrates well the idea of our subject:

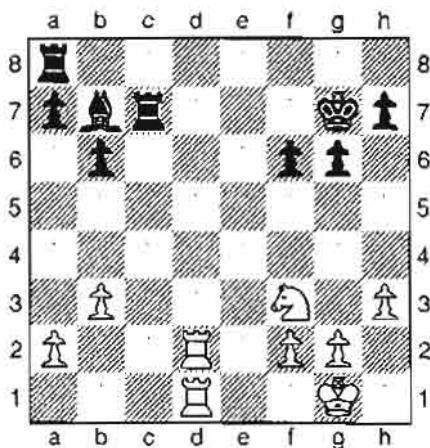
1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 c5 3. Bf4 cxd4 4. Nxd4



And now, 4. ... e5!, the first fork. 5. Bxe5 Qa5+, the second fork, already winning the bishop on e5.

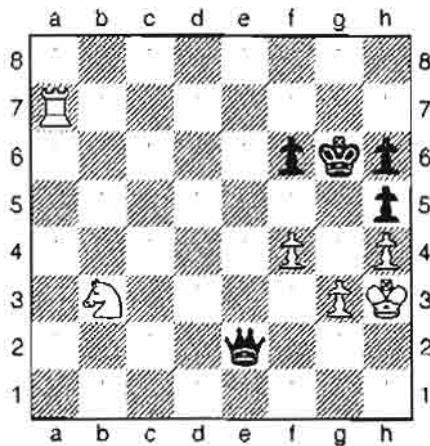
The next example is simple. White trades a pair of rooks and then wins Black's bishop. Can you figure out how?

CHESS TACTICS FOR CHAMPIONS



The solution is: 1. **Rd7+** **Rxd7** 2. **Rxd7+**, and after any king move, such as 2. ... **Kg8**, simply 3. **Rxb7**.

In the next position, White needs to give up a pawn in order to force the Black king into a fork.



1. **f5+**. Black has no choice but to capture the pawn. 1. ... **Kxf5**, and now 2. **Nd4+** forks the Black king and queen.

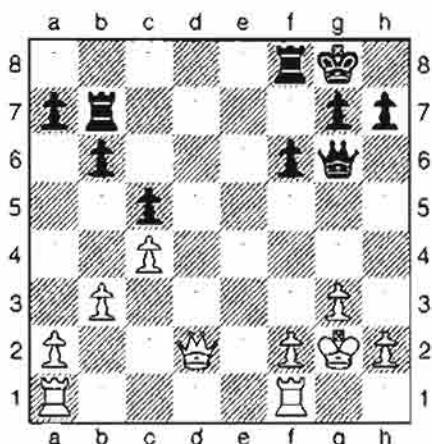
In the next example, White needs to force the Black king to a square where it can be forked by the knight.

Forks and Double Attacks

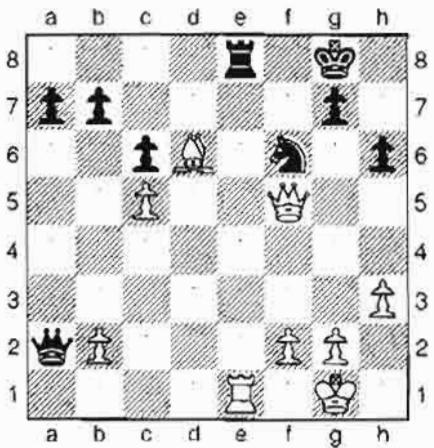


The solution is 1. Qc4+, and now after either 1. ... Kb8 or 1. ... Kb6, White forks king and queen with 2. Nd7+.

In the next example, the fork does not achieve anything.

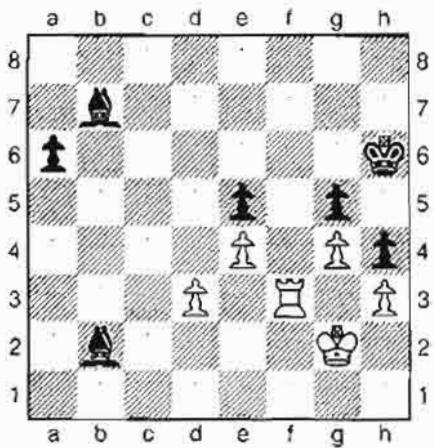


White can fork king and rook with 1. Qd5+. However, after 1. ... Qf7 (or even 1. ... Rbf7 or 1. ... Rff7), the Black rook is safe.

Susan's Corner**Susan Polgar—Boguslavsky
Budapest, 1984**

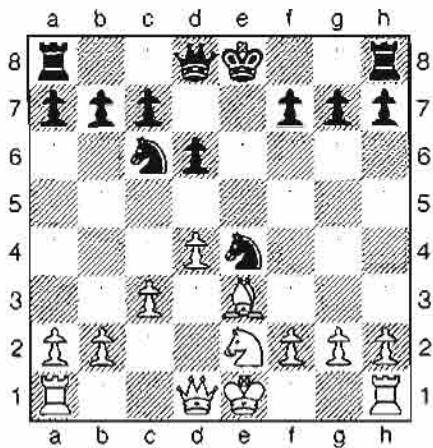
In this position, I traded rooks with 28. Rxe8+ Nxe8 and won the knight with the fork 29. Qf8+, 1–0.

The following 50 puzzles will give you the opportunity to practice your skill with forks. The solutions are at the end of the chapter.

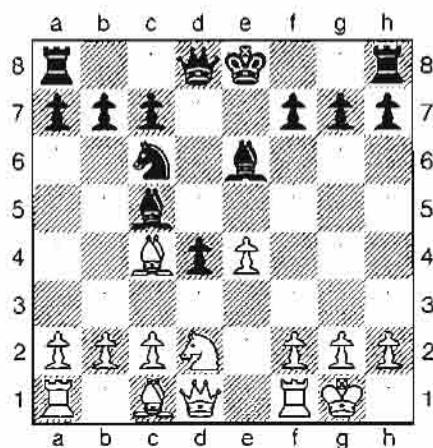
1. White to move

Forks and Double Attacks

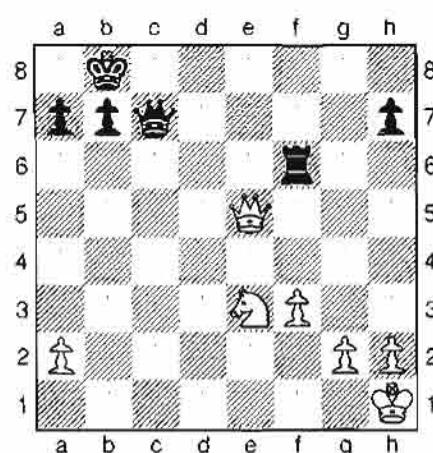
2. White to move



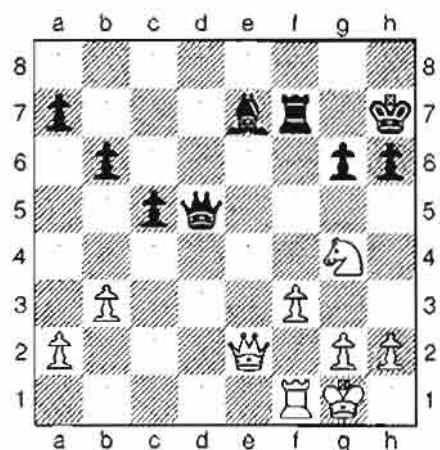
3. White to move



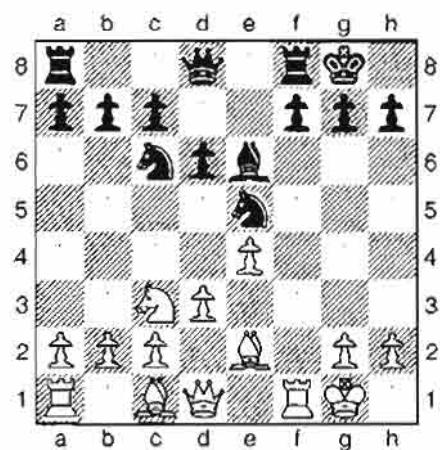
4. White to move



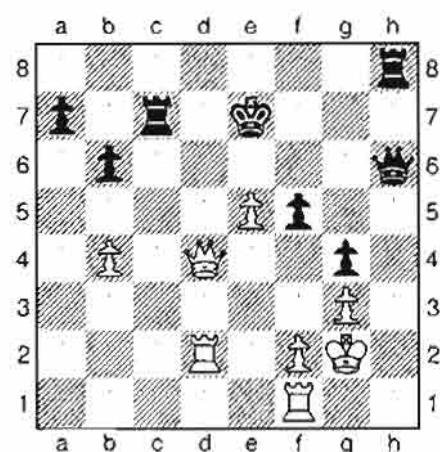
5. White to move



6. White to move



7. White to move



Forks and Double Attacks

8. White to move



9. White to move



10. White to move



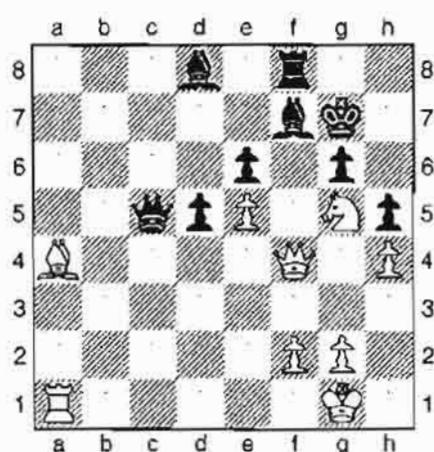
11. White to move



12. White to move

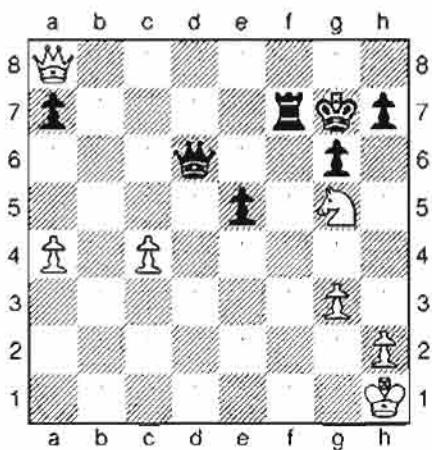


13. White to move

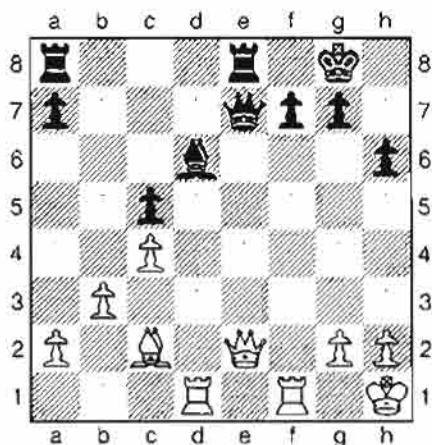


Forks and Double Attacks

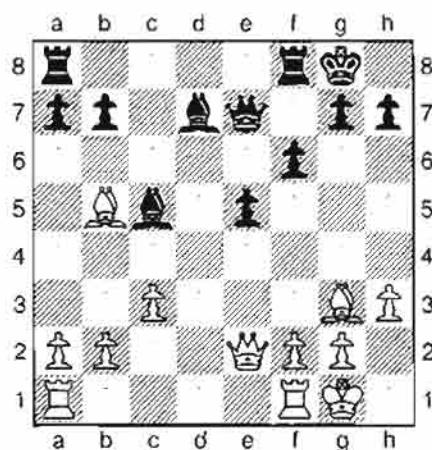
14. White to move



15. White to move

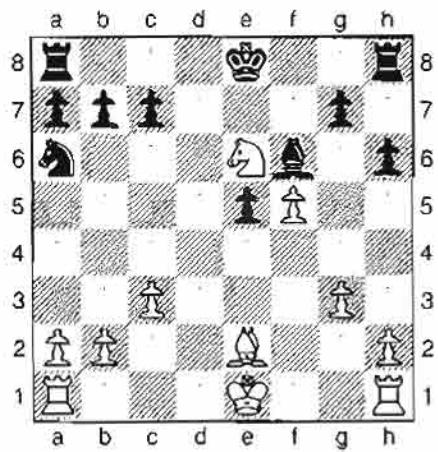


16. White to move

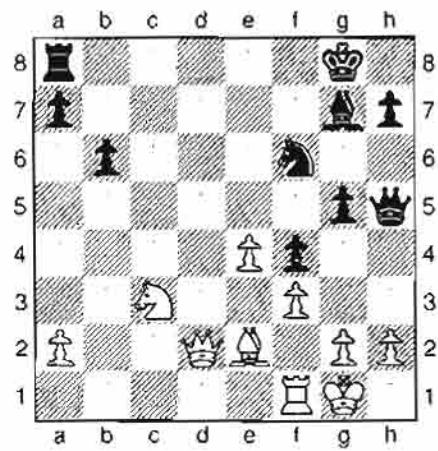


CHESS TACTICS FOR CHAMPIONS

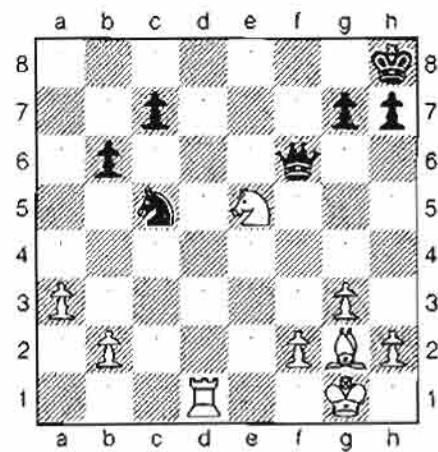
17. White to move



18. White to move



19. White to move

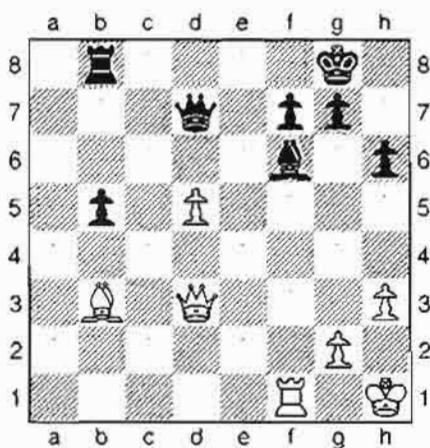


Forks and Double Attacks

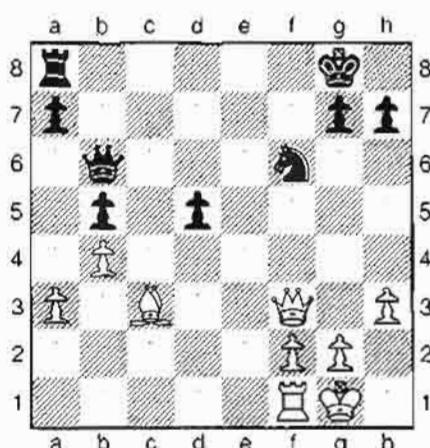
20. White to move



21. White to move

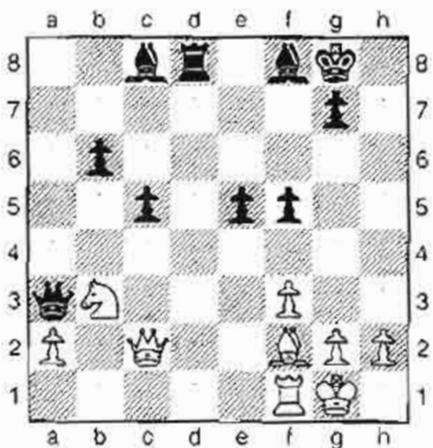


22. White to move





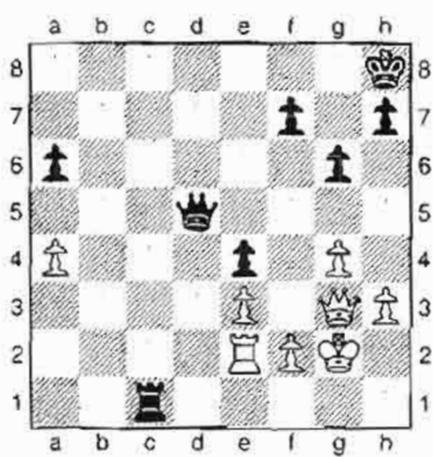
23. White to move



24. White to move

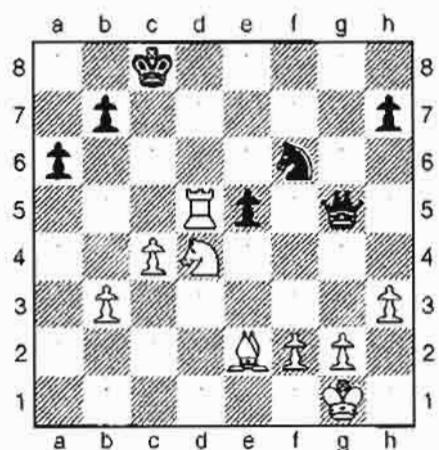


25. White to move

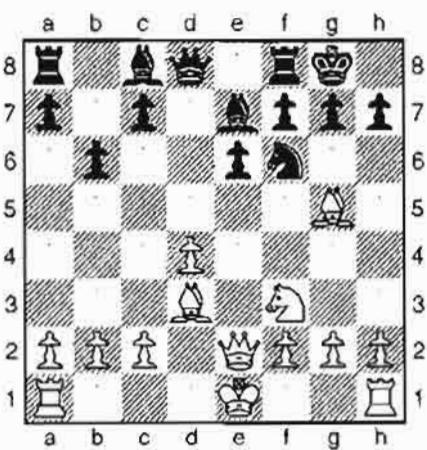


Forks and Double Attacks

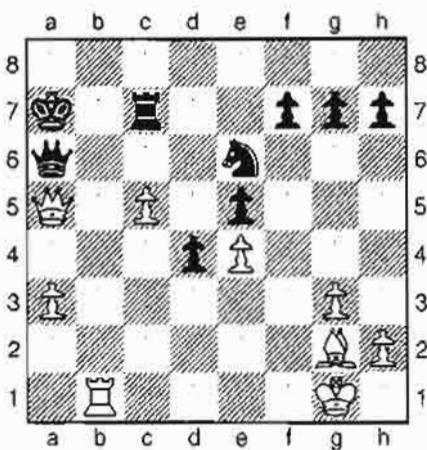
26. White to move



27. White to move

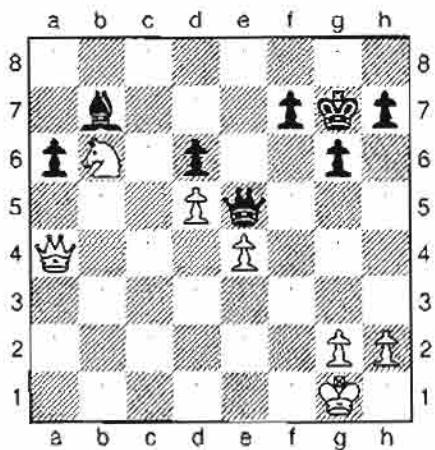


28. White to move

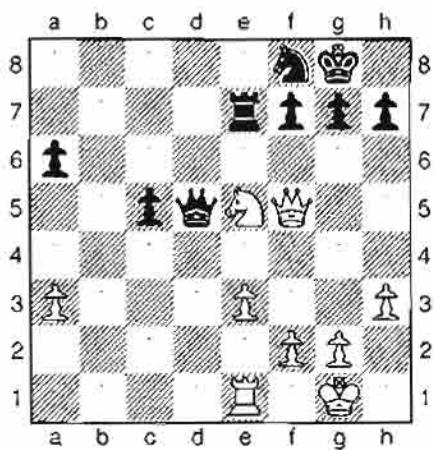




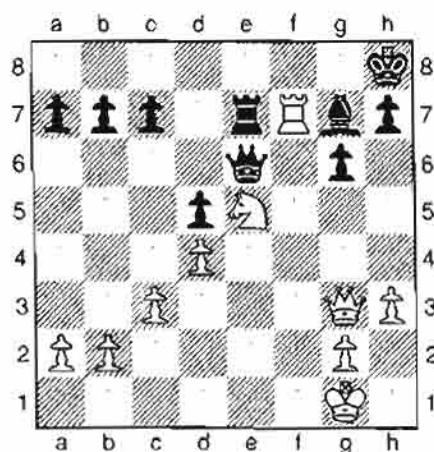
29. Black to move



30. White to move



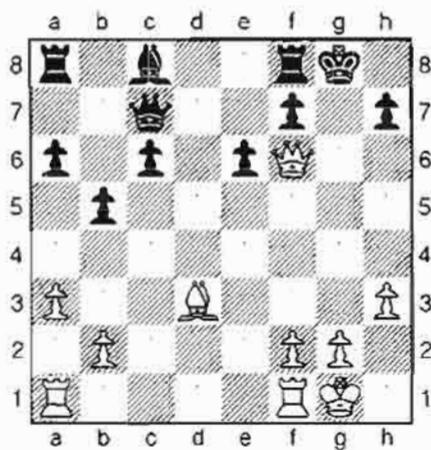
31. White to move



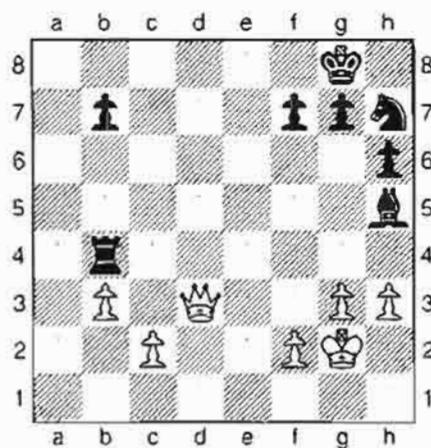
Forks and Double Attacks



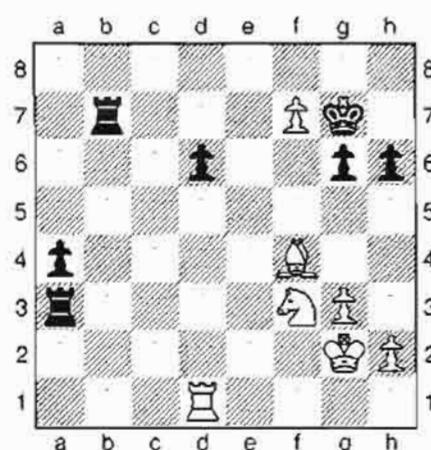
32. White to move



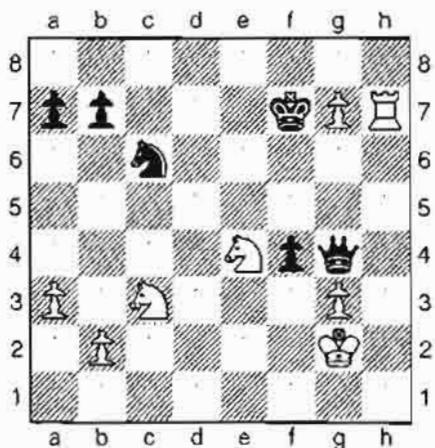
33. White to move



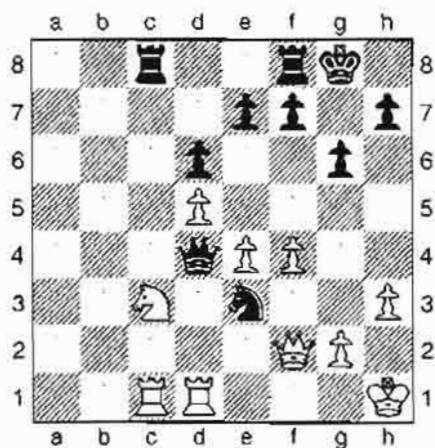
34. White to move



35. White to move



36. Black to move

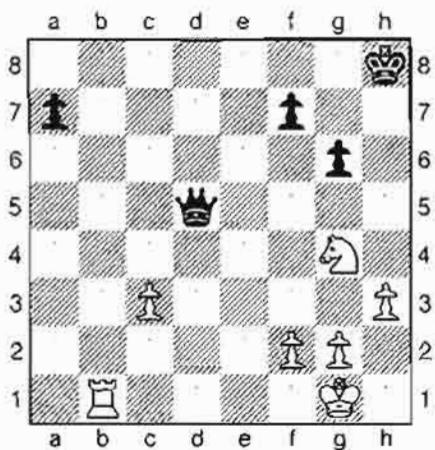


37. White to move

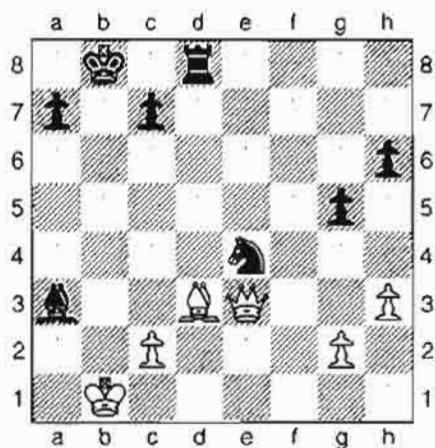


Forks and Double Attacks

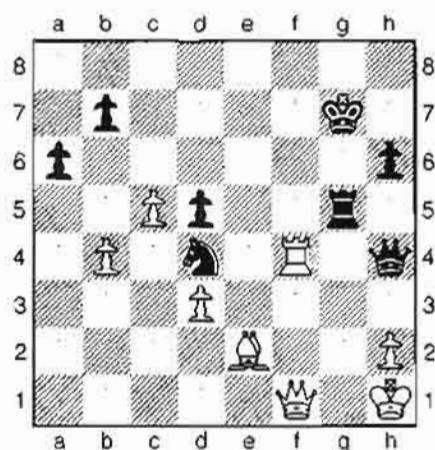
38. White to move



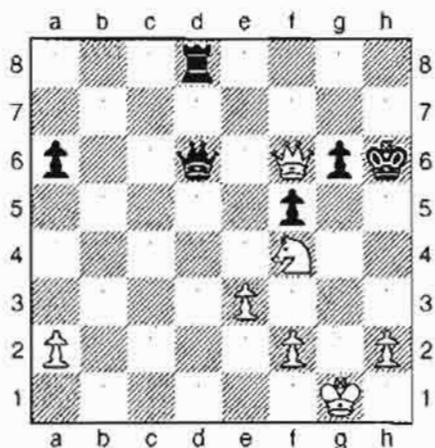
39. Black to move



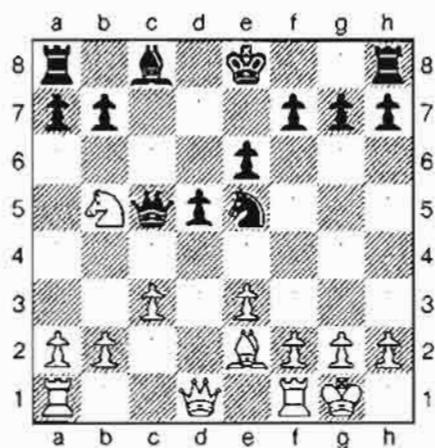
40. Black to move



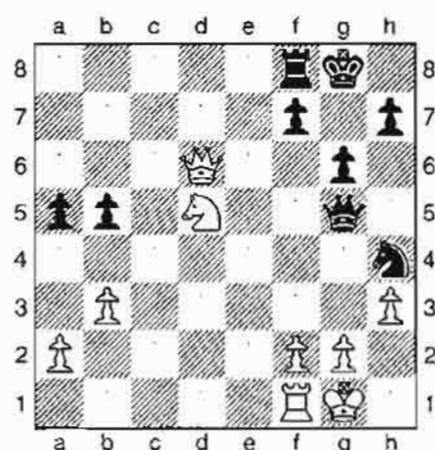
41. White to move



42. White to move



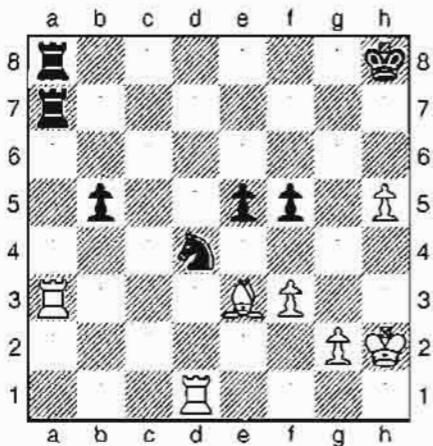
43. White to move



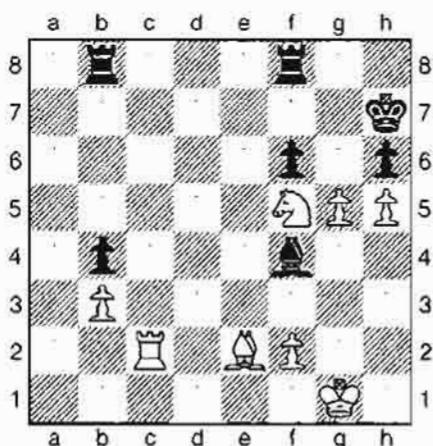
Forks and Double Attacks



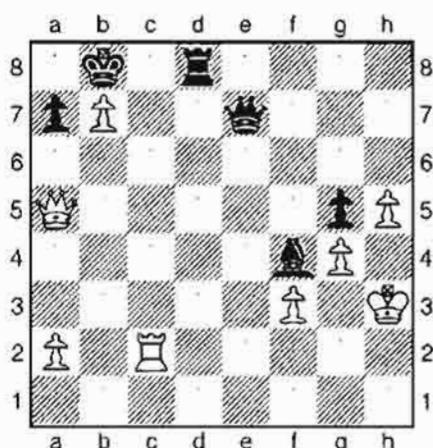
44. White to move



45. White to move

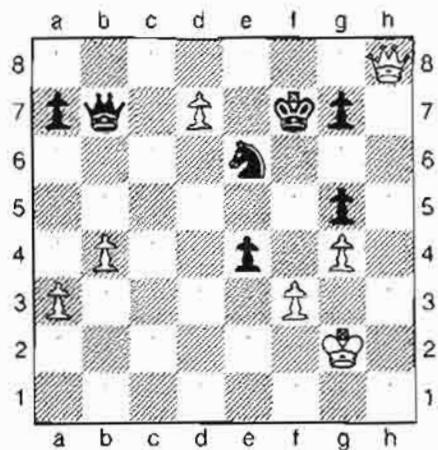


46. White to move

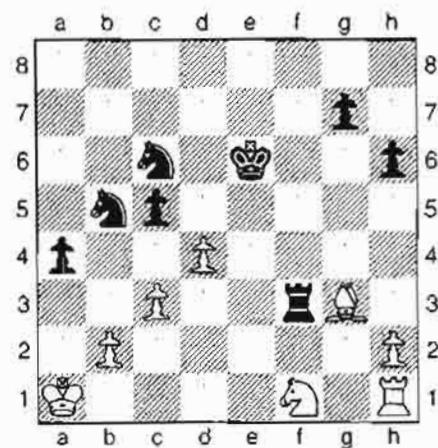




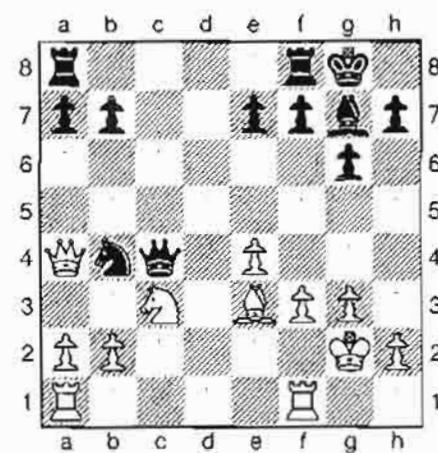
47. White to move



48. White to move



49. Black to move



Forks and Double Attacks

50. Black to move



Solutions

1. 1. Rf6+ (intermediate move) Kg7 2. Rb6 forks both Black bishops.
2. The first step is to chase the Black knight away from c6 with 1. d5 Ne5 and then fork with 2. Qa4+.
3. Look for the unprotected piece on c5! 1. Bxe6 fxe6 2.Qh5+.
4. It would be a blunder to grab the hanging rook, as White's back rank is weak. The right answer is: 1. Qxc7+ Kxc7 2. Nd5+.
5. Here White needs to find a pretty queen sacrifice: 1. Qxe7! Rxe7 2. Nf6+. It is also important to see that after 1. ... Qd4+ White saves the queen, by blocking the check with 2. Qe3.
6. Here the d-pawn is the hero! 1. d4 Ng6 2. d5.
7. White wins a rook with 1. Qd6+ Qxd6 2. exd6+.
8. By trading rooks with 1. Rxd8 Qxd8, White forces the Black queen to leave the seventh rank. Then 2. Qb7+ forks.
9. White wins a rook with 1. Qxf6! gxf6 2. Nf7+.
10. With a smart decoy, 1. Qe8+ Kh7, White forces the Black king into a fork with 2. Qe4+.
11. After the obvious-looking 1. Qd7 Black is okay after 1. ... Rg8. The right answer is: 1. Bxg7+! Kxg7 2. Qd7+.
12. White's knight on d4 is under attack and Black is even threatening checkmate in one. White can solve all those problems and even win an exchange. 1. Nf5+! gxf5 2. Qg5+.
13. White sacrifices the queen to remove the guard of the e6 pawn. 1. Qxf7+! Rxf7 2. Nxe6+.
14. White could win the exchange back by capturing on f7 right away. But with a nice queen sacrifice in the corner, 1. Qh8+! Kxh8 2. Nxh8+, White wins a whole rook.
15. Here White combines a checkmate threat with attacking Black's bishop. 1. Qd3 Rad8 (1. ... g6 2. Qxd6) 2. Qh7+ Kf8 3. Qh8#.
16. White trades with 1. Bxd7 Qxd7, and now that the bishop on c5 is unprotected the fork is played: 2. Qc4+. On the other the immediate 1. Qe4+ is not sufficient, because of 1 ... Be6.
17. White could give a knight fork if Black's knight were not protecting the c7 pawn. Therefore, White trades with 1. Bxa6 bxa6 and then 2. Nxc7+.
18. In this example, White needs to remove the guard of the crucial d5 square. It can be accomplished by 1. e5 Ne8 and now White wins the rook in the corner with 2. Qd5+.

Forks and Double Attacks

19. Here White uses the decoy method by sacrificing a rook: 1. $Rd8+!$, forcing the Black queen to be the victim of a fork: 1. ... $Qxd8$ 2. $Nf7+$.
20. White wins at least a piece with 1. $Rxc6!$ $bxc6$ 2. $Qxc6+$ and then takes the unprotected rook on a8.
21. Black would be doing okay if the rook were not on b8, an unprotected square. With a smart exchange sacrifice, White gains a material advantage. 1. $Rxf6!$ $gxf6$ 2. $Qg3+$. The immediate 1. $Qg3$ is not so successful because of 1. ... $Rb6$.
22. With a simple trade White removes the guard of the d5 pawn (the black knight): 1. $Bxf6$ $Qxf6$ and then 2. $Qxd5+$ forks.
23. Again Black has a problem with the rook on an unsafe square. After a decoy check, 1. $Qc4+$, the Black king is forced to step on the h-file: 1. ... $Kh8$ and then 2. $Qh4+$ wins.
24. In this position White uses a pin to decoy the Black king into a fork: 1. $Nb6+$ $Kb8$ 2. $Nd7+$.
25. Black seems to do fine, except for having the rook on an unprotected square. All of a sudden, the White queen swings over to the other side of the board: 1. $Qb8+$ $Kg7$ 2. $Qb2+$.
26. White would have some advantage after 1. $Ne6$ $Qg8$ 2. $Rd8+$, but White should not settle for that. With the right move White forces the Black king into a fork: 1. $Rd8+!$ $Kxd8$ 2. $Ne6+$.
27. This idea is a famous opening trap employed in many similar positions. After a harmless-looking trade with 1. $Bxf6$ $Bxf6$ White creates a double threat with: 2. $Qe4$ $g6$ (2. ... $Rb8$ 3. $Qxh7\#$) 3. $Qxa8$ winning a rook.
28. In this position material is balanced, but White can force a trade that will result in a fork to win a rook: 1. $Qb6+$ $Qxb6$ 2. $cxh6+$.
29. Here Black, with a tricky move, creates a double threat by playing: 1. ... $Qc3$ (with the main idea of 2. ... $Qe1\#$) 2. $Qd1$ $Qc5+$ forks.
30. With a temporary queen sacrifice White wins material. 1. $Ng6!$ $Qxf5$ (after 1. ... $Rd7$ 2. $Ne7+$ White gains even more) 2. $Nxe7+$.
31. White sacrifices a knight to win back more material: 1. $Nxg6+!$ $hxg6$ 2. $Qh4+$ $Kg8$ 3. $Rxe7$.
32. White disconnects Black's king and rook with 1. $Qg5+$ $Kh8$ and now 2. $Qh6$ wins with dual checkmate threats on f8 and h7.
33. In this example, two of Black's pieces are on unprotected squares. After the intermediate check 1. $Qd8+$ $Nf8$ White forks by 2. $Qa5$.
34. White's f7 pawn seems to be falling. For example, 1. $Bxd6$ $Ra2+$, followed by 2. ... $Kxf7$. However, the f7 pawn can be

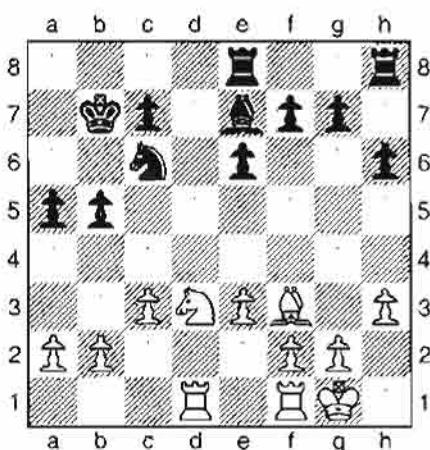
- used in a very beneficial way: 1. f8Q+! Kxf8 and now 2. Bxd6+.
35. As in the previous example, here too White needs to promote the pawn by 1. g8Q+! Kxg8 and then 2. Nf6+.
36. Black has a way to sacrifice the queen and get two rooks and a knight in exchange: 1. ... Qxc3! 2. Rxc3 Nxd1 3. Qd2 Nxc3.
37. Here White needs to trade first, followed by a decoy combination. 1. Bxg7 Qxg7 2. Qxe5! Qxe5 3. Nf7+, winning a piece.
38. Amazingly, White here is able to force the Black king to either g8 or h7, where it can be forked: 1. Rb8+ Kg7 2. Rg8+! (this is the key move!) 2. ... Kxg8 3. Nf6+.
39. After a simple check, by sacrificing the bishop Black forces the White king into a fork: 1. ... Nc3+ 2. Ka1 Bb2+! 3. Kxb2 Nd1+.
40. Here Black simplifies the position by a double sacrifice: 1. ... Qxf4! 2. Qxf4 Rg1+! 3. Kxg1 Nxe2+.
41. First a decoy, then a queen sac and finally the fork: 1. Qh4+ Kg7 2. Qxd8! Qxd8 3. Ne6+.
42. 1. Nc7+ is an obvious fork idea, but for now the Black queen is stopping it. White has an unexpected way to make this idea work, however: 1. Qd4 Qxd4 2. cxd4 Nc6 3. Nc7+.
43. Again the knight is the hero! 1. Nf6+ Kg7 2. Qxf8+! Kxf8 3. Nxh7+.
44. 1. Rxa7 Rxa7 2. Rxd4! exd4 3. Bxd4+. Now Black is almost saved with 3. ... Rg7, but 4. h6 wins by using the pin.
45. Pawns can fork too! 1. g6+ Kg8 2. Bc4+ Kh8 3. g7+.
46. This is one of the prettiest forking ideas I know. After a queen sacrifice White uses an underpromotion! 1. Rc8+ Rxc8 2. Qxa7+! Kxa7 3. bxc8N+!.
47. As in the previous diagram, a queen sacrifice and a knight promotion! 1. Qe8+ Kf6 2. Qxe6+! Kxe6 3. d8N+!.
48. A fun example of a decoy to achieve a fork. 1. d5+! Kxd5 2. c4+! Kxc4 3. Nd2+.
49. Black has a cute way to win a piece: 1. ... Bxc3 2. bxc3 Nd5! 3. Qxc4 Nxe3+.
50. By giving two simple checks Black forces the White king into a fork: 1. ... Re1+ 2. Kg2 R8e2+ 3. Kf3 Re3+.

2

PINS

A pin always has three participants: the pinning piece, the pinned piece, and a piece behind the pinned piece which is located on the same line. There are two different kinds of pins: absolute pins and relative pins. In an absolute pin, the pinned piece has no legal move because the piece behind it is the king, which would be exposed to check. In a relative pin, the pinned piece may move, but that would cause some kind of problem, like losing a piece or allowing checkmate.

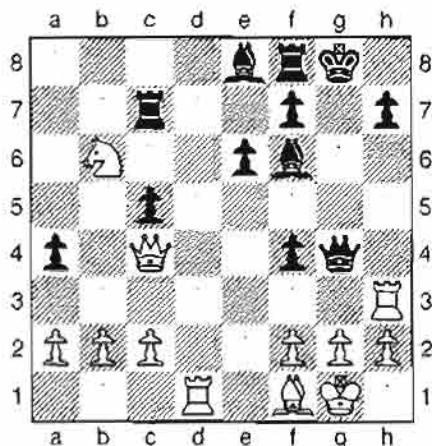
Pieces able to make pins are the queen, the rook, and the bishop. Some basic examples follow:



The White bishop on f3 is pinning Black's knight on c6. This is an absolute pin. The knight absolutely cannot move. White can take advantage of Black's temporary problem by playing 1. Ne5, attacking the knight a second time. Black's knight is lost. If White misses this opportunity by making a casual move like 1. Rfe1, Black has time to get out of the pin by playing 1. ... Kb6 or to prevent the Ne5 move by playing 1. ... f6.

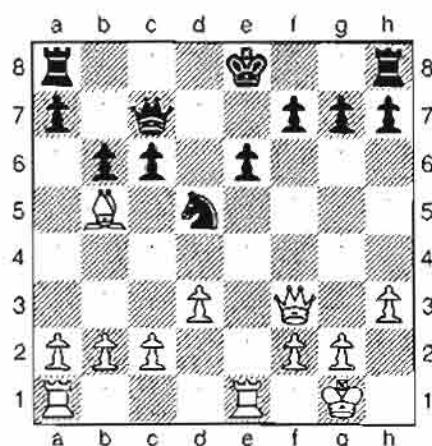


In the next position, White uses an existing pin to create a new pin!



The correct move to win Black's queen is 1. Rg3. If Black captures with the pinned f-pawn by 1. ... fxg3, the answer is 2. Qxg4+ with decisive material gain.

In the next position, we see pins from every direction.



White wins the knight with 1. Qxd5. The queen cannot be captured by either pawn because of absolute pins by the rook on e1 and the bishop on b5. If Black plays 1. ... cxb5 White wins material by taking Black's rook on a8 with 2. Qxa8+.

Here's a short game where the pin plays a crucial role.

1. e4 c6

This is the Caro-Kann Defense.

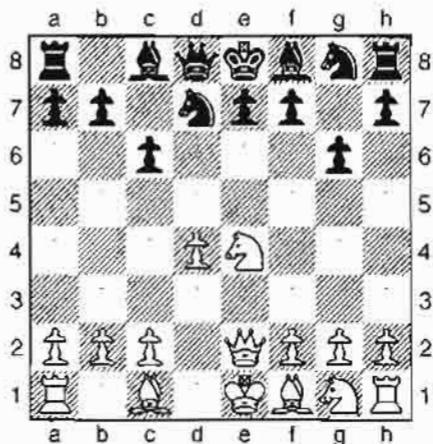
2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Nd7 5. Qe2

Not a good move but a very tricky one. It is better to develop the bishops and knights before bringing out the queen.

5. ... g6??

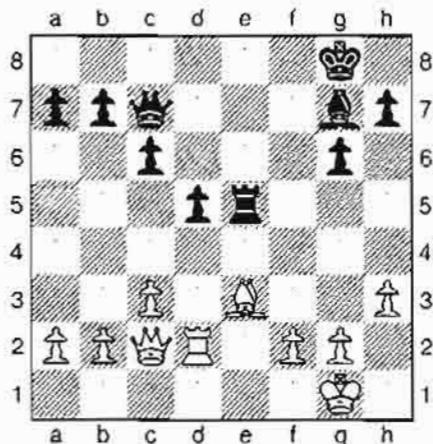
Pins

Black falls into the trap. Much better is 5. ... e6. After Black's error, can you find the checkmate in one for White?



6. Nd6# smothered mate with the help of an absolute pin.

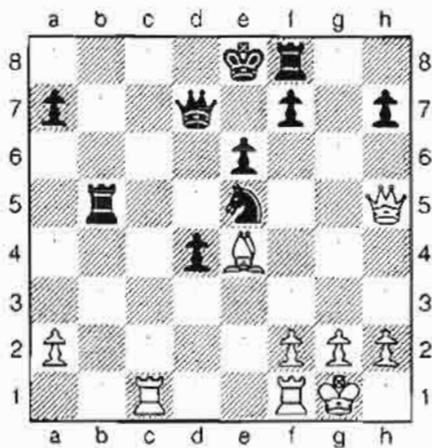
A typical misconception is to believe that every pin is good. Here, for example, a pin backfires.



If White makes the natural move 1. Bf4 to pin the Black rook, all of a sudden Black not only saves the rook but even wins a piece by making a discovery (see chapter 4) with 1. ... Re1+ followed by 2. Kh2 Qxf4+.

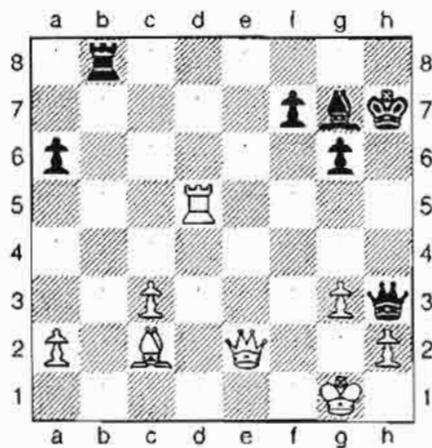


Susan's Corner

Susan Polgar–Iclicki
Brussels, 1985

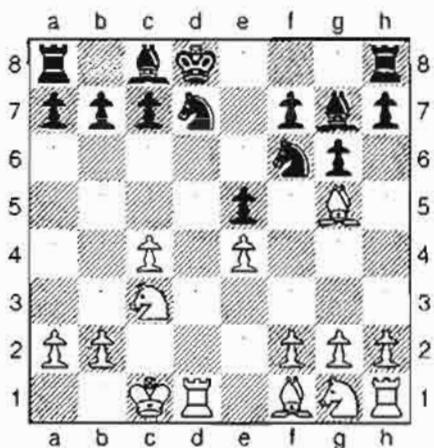
Here I found a quick way to win material with 1. $Bc6$ pinning the Black queen. Black's best option is 1. ... $Nxc6$ and then 2. $Qxb5$. My opponent resigned a few moves later.

Following are 50 exercises involving pins for you to enjoy.

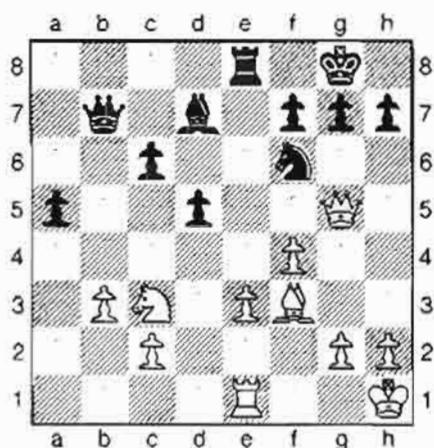
1. White to move

Pins

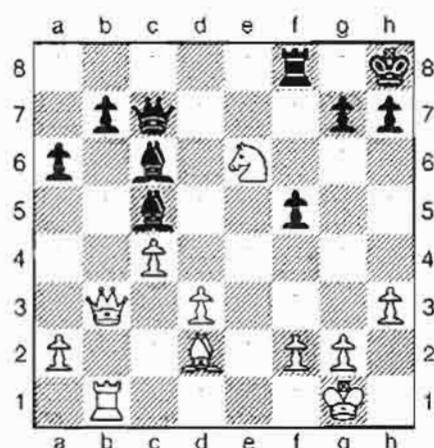
2. White to move

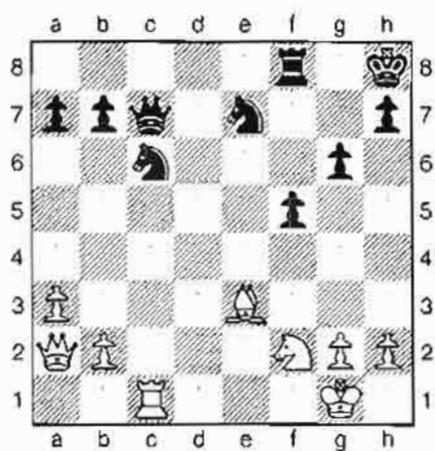
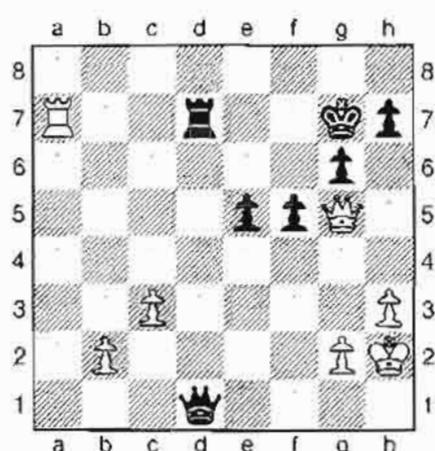


3. Black to move



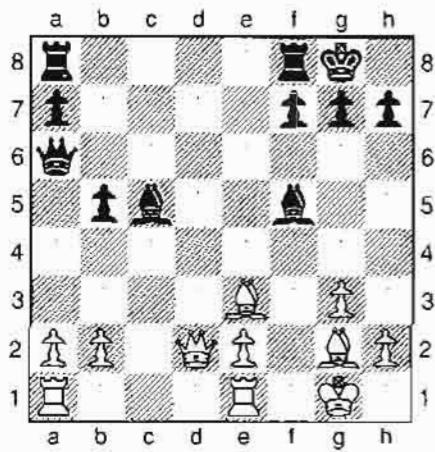
4. Black to move



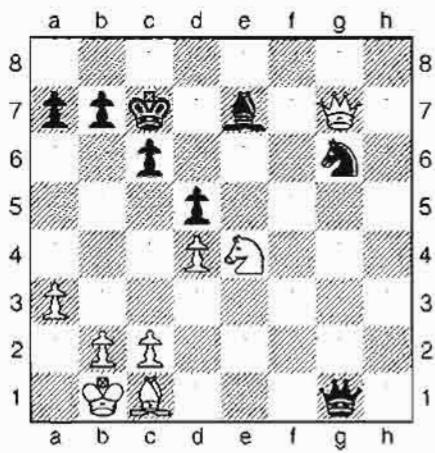
**5. White to move****6. White to move****7. White to move**

Pins

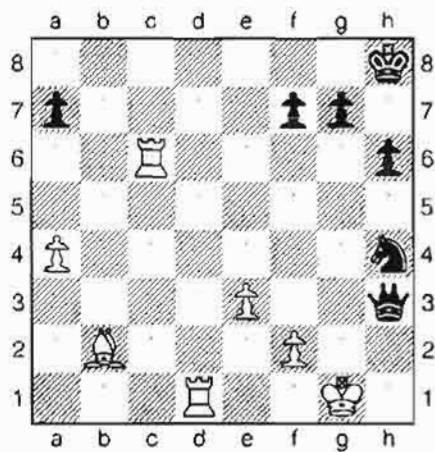
8. Black to move



9. White to move

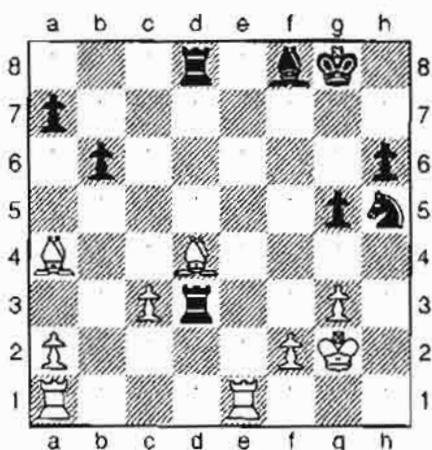


10. White to move

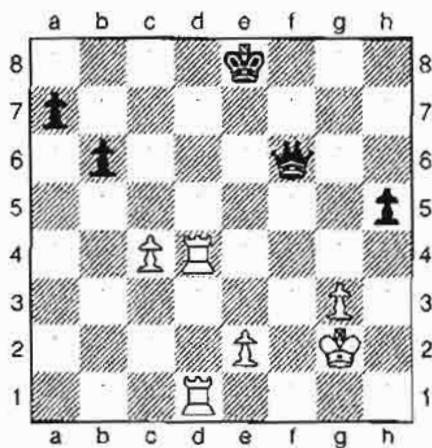


CHESS TACTICS FOR CHAMPIONS

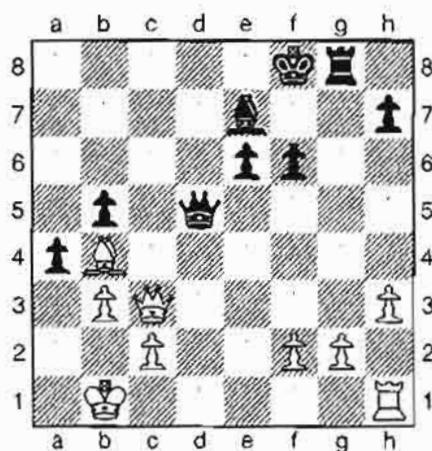
11. White to move



12. White to move

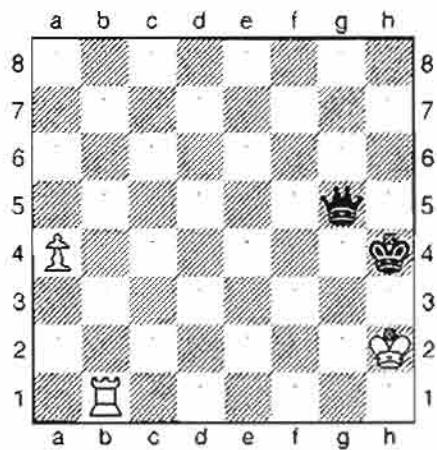


13. White to move

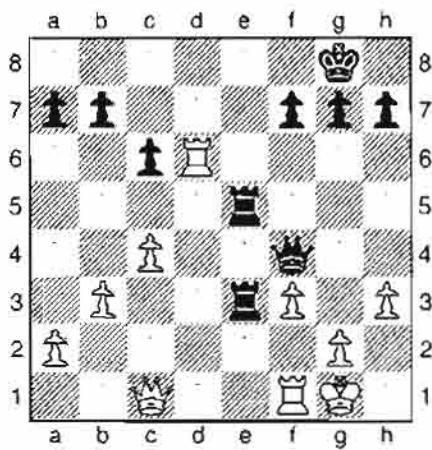


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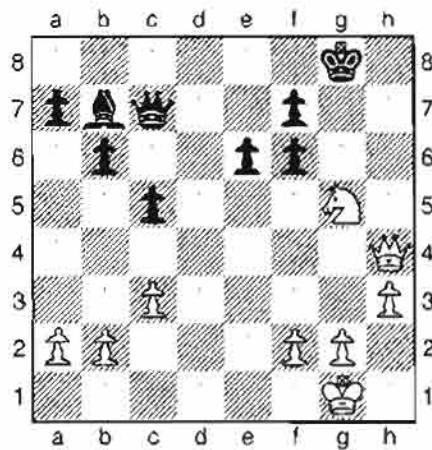
14. White to move



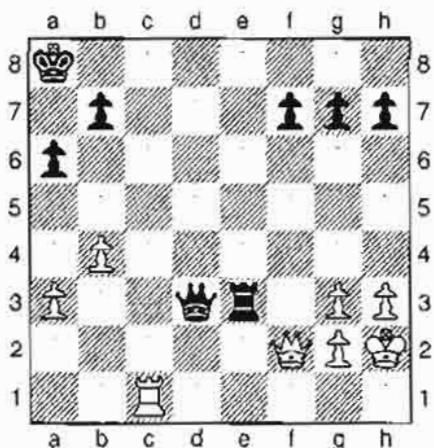
15. White to move



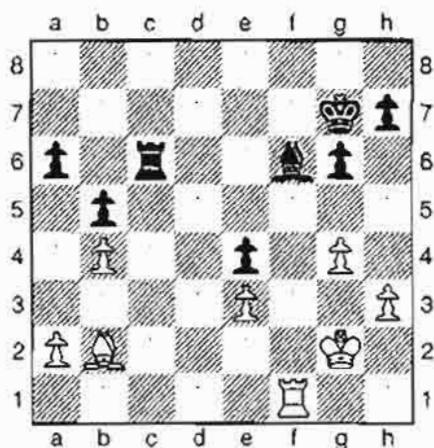
16. White to move



17. White to move



18. White to move

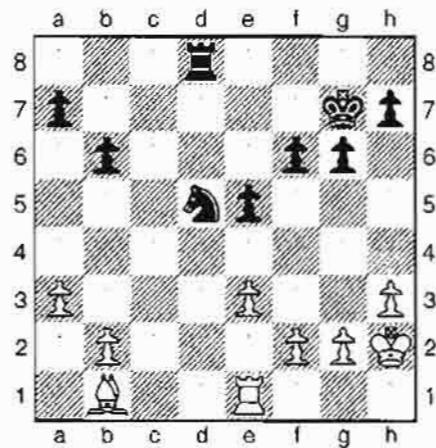


19. White to move

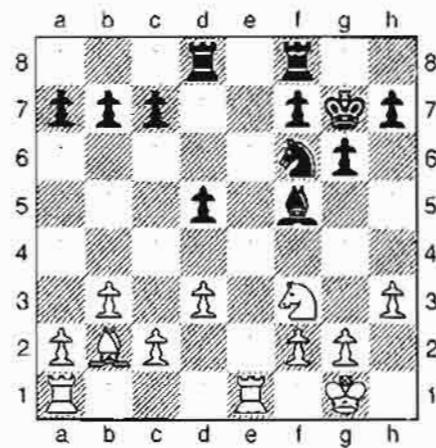


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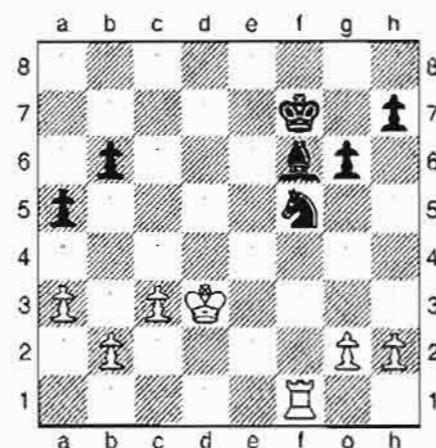
20. White to move



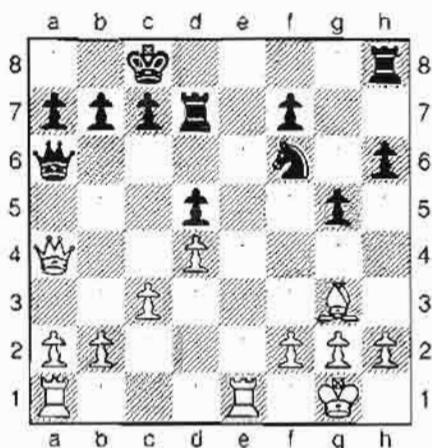
21. White to move



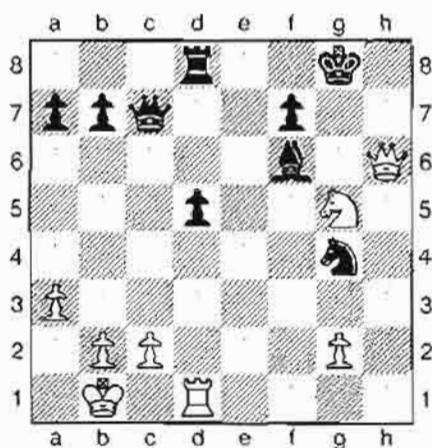
22. White to move



23. White to move



24. White to move

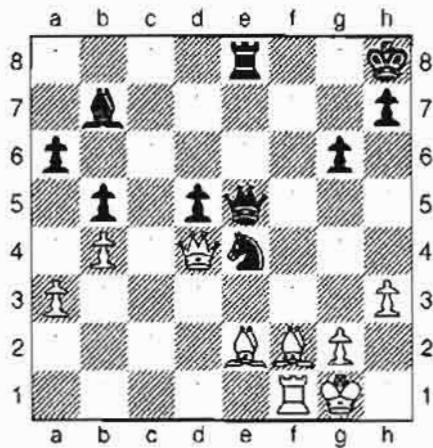


25. White to move

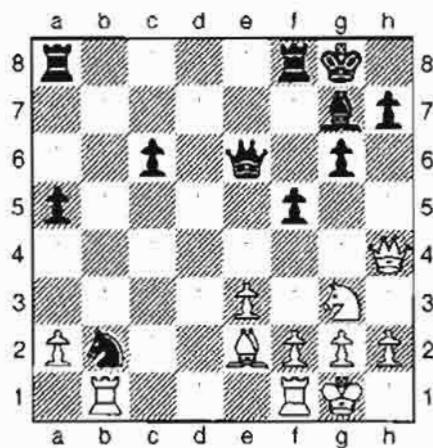


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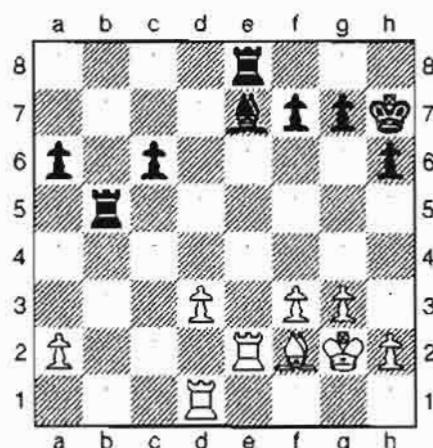
26. White to move



27. White to move

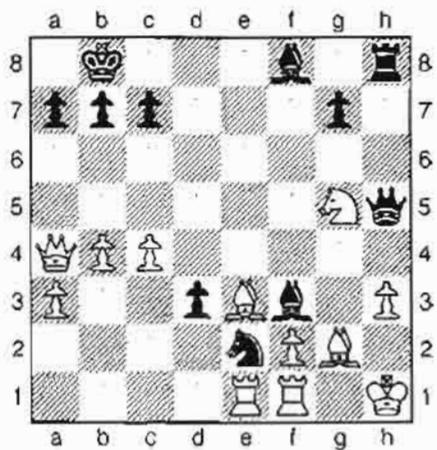


28. White to move

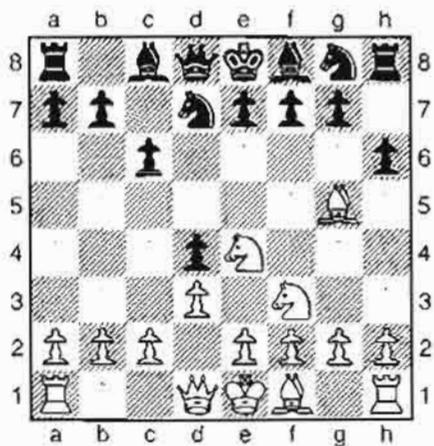




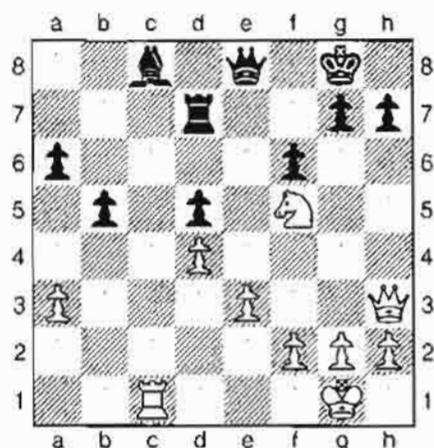
29. Black to move



30. White to move

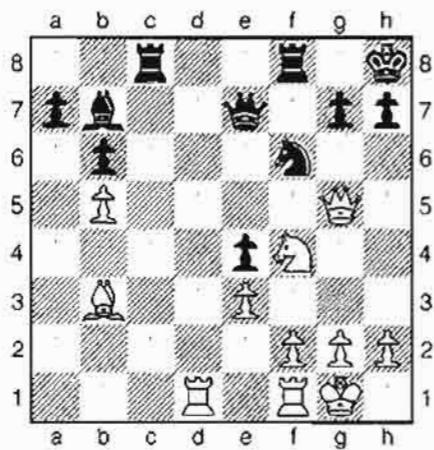


31. White to move

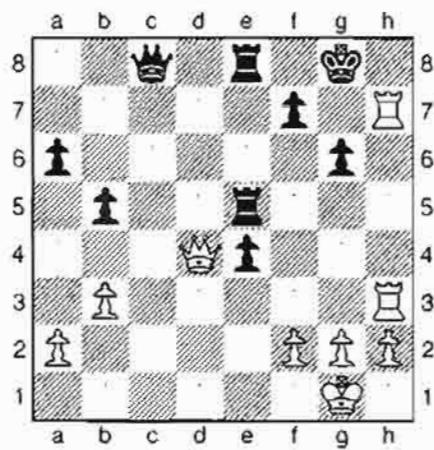


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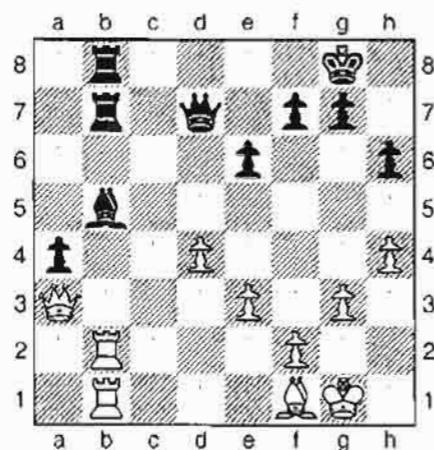
32. White to move

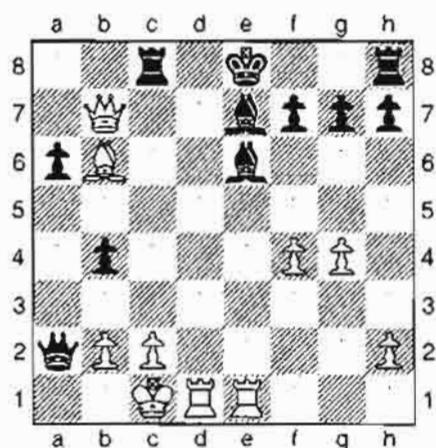
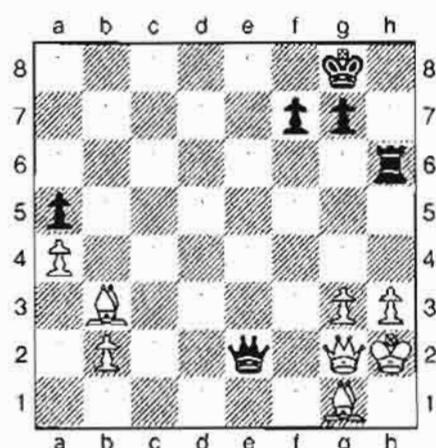


33. White to move



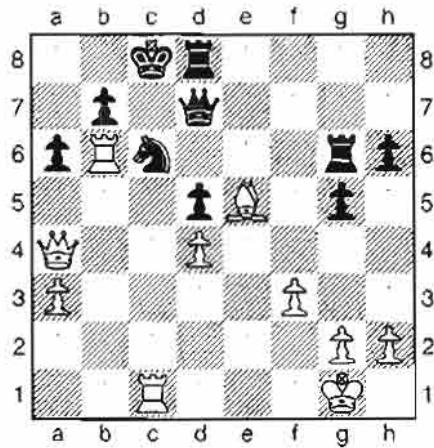
34. White to move



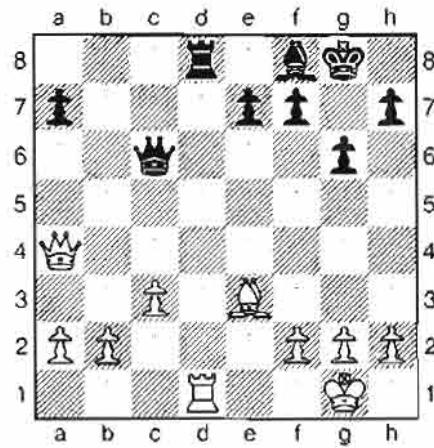
**35. White to move****36. White to move****37. Black to move**

Pins

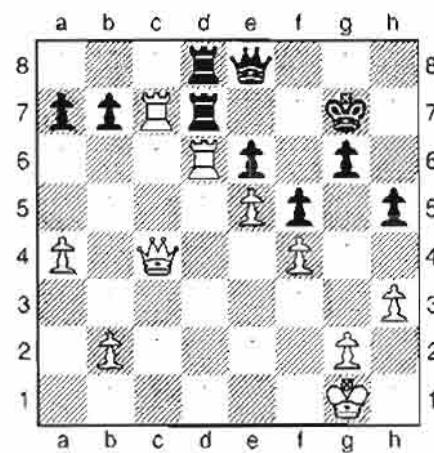
38. White to move



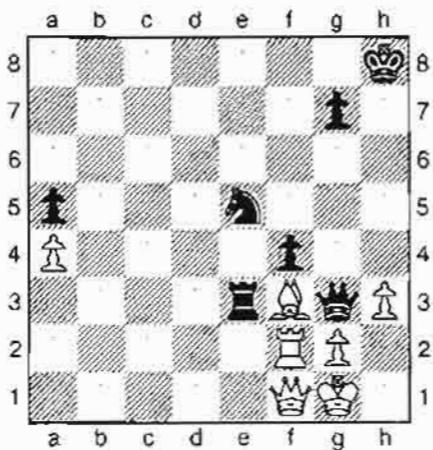
39. White to move



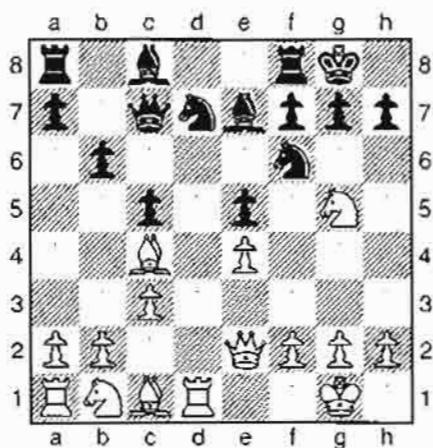
40. White to move



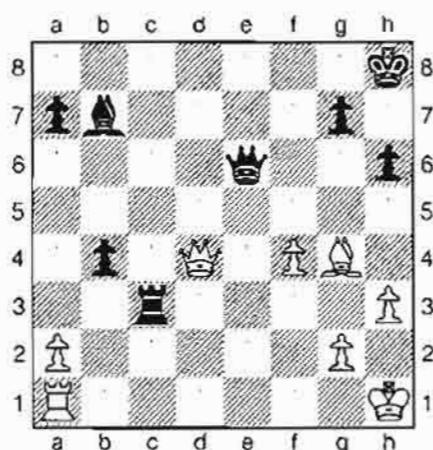
41. Black to move



42. White to move

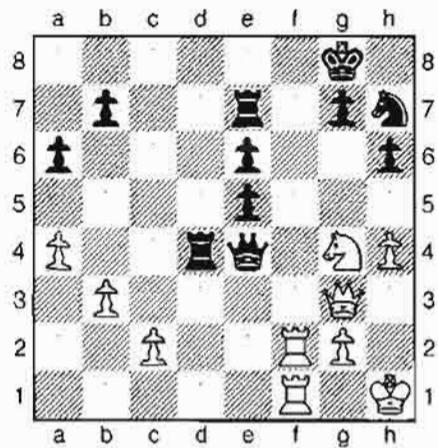


43. Black to move

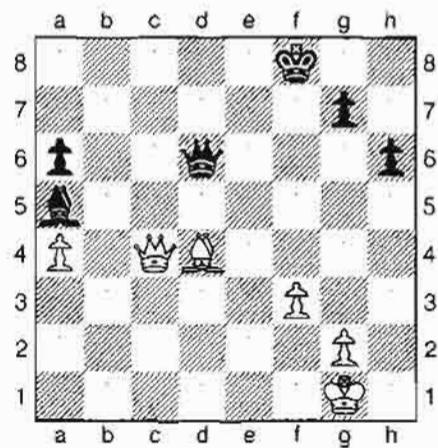


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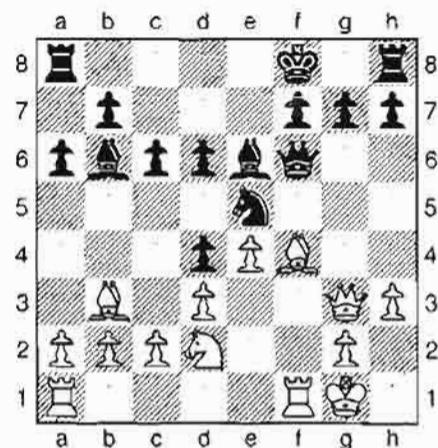
44. White to move



45. White to move

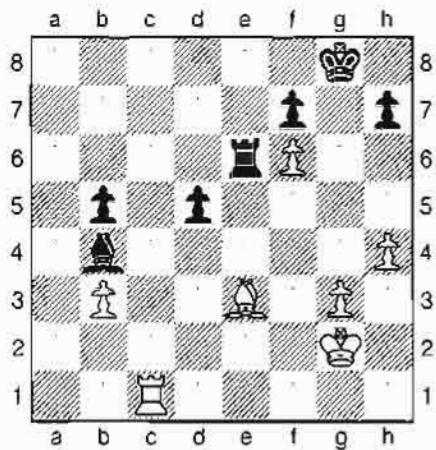


46. White to move

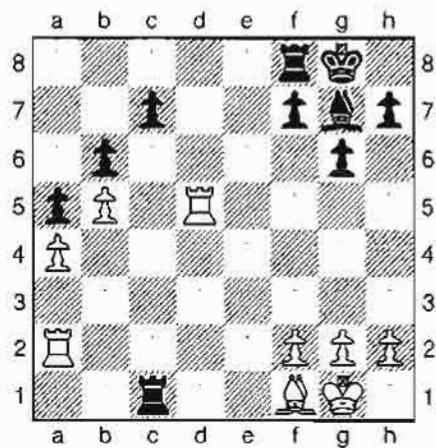




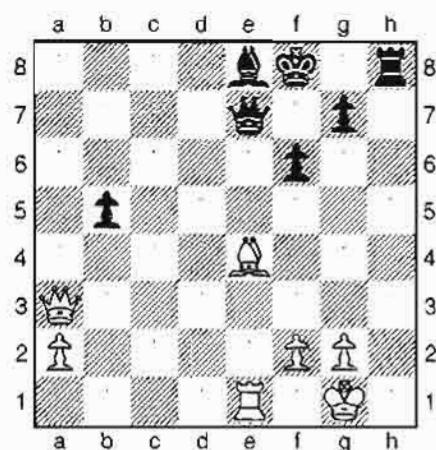
47. White to move



48. Black to move



49. White to move

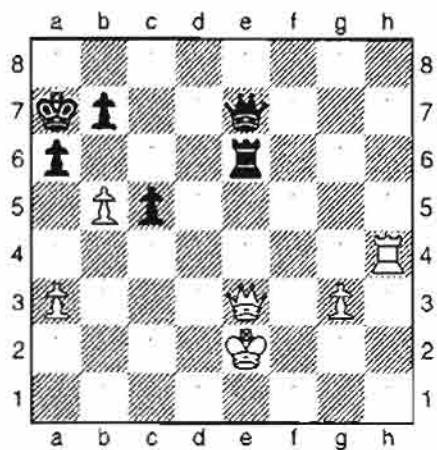




Pins



50. White to move



Solutions

1. White can fork in one move by using an existing pin: 1. Rh5+.
2. Both of Black's knights are pinned. White takes advantage of this with 1. Nd5. If the Black king walks out of both pins with 1. ... Ke8, it walks into the fork 2. Nxc7+.
3. White has two pieces (rook and knight) on unprotected squares. Black creates a relative pin to win a piece with 1. ... Qb4.
4. White has just played Nf4-e6, forking Black's queen, rook, and bishop. Thanks to the pin on the f2 pawn, Black starts a mating attack with 1. ... Qg3.
5. A simple relative pin with 1. Qf8.
6. The Black king is in trouble because of the opened diagonals a1-h8 and a2-g8. Because of the pin on Black's knight on c6, White can win material with: 1. Bd4+ Nxd4 2. Rxc7.
7. This is a classic example of the cross-pin (a double pin on the same piece): 1. Qd8.
8. Another exercise for the cross-pin. 1. ... Qh6. After 2. Kf2, Rae8 decides the game.
9. The Black pieces are overworked. White severs the connection between the Black queen and knight, seeing that Black's bishop is pinned and can't take the White knight: 1. Ng5.
10. White forces mate in two moves thanks to a pin: 1. Rxh6+ Kg8 2. Rd8#.
11. Right now there is no pin, but with a decoy check White forces the Black king to the same diagonal as the rook on d3: 1. Bb3+ Kh7 and now 2. Bc2 pins and wins the rook.
12. As in the previous example, White forces Black's king to the same file as the queen and then pins. 1. Re4+ Kf8 2. Rf4 (or 2. Rf1).
13. Black's bishop on e7 is pinned. That fact allows the following mate in two: 1. Qxf6+ Ke8 2. Qxe7#.
14. White forces the Black king to the fifth rank with 1. Rb4+ Kh5 and then pins with 2. Rb5.
15. Black's suffering is caused by White's combination of two elements: the back-rank problem and the pin. After 1. Rd8+ Black has no choice but to block with 1. ... Re8 and then White wins the queen after 2. Rxe8+ Rxe8 3. Qxf4.
16. Here White creates a pin on the f7 pawn with 1. Qh7+ Kf8 and then forks with 2. Nxe6+ to win Black's queen after 2. ... fxe6 3. Qxc7.
17. With a simple check White forces the Black king to the a7-g1 diagonal by 1. Rc8+ Ka7 and

- then uses the newly created pin:
2. Re8.
18. White makes a temporary exchange sacrifice with 1. Rxf6 Rxf6 and then uses the pin by 2. g5 to win the rook.
 19. White can force mate in two by 1. Bf4+ Ka8 and now, taking advantage of the pin on the a7 pawn, 2. Nb6#.
 20. White pins by 1. Rd1, which Black cannot get out of in time. For example: 1. ... f5 2. Ba2 or 1. ... Kf7 2. Ba2 Ke6 3. e4.
 21. Black's knight on f6 is pinned. With the intermediate move 1. g4, attacking Black's bishop first, White wins the knight after 1. ... Be6 2. g5.
 22. White wins a piece by chasing the knight away with 1. g4 Nd6 and then uses the pin with 2. g5.
 23. White trades queens with 1. Qxa6 bxa6 and then pins with 2. Be5.
 24. A similar idea to that of number 16. Did you recognize the pattern? 1. Qh7+ Kf8 2. Ne6+.
 25. The g6 pawn is pinned, which is why 1. Nxf5+ is possible. After 1. ... Kh5 2. Be2# the game ends.
 26. With the trade 1. Qxe5+ Rxe5 White forces the Black rook to the a1-h8 diagonal, where the Black king resides, then pins with 2. Bd4.
 27. We see the pinning idea of Be2-c4. But first we need to remove the guard (the knight on b2) of the c4 square: 1. Rxb2! Bxb2 2. Bc4.
 28. Black's bishop is pinned. All White needs to do is to attack it several more times: 1. Rde1 Rb7 2. Bc5 Bxc5 3. Rxe8.
 29. White's bishop on g2 is pinned, which allows Black a beautiful queen sacrifice to mate in two moves: 1. ... Qxh3+! 2. Nxh3 Rxh3#.
 30. White wins material with 1. Nd6+ exd6 2. Bxd8.
 31. A cute combination to win material: 1. Rxc8! Qxc8 2. Ne7+ Rxe7 3. Qxc8+.
 32. With a nice combination, White takes advantage of the pin on the knight on f6. 1. Ng6+! hxg6 2. Qh4+ Nh5 3. Qxe7.
 33. White wins a rook by 1. Rh8+ Kg7 2. Qxe5+! Rxe5 3. Rxc8. The other move order, 1. Qxe5? Rxe5 2. Rh8+, doesn't work because Black mates with 1. ... Qc1#.
 34. White wins a bishop after 1. Rxb5! Rxb5 2. Qxa4 pinning the rook.
 35. The Black queen is pinned. White uses this to give an impressive checkmate after 1. Re7! Qxh3 2. Rxc7#.
 36. With a pretty queen sacrifice White forces mate in two: 1. Qxc8+! Bxc8 2. Rd8#.
 37. Checkmate in two: 1. ... Rxh3+! 2. Kxh3 Qh5#.
 38. Black's knight is pinned. See how White takes advantage of this: 1. Qxa6! bxa6 2. Rb8#.

39. The Black queen is taboo, as after 1. Qxc6 Black gives a back-rank mate. But White can sacrifice the queen with 1. Rxd8! Qxa4, as after 2. Bh6 Black is lost.
40. At first, it does not seem to matter which rook to trade and then pin. But after 1. Rcx d7+? Rxd7 2. Qb5 Black escapes with 2. ... Re7. The correct solution is: 1. Rdx d7+ Rxd7 2. Qb5 creating a cross-pin (2. ... Re7 3. Qxe8 wins the Black queen).
41. This example is a parade of pins! 1. ... Re1! A decoy! 2. Qxe1 Nxf3+ and White's queen is lost.
42. The weakest point in Black's camp is f7, which is where White strikes: 1. Bxf7+! Rxf7 2. Qc4.
43. Black's queen is under attack, yet because of the pin on the g2 pawn, Black can ignore that and play 1. ... Rxh3+!, and if 2. Bxh3 Qxh3+ 3. Kg1 Qxg2#.
44. White can capture a pawn by 1. Nxh6+, but there is a better solution: 1. Rf8+! Nxf8 2. Nf6+.
45. This looks like a simple puzzle, but there is more to it. After 1. Bc5 Black has a counter-pin with 1. ... Bb6, but 2. Qf4+ decides the game for White.
46. White wins a piece by clearing the f-file. 1. Bxe5 Qxe5 2. Qxe5 dx e5 3. Bxe6.
47. A very common pinning trick: 1. Rc8+ Bf8 2. Bh6.
48. White's bishop is pinned. Black needs to bring more ammunition to take advantage of this: 1. ... Re8 2. f4 Ree1 (a second attack on the pinned bishop) 3. Rf2. (White protects it just in time) 3. ... Bf8! (threatening Bf8-e5) 4. Rd8. White tries defending by creating a pin on the Black bishop, but Black gets out of it with the simple 4. ... Kg7. Now White can't avoid losing material.
49. White creates a nice mating net: 1. Bg6! Qxa3 2. Rxe8#.
50. White seems to be in serious trouble, as the queen is pinned. But White turns things around with 1. b6+! Kxb6 2. Rh6. A cross-pin! 2. ... Rxh6 3. Qxe7. If 1. ... Kb8 2. Rh8+, and Black has a back-rank problem.

3

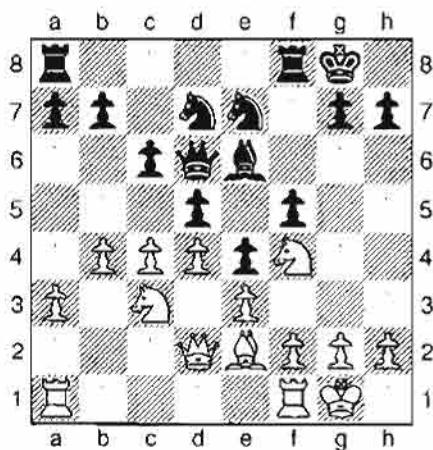
DEFLECTION/REMOVING THE GUARD

In order to find the right solution to any problem, you usually need the following thought process:

- 1) Recognize your goal. Where do you want to checkmate or which piece do you want to win?
- 2) Notice how your plan might be stopped by a defending piece.
- 3) Look for a way to get rid of the defender.

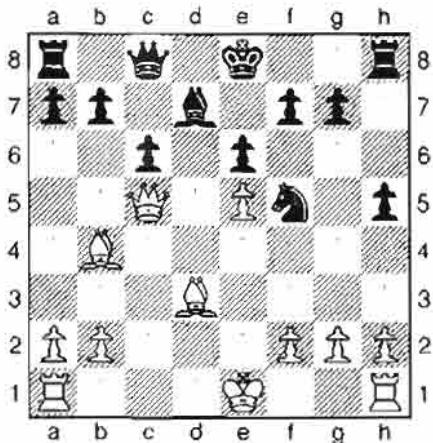
In the following positions, we see deflections of two types, which have the effect of either winning a piece or checkmating.

In the first position, all Black's pieces seem to be safe.



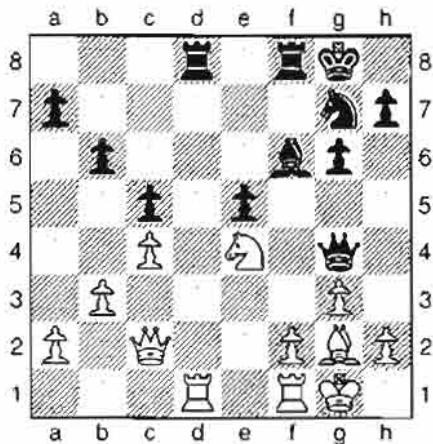
The White knight on f4 is attacking the Black bishop on e6. But the bishop is guarded by the Black queen. Therefore, White plays 1. c5 to chase the queen away and then takes the unprotected bishop.

In the next example, White would be ready to checkmate with 1. Qe7 if the Black knight were not on f5. So the task is to remove the defender of the e7 square.



After 1. Bxf5, if Black recaptures with 1. ... exf5, the game ends after 2. Qe7#. If Black does not recapture, then Black simply loses the knight.

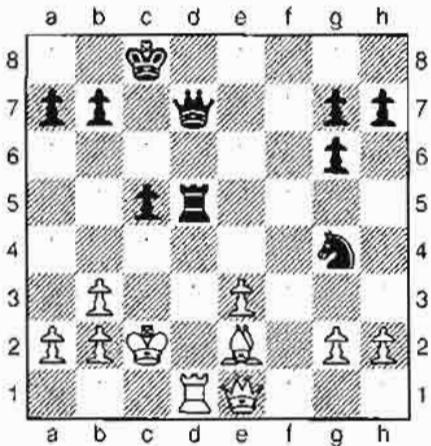
In the next position, the target is the Black rook on d8. It seems to be safe right now, since two pieces are protecting it. But with the right move, White can get rid of both of them.



After 1. Nxf6+ Black's queen and king are forked, so the only reasonable response is to recapture with 1. ... Rxf6. But then White gets the unprotected rook with 2. Rxd8+.

In the next example, a piece (the queen) is not able to perform two duties.

Deflection/Removing the Guard



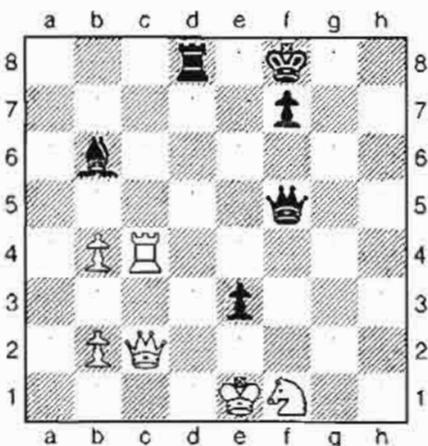
The correct move is 1. **Bxg4** (but not 1. **Rxd5?** because after the intermediate moves 1. ... **Nxe3+** 2. **Kc1 Nxd5** Black stands better) 1. ... **Qxg4** and White wins a rook with 2. **Rxd5**. Now Black can't win the rook back with either 2. ... **Qxg2+** 3. **Qd2** or 2. ... **Qe4+** 3. **Rd3**.

In the next example, White can almost give checkmate with **Bxf7**—if only the Black bishop on h5 were not defending the f7 pawn!



That explains why White is willing to sacrifice even the queen with 1. **Qxh5!** If Black accepts the “gift” with 1. ... **Nxh5**, the game ends right away with 2. **Bxf7#**. If Black doesn’t take the queen (the best option), then White has just won a bishop.

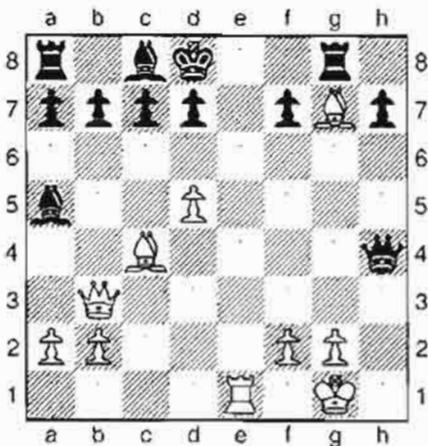
Susan's Corner

Koch—Susan Polgar
Aubervilliers, 1989

It is obvious that the White king lacks defense. Right now, the f2 square is still guarded by White's queen. I found a way to deflect the defender of the f2 square. Can you see the right move?

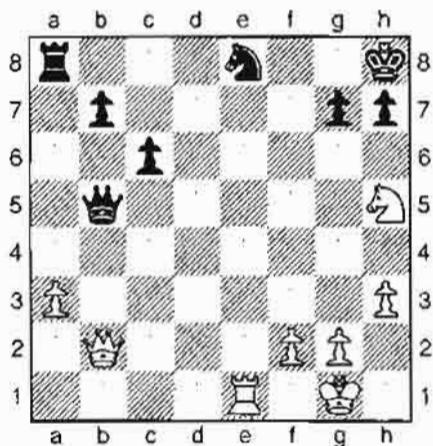
My opponent resigned after 43. ... Rd1+!, seeing that checkmate was unavoidable after either 44. Qxd1 Qf2# or 44. Kxd1 Qxf1#.

Now that you understand the importance of removing the guard, try solving the following 50 puzzles.

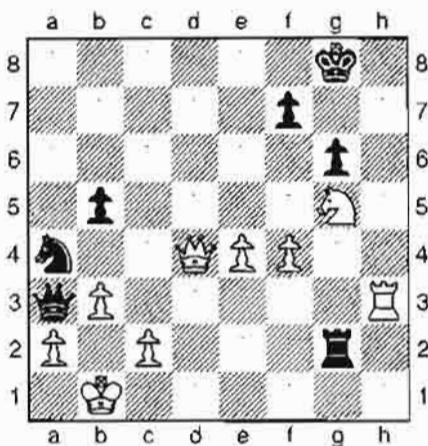
1. White to move

Deflection/Removing the Guard

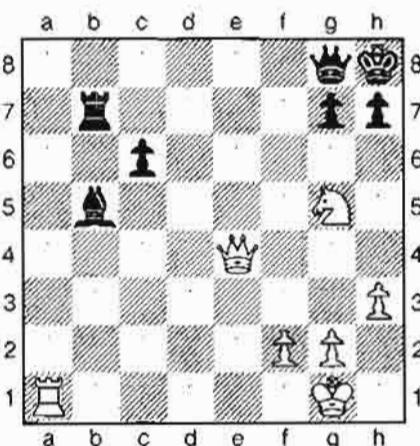
2. White to move

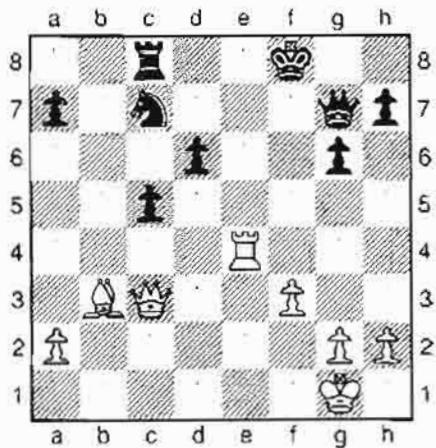
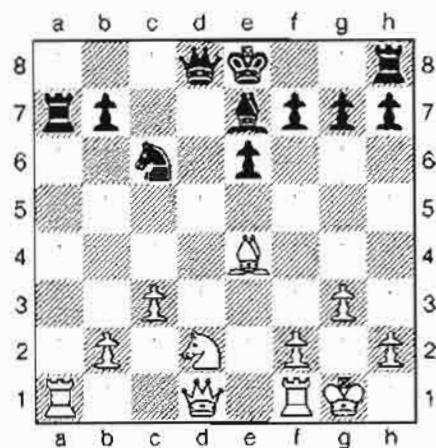
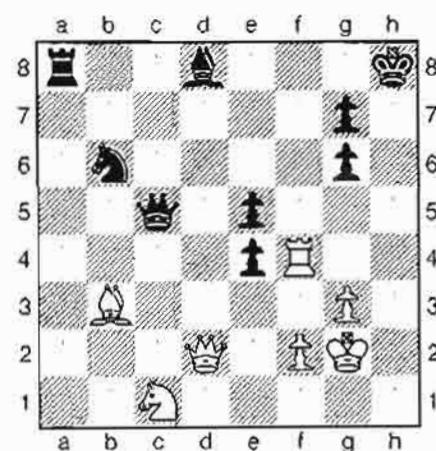


3. Black to move



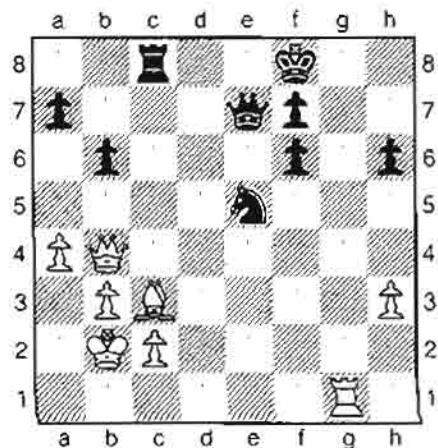
4. White to move



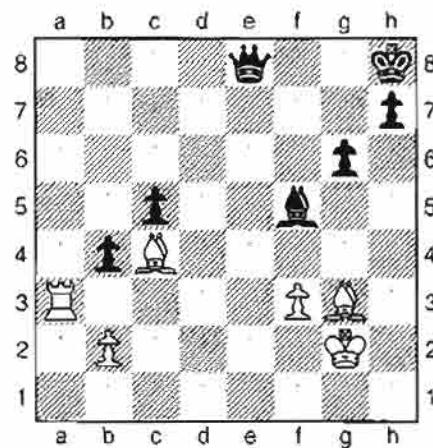
**5. White to move****6. White to move****7. White to move**

Deflection/Removing the Guard

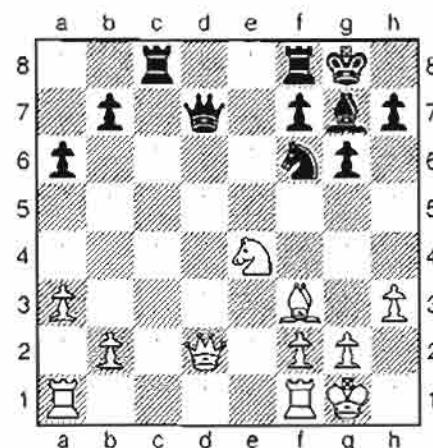
8. White to move



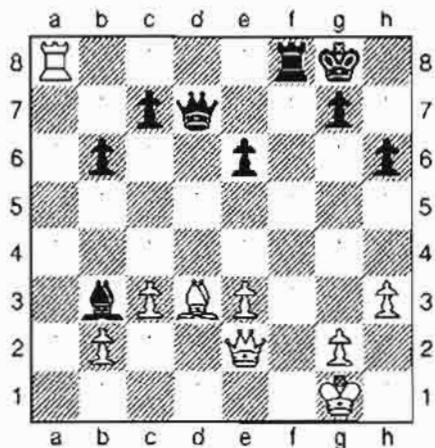
9. White to move



10. White to move



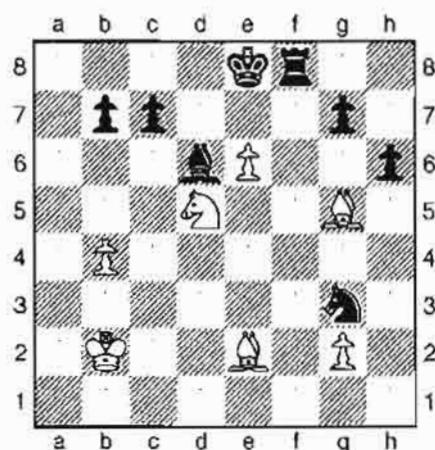
11. White to move



12. White to move

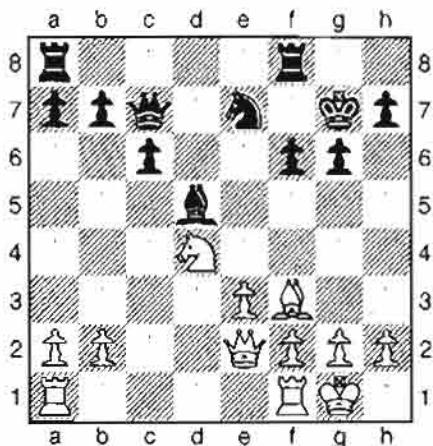


13. White to move

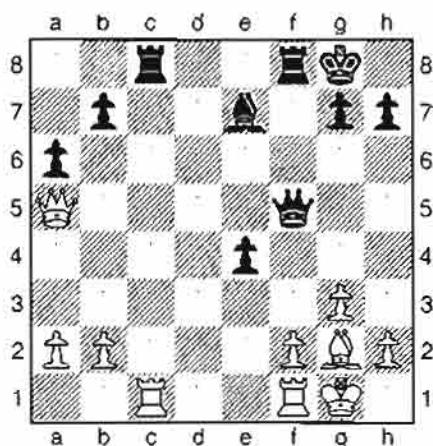


Deflection/Removing the Guard

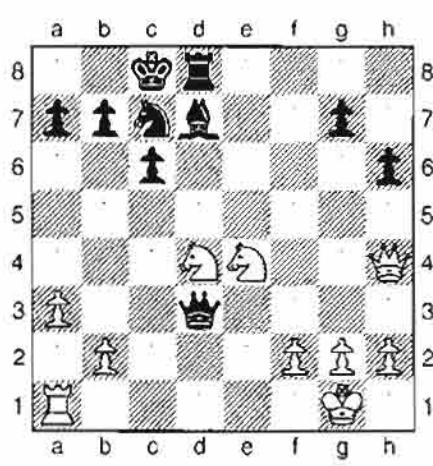
14. White to move



15. White to move



16. White to move



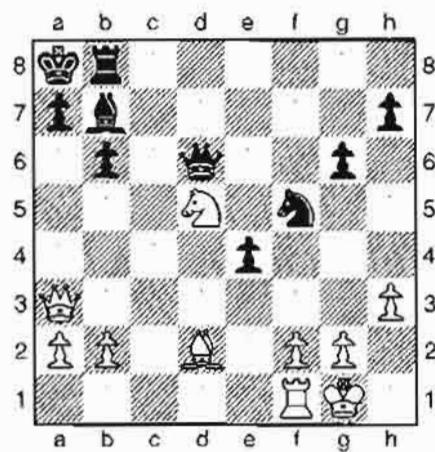
17. White to move



18. White to move



19. White to move



Deflection/Removing the Guard

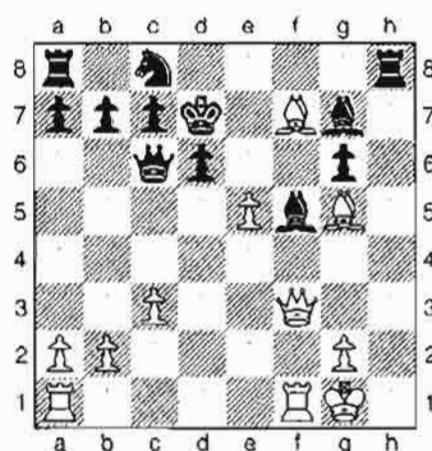
20. White to move

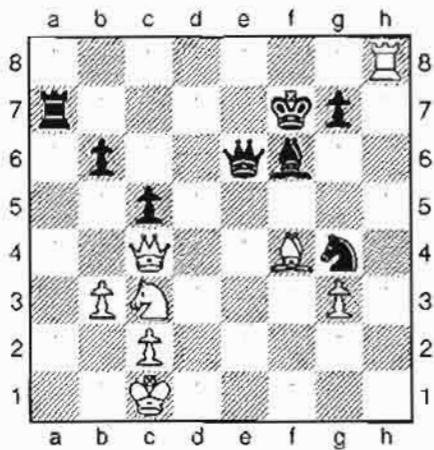
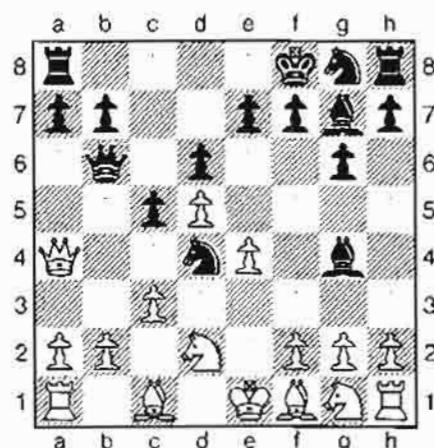


21. White to move



22. White to move



**23. White to move****24. White to move****25. Black to move**

Deflection/Removing the Guard

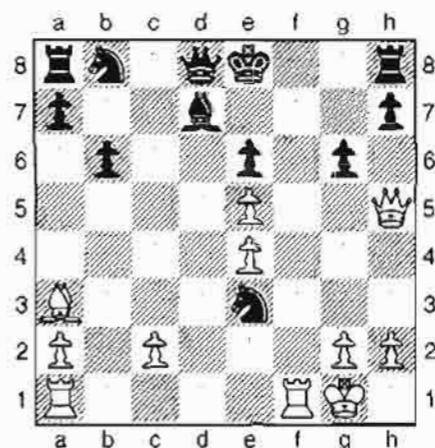
26. Black to move



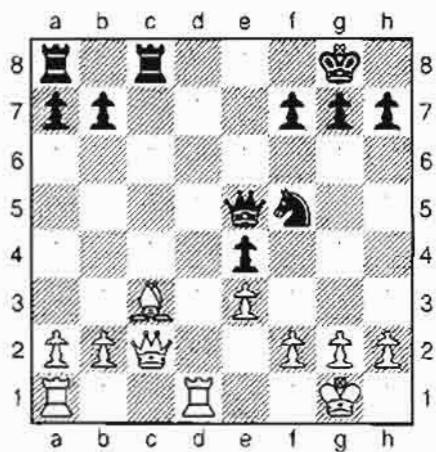
27. White to move



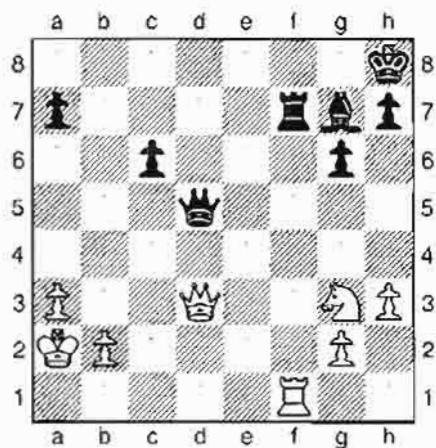
28. White to move



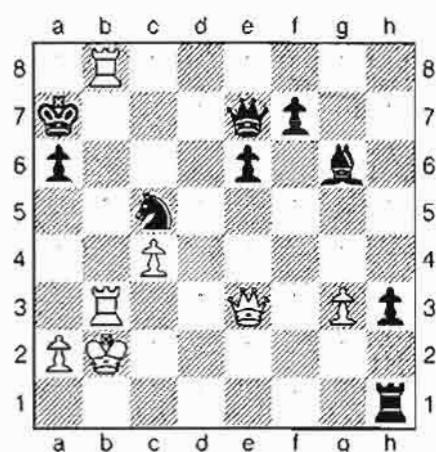
29. White to move



30. White to move



31. White to move

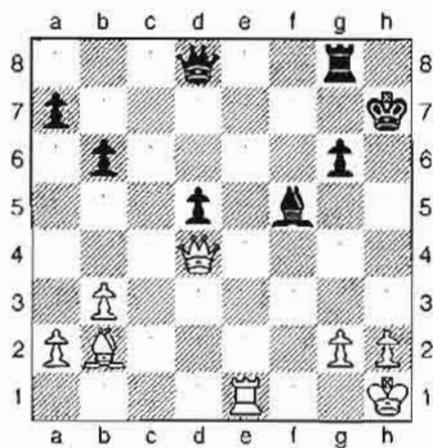


Deflection/Removing the Guard

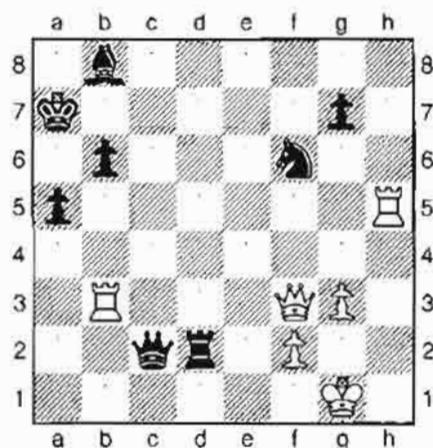
32. White to move

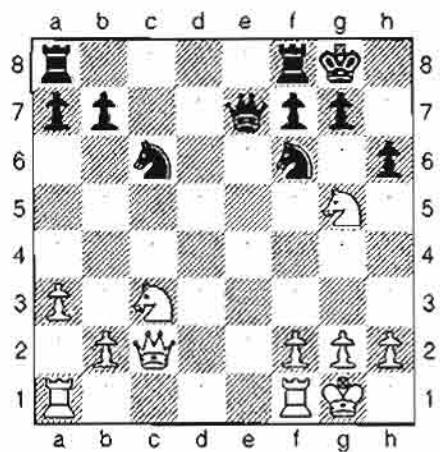
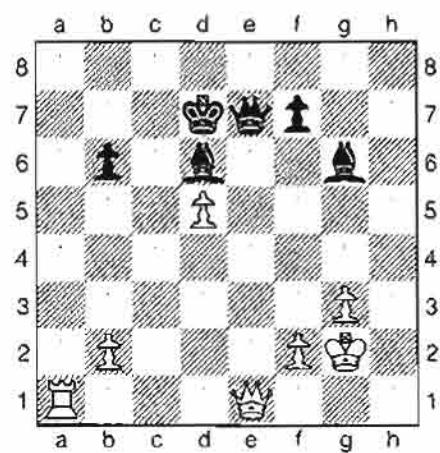
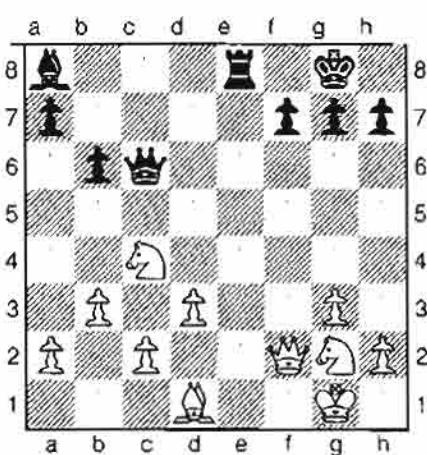


33. White to move



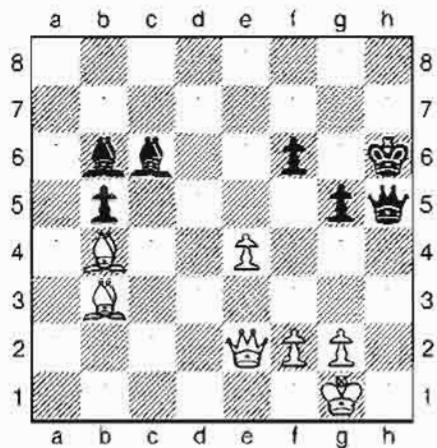
34. White to move



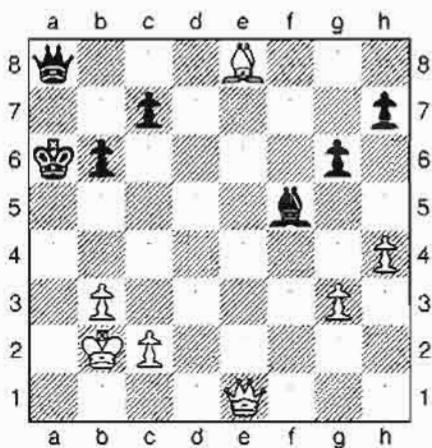
**35. White to move****36. White to move****37. Black to move**

Deflection/Removing the Guard

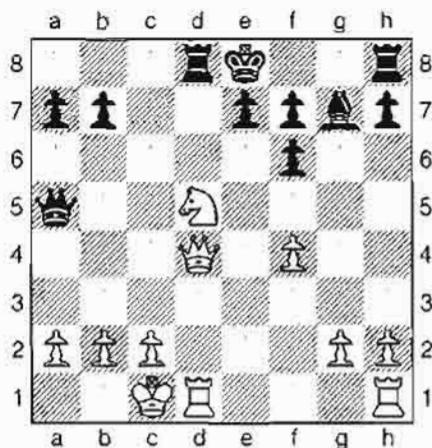
38. White to move



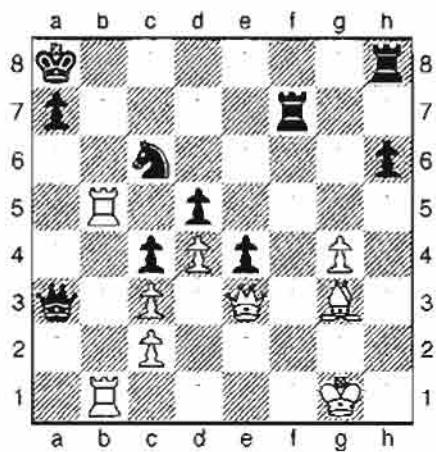
39. White to move



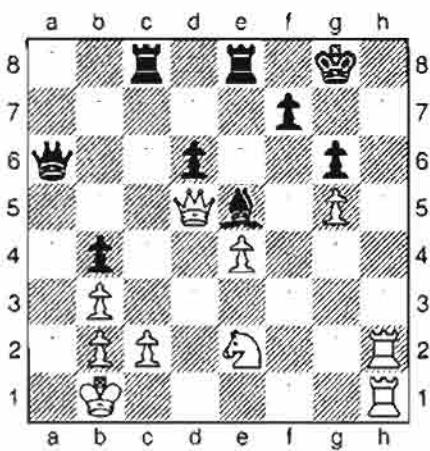
40. White to move



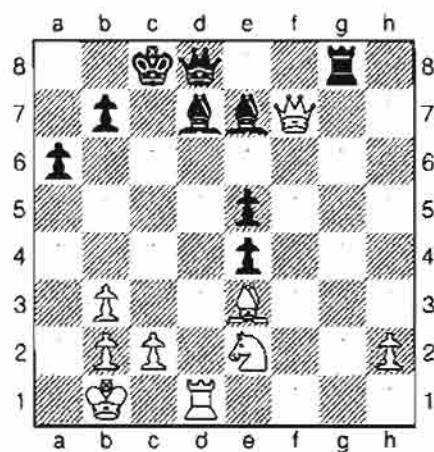
41. White to move



42. White to move

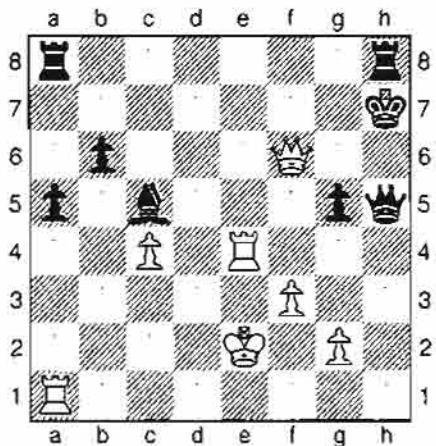


43. White to move

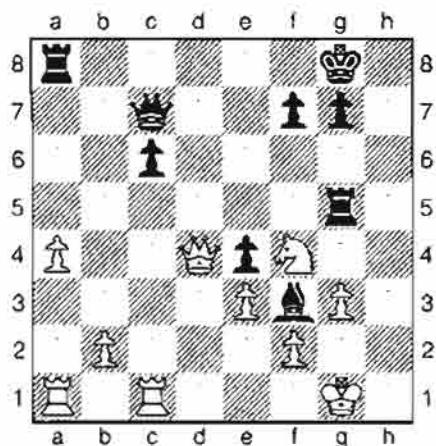


Deflection/Removing the Guard

44. White to move



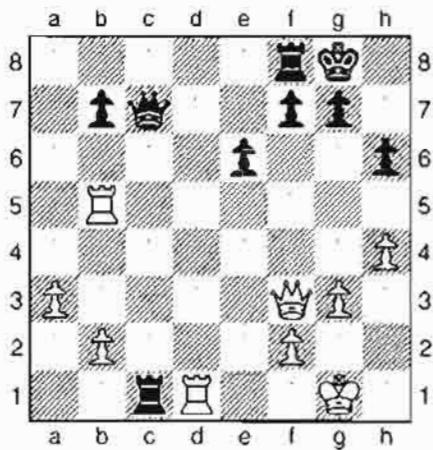
45. Black to move



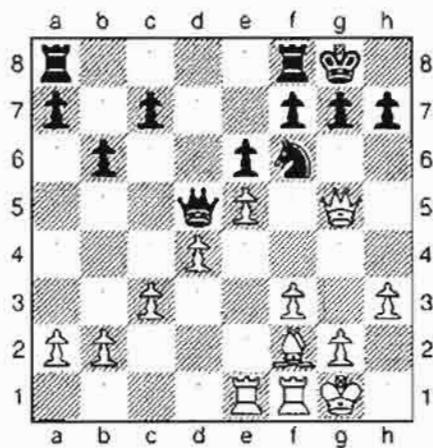
46. White to move



47. Black to move



48. White to move

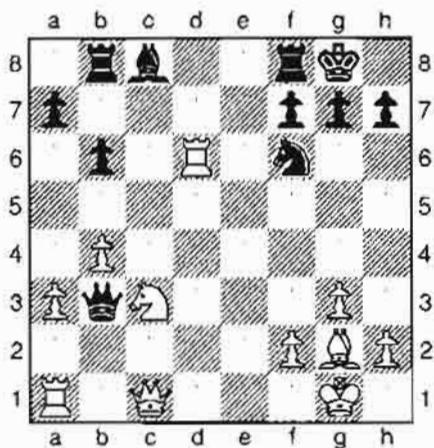


49. White to move



Deflection/Removing the Guard

50. White to move



Solutions

1. White's aim is to checkmate with $Bg7-f6$, but now the Black queen is stopping that. So White deflects the queen with 1. $Qg3$ and if 1. ... $Qxg3$ 2. $Bf6\#$.
2. Here the weak spot is on $g7$. The guard is the knight on $e8$. So: 1. $Rxe8+$! $Rxe8$ 2. $Qxg7\#$.
3. White is threatening checkmate on $h8$. But Black can checkmate in two by deflecting the White queen from the defense of the $b2$ square: 1. ... $Rg1+!$ 2. $Qxg1$ $Qb2\#$.
4. White has a strong attack on the $h7$ square. However, Black's queen is holding off the offense. Here is how to make it work: 1. $Ra8!$ $Qxa8$ 2. $Qxh7\#$ or 1. ... $Rb8$ 2. $Rxb8$ $Qxb8$ 3. $Qxh7\#$.
5. With a simple check White makes the Black king move and give up protecting the queen. 1. $Rf4+$ $Ke8$ 2. $Qxg7$.
6. Black's rook is protected by the knight. The task is easy: remove the guard! 1. $Bxc6+$ $bcx6$ 2. $Rxa7$.
7. White would be ready to checkmate on the h -file except for Black's bishop in the way. So: 1. $Qxd8+!$ $Rxd8$ 2. $Rh4\#$.
8. With a rook sacrifice, White wins Black's queen. 1. $Rg8+!$ $Kxg8$ 2. $Qxe7$.
9. Here the key square is $e5$. 1. $Ra8!$ $Qxa8$ 2. $Be5\#$ or 1. ... $Bc8$ 2. $Rxc8!$ $Qxc8$ 3. $Be5\#$.
10. The Black queen is only protected by the knight. With a simple trade White wins the queen. 1. $Nxf6+$ $Bxf6$ 2. $Qxd7$.
11. With a bishop sacrifice White gains an exchange. 1. $Bh7+!$ $Kxh7$ 2. $Rxf8$. Even worse is 1. ... $Kf7$ 2. $Qf3+$ $Ke7$ 3. $Qxf8\#$.
12. With a simple check White pushes the Black king away from protecting the queen. 1. $Nf6+$ $Kh8$ 2. $Qxh6\#$.
13. The immediate 1. $Bb5+$ would be blocked by 1. ... $c6$. That explains White's next move, which forces checkmate in two. 1. $Nxc7+!$ $Bxc7$ 2. $Bb5\#$.
14. There is a nice "family fork" in sight on $e6$. 1. $Bxd5$ $Nxd5$ 2. $Ne6+$.
15. Black's rook (on $f8$) is overworked. 1. $Qxf5$ $Rxf5$ 2. $Rxc8+$.
16. White can force checkmate in three by: 1. $Nd6+$ $Kb8$ 2. $Qxd8+$.
17. By sacrificing a rook White wins Black's queen. 1. $Ra8+!$ $Kxa8$ 2. $Qxa6+$.
18. Black's queen seems to be sufficiently protected. But after 1. $Bxg7+!$ the Black king must give up its guard. 1. ... $Kxg7$ 2. $Qxe7$ and White gains significant material advantage.
19. Here there is a smothered mate on the horizon. All White needs

Deflection/Removing the Guard

- to do is to trade queens with 1. Qxd6 Nxd6 and then 2. Nc7#.
20. Here the weak point is on f7. 1. Qxc4! bxc4 2. Rxf7#.
21. The Black king is in an awkward position and White takes advantage of it like this: 1. Qxe3+! Qxe3 2. Nf7#.
22. After a nice queen sacrifice White's e-pawn becomes the hero of the game! 1. Qxf5+! gxf5 2. e6#.
23. White gives up a rook to get the queen: 1. Rf8+! Kxf8 2. Qxe6 or 1. ... Ke7 2. Re8+! Kxe8 3. Qxe6.
24. The Black king is in a tight position. The idea Nh5xf6# is in view. 1. Qg4+! Qxg4 2. Nxf6#.
25. White has neglected king safety and that allows the following impressive move: 1. ... Qa5! 2. Qxa5 Ne2#.
26. Black could checkmate with Qh1 if White's queen were not guarding that square from a distance. Here is how Black can either gain serious material advantage or give checkmate: 1. ... Rxc2! 2. Qxc2 Qh1# or 2. Qb7 Rxc8 3. Qxc8 Qh1#.
27. This is a famous opening trap in the Dutch Defense. White checkmates in two moves: 1. Qxh5+! Rxh5 2. Bg6#.
28. Both the White queen and rook are under attack, yet White has a winning combination because of a nice checkmate idea: 1. Qxh7! Rxh7 2. Rf8#.
29. Black is relying on the pin on the c-file to avoid losing the queen. With the following rook sacrifice, White "unpins" the bishop on c3. 1. Rd8+! Rxd8 2. Bxe5.
30. White is in check, but can win a rook as follows: 1. Qxd5 cxd5 2. Rxf7.
31. There's a checkmate idea on the horizon with Rb3-b7, but right now two Black pieces are guarding the b7 square. White can remove both guards at once: 1. Qxc5+! Qxc5 2. R3b7#.
32. Black's knight on f6 is in White's way. 1. Qxe4+! Nxe4 2. Bxf7#.
33. This is a fine example, where White moves the rook to a square where it is doubly attacked. Either of Black pieces can take the rook, resulting in different problems. 1. Re8! Qxe8 2. Qh4# or 1. ... Rxe8 2. Qg7#. Ignoring the sacrifice does not help either: 1. ... Qg5 2. Qh8+! Rxh8 3. Rxh8#.
34. By opening the b-file White can force checkmate in two moves: 1. Rxa5+! bxa5 2. Qb7#.
35. Black's last move (h7-h6) attacked White's knight on g5. White needs to deflect Black's knight from f6. 1. Nd5! Qd6 2. Nxf6+ Qxf6 3. Qh7#.
36. The first move is a very natural skewer with 1. Ra7+, but Black can block it by 1. ... Bc7. Now the king becomes overworked: 2. Rxc7+! Kxc7 3. Qxe7+.

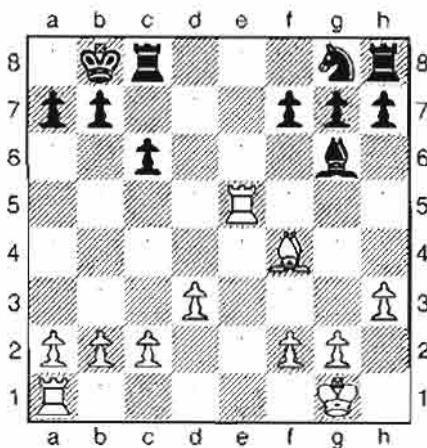
37. The idea Black uses here resembles the one we saw in position 33. 1. ... Re1+! 2. Qxe1 Qxg2# or 2. Nxe1 Qh1#.
38. Black's king is protecting the queen. There is a way to chase the king away from the sixth rank. 1. Bf8+ Kg6 2. Bf7+! Kxf7 3. Qxh5+.
39. Black can get out of the first skewer safely, 1. Qa1+ Kb7, but after the second one Black loses badly: 2. Bc6+! Kxc6 3. Qxa8+.
40. The key square is: c7. 1. Qa4+! Qxa4 2. Nc7+ Kf8 3. Rxd8+ Qe8 4. Rxe8#.
41. Black has a back-rank problem. White needs to deflect either Black's knight or rook (on h8) away from the b8-square. 1. Qxh6! Rxh6 2. Rb8+ Nxb8 3. Rxb8# or 1. ... Rc8 2. Qxc6+! Rxc6 3. Rb8#.
42. Both White rooks are lined up along the h-file, ready for action. Only Black's bishop on e5 is in the way. 1. Qxe5! Rxe5 2. Rh8+ Kg7 3. R1h7#.
43. After the simple check 1. Qc4+ Kb8, Black's queen becomes overworked: 2. Rxd7! Qxd7 3. Qxg8+ or 1. ... Qc7 2. Qxg8+.
44. The Black king is out in the open, but right now the Black queen guards the crucial f7-square. 1. Rh1! Qxh1 2. Qf7+ Kh6 3. Re6#.
45. Black's bishop on f3 is clearly very powerful. Black wants to get a rook (or queen) to h1, but first the h5 square must be made available for the rook. 1. ... Qxf4! 2. exf4 Rh5 followed by 3. ... Rh1#.
46. Black is offering a trade of queens and also threatening to checkmate on g2. White can remove the guard of the Black queen (the knight on b6). 1. Nd7+! Nxd7 2. Qxd5 or 1. ... Kc8 2. Nxb6+ axb6 3. Qxd5.
47. The White queen protects the rook on d1. The goal is to lure it away: 1. ... Qc6 2. Qxc6 Rxd1+ 3. Kg2 bxc6 or 2. Qe2 Rxd1+ 3. Qxd1 Qxb5 and Black wins a rook in both variations.
48. The knight on f6 is indirectly protected because of the pin on the e5-pawn. With two smart pawn moves White can unpin the pawn: 1. c4 Qa5 2. b4 Qxb4 3. exf6.
49. Here the point is to make the f6-square available for the White knight. 1. Qxd4! Nxd4 2. Nf6+ Kf8 3. Bh6#.
50. The Black queen is surrounded by too many enemy pieces. White needs to attack the queen with Bd5, but the knight on f6 is guarding that square for now. 1. Rxf6! gxf6 2. Bd5 traps the queen.

4

DISCOVERIES

Discovered checks and attacks—moving a piece so that another piece behind it can give check or attack an enemy piece—are very special double attacks. Under normal circumstances, you need to be careful where you move, making sure your piece will not be captured right away. But in positions where you can make a discovered attack, you may even move your piece to a square that is attacked by an enemy piece in order to make the discovery work.

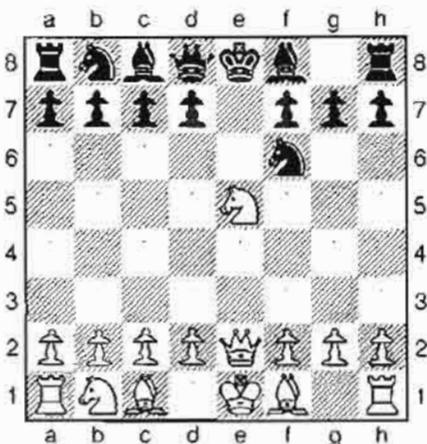
Here's a basic example:



It is White's turn to move. White will give a discovered check with 1. Re8+, forcing 1. ... Ka8. Then White can checkmate with 2. Rxc8#.

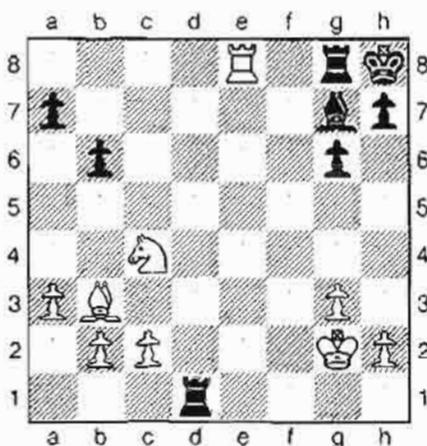
Take a look at this famous opening trap:

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6: the Petroff Defense.
3. Nxe5 Black's next two moves are mistakes.
3. ... Nxe4? The correct move is 3. ... d6 first, and only then capture the e4 pawn.
4. Qe2 Nf6?



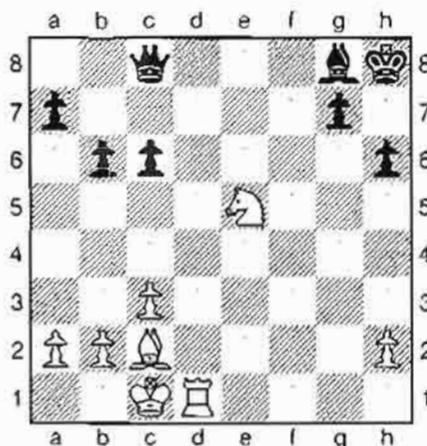
And now 5. Nc6+ wins the Black queen.

In the next position, White needs to push the Black king into the discovery.



White achieves this by trading rooks with 1. Rxg8+ Kxg8 and then winning the rook with 2. Ne3+ discovered check.

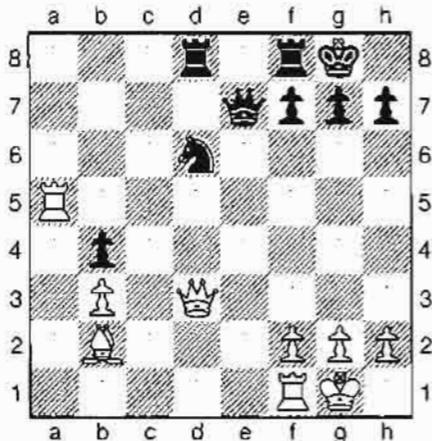
The next example is similar to what we just saw. In this position, the goal is to force the Black king into a discovery.



Discoveries

After 1. Ng6+, the only answer is 1. ... Kh7 and then 2. Ne7+ wins the Black queen, a decisive material advantage for White.

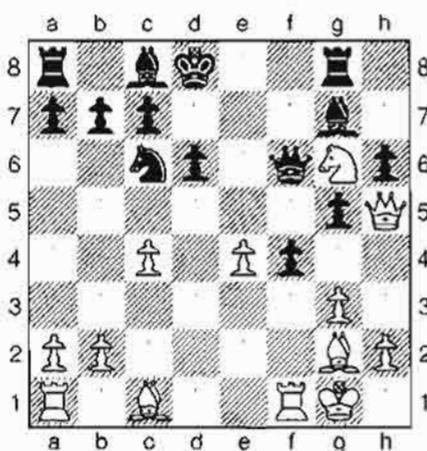
As dangerous as discoveries are, not all of them have a devastating effect. This one is an example of effective defense.



Black can try a double attack by discovery with 1. ... Nb7. But White is safe either by blocking with 2. Rd5 or by creating a counterthreat (checkmate on g7) with 2. Qg3.

Susan's Corner

Herendi–Susan Polgar
Kecskemet, 1984



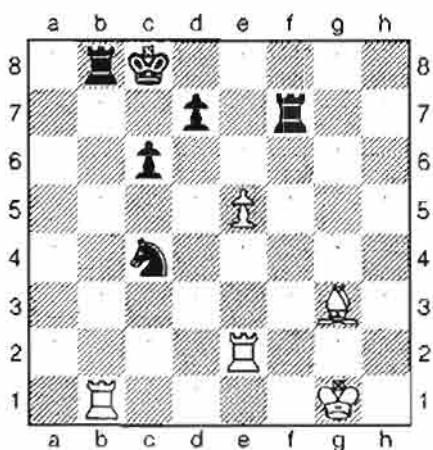
The Black king has lost the right to castle. But White has a more serious tactical problem. The knight on g6 is surrounded by too many Black pieces. The simplest way to win is a discovery combination. 15. ...



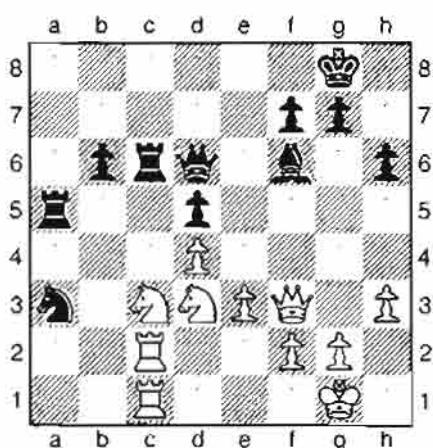
Qxg6 and White resigned because if 16. Qxg6 then 16. ... Bd4+ wins the queen on g6.

Following are 25 puzzles for you to practice with. The last two involve the “mill,” which uses the discovery element repeatedly.

1. White to move

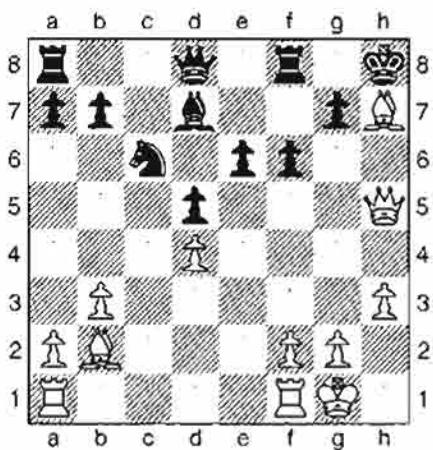


2. White to move

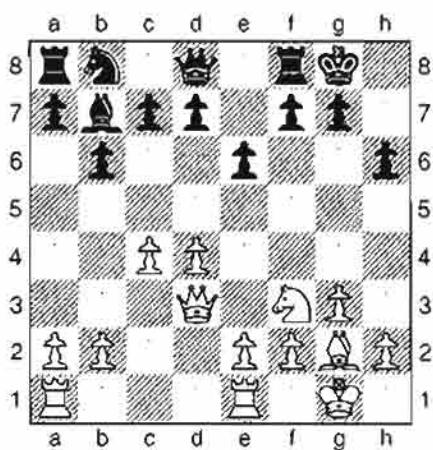


Discoveries

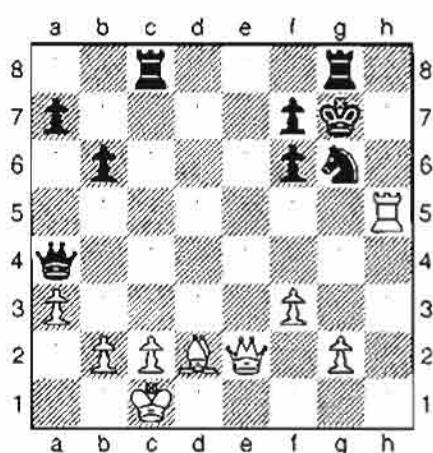
3. White to move

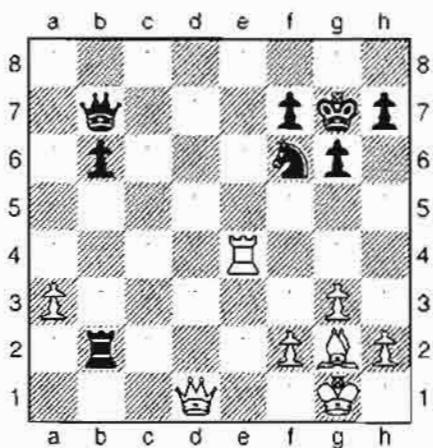
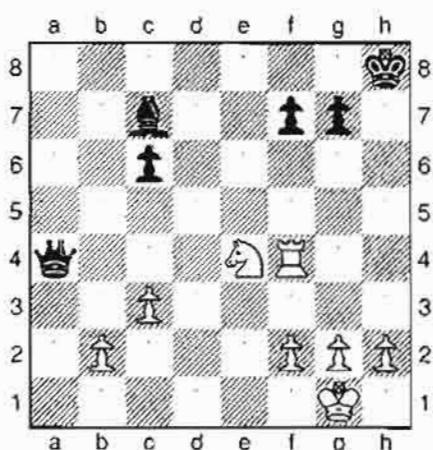


4. White to move



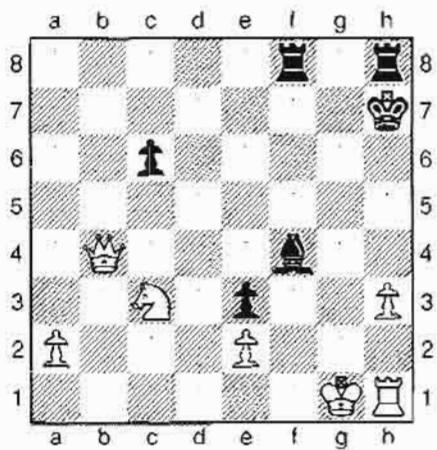
5. White to move



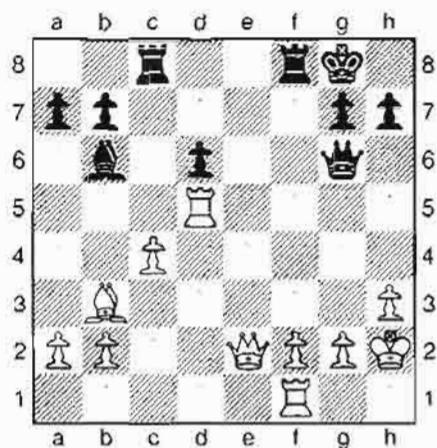
6. White to move**7. White to move****8. White to move**

Discoveries

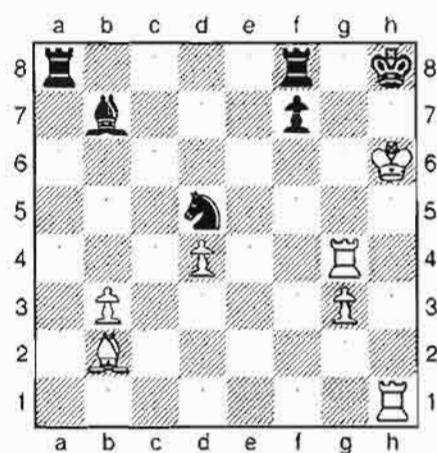
9. Black to move

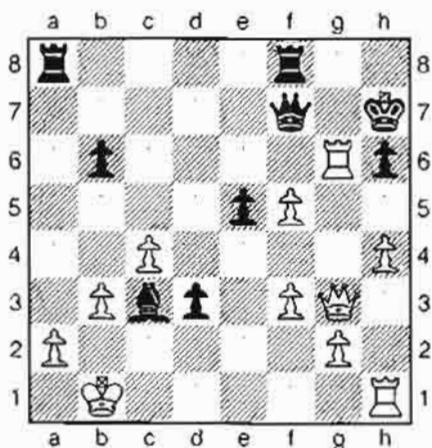
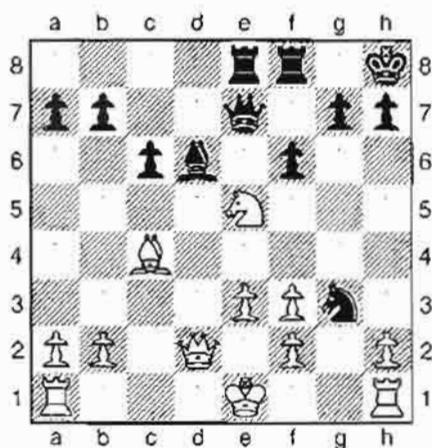
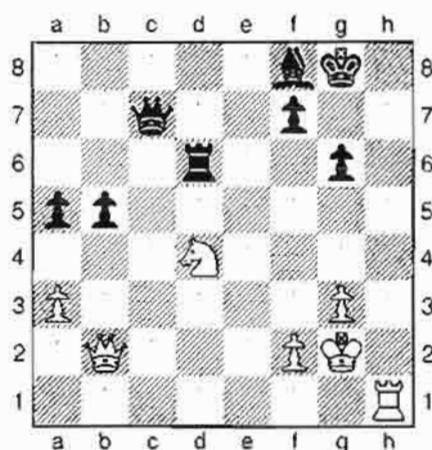


10. White to move



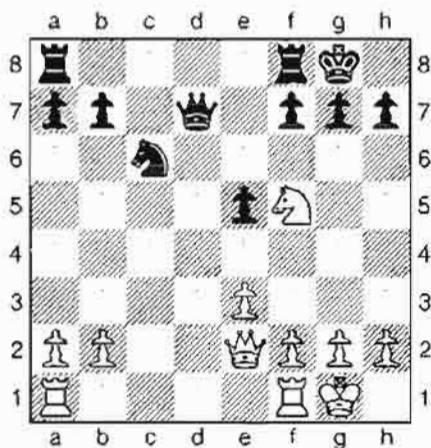
11. White to move



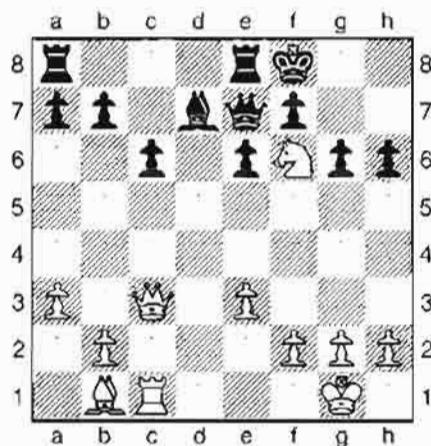
**12. White to move****13. White to move****14. White to move**

Discoveries

15. White to move



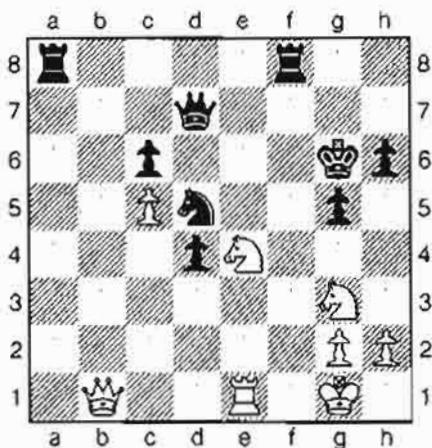
16. White to move



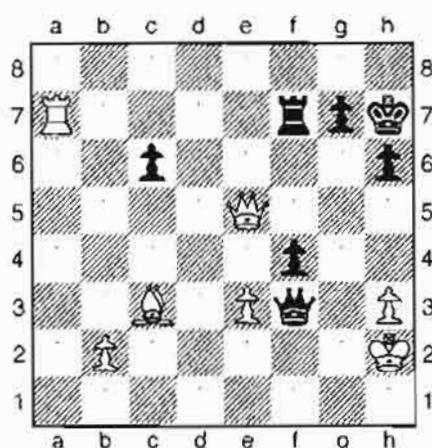
17. White to move



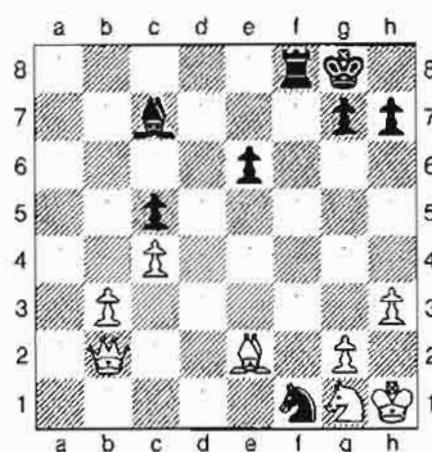
18. White to move



19. White to move

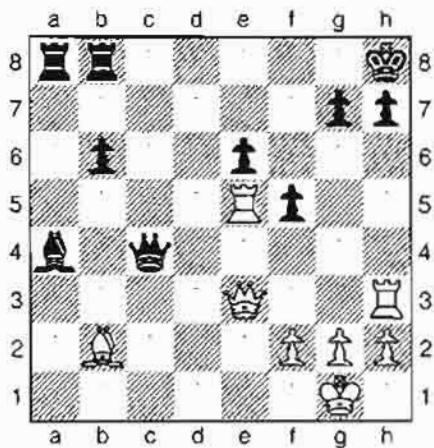


20. Black to move

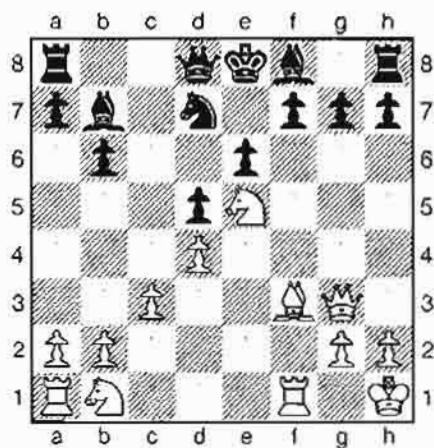


Discoveries

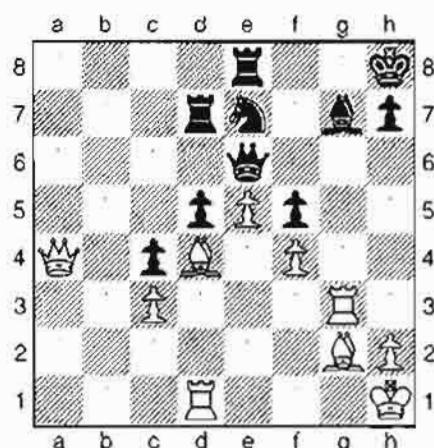
21. White to move



22. White to move

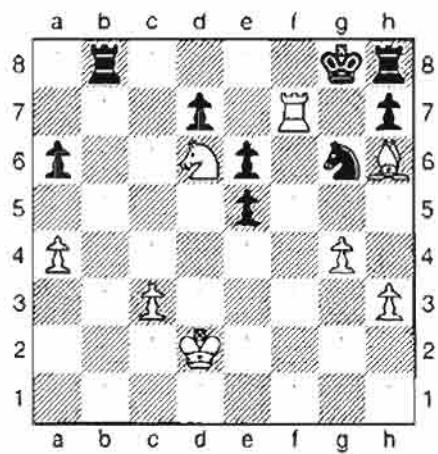


23. White to move

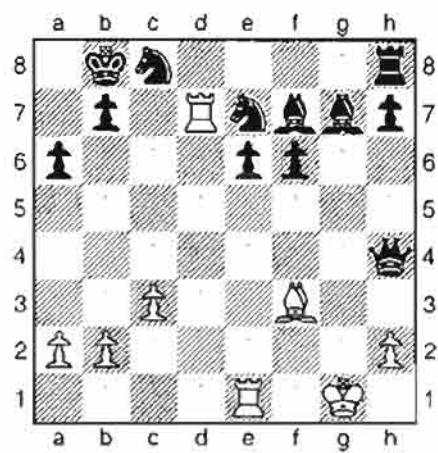




24. White to move



25. White to move



Solutions

1. With the simple rook trade 1. Rxb8+ Kxb8, White forces the Black king into a discovery: 2. e6+ Kc8 3. exf7.
2. Here the action is on the c-file. 1. Nb5! Rxb5 2. Rxc6.
3. The bishop has many moves that give a discovered check. The only good one is 1. Bg6+, to make sure that after 1. ... Kg8, the king will not be able to escape to f7 after 2. Qh7#.
4. The Black bishop on b7 is unprotected. White takes advantage of this by 1. Ng5! Qxg5 2. Bxb7, and Black's rook is trapped in the corner.
5. White to move and checkmate in two: 1. Bh6+ Kh7 2. Bf8#.
6. The action here is along the a2-g8 diagonal. The best way to use the opportunity is 1. Rxd8 Rxd8 2. Ne5+. Less effective is the immediate 1. Ne5, which also results in some material gain.
7. This is a tricky position. It seems there are two good moves (1. Rb4 and 1. Re2). But only one of them actually works. If 1. Re2, Black escapes thanks to an intermediate check after 1. ... Qd7 2. Qxd7 Rb1+. The correct move is 1. Rb4, and after 1. ... Qd7 2. Qxd7 Nxd7 3. Rxb2, White wins a rook.
8. If the White knight were able to move away with a check, the Black queen would fall. With a check along the h-file White is able to force the Black king to g8, which is the goal. 1. Rh4+ Kg8 2. Nf6+ gxf6 3. Rxa4.
9. With a simple check, Black forces White to the danger zone: the f-file. 1. ... Rhg8+ 2. Kf1 and now the discovered check wins the queen: 2. ... Bd6+.
10. If the c4-pawn were not there, White would have powerful discovered checks available. So: 1. c5! dxc5 and now 2. Rg5+ or 2. Rd6+.
11. This is an unusual example where the king is the star: 1. Kg5+ Kg7 2. Kf5#.
12. Black is up a bishop, but White has a beautiful way to proceed with an attack against the king. 1. Qg5! hxg5 2. hxg5#. If 1. ... Kh8 2. Rxh6+.
13. White can force checkmate in two moves with a knight sacrifice. 1. Ng6+! hxg6 2. hxg3#.
14. Black has problems along the a1-h8 diagonal. Opening it directly with 1. Ne6 does not work because of the intermediate check 1. ... Qc6+ (1. ... fxe6? 2. Qh8+ Kf7 3. Rh7+ winning the Black queen) followed by 2. f3 fxe6. The correct move is 1. Rh8+!, forcing the Black king to the "hot" diagonal. 1. ... Kxh8 2. Ne6+.

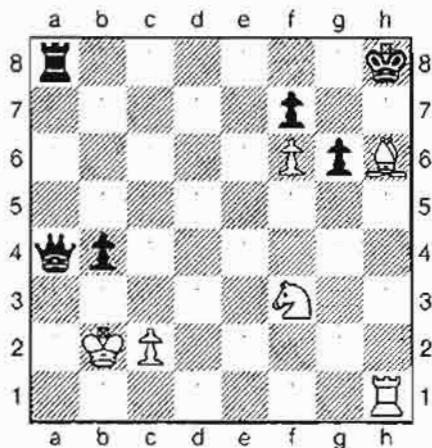
15. This is a very important pattern, which occurs often in practical play. White threatens checkmate on g7 with 1. Qg4, and after Black defends by 1. ... g6, White wins the Black queen with 2. Nh6+.
16. By opening the long (a1-h8) diagonal, White combines a checkmate threat with an attack on Black's queen: 1. Nd5! exd5 2. Qh8#.
17. After a nice exchange sacrifice, Black should not recapture, because that would lose even more material. 1. Rx e6+! Bxe6 (or 1. ... fxe6 2. Bg6+) 2. Bb5+ axb5 3. Qxd4.
18. White has no obvious way to take advantage of the knight jump from e4. You need to notice a cute checkmate idea: 1. Nf6+! Kxf6 2. Nh5+ Kf7 3. Qh7#.
19. If White captures the rook on f7, Black gives perpetual checks starting with 1. ... Qf2+. White has a combination to simplify the position and win a rook along the way. 1. Qxg7+! Rxg7 2. Rxg7+ Kh8 3. Rg3+.
20. Black forces the White king into a discovery with 1. ... Ng3+ 2. Kh2 and now he checkmates in a few moves: 2. ... Ne4+ 3. g3 (or 3. Kh1 Nf2#) 3. ... Rf2+ 4. Kh1 Nxg3#.
21. All of Black's pieces are on the queenside and Black's problem is that they are far away from protecting the king. 1. Qh6! gxh6 (if 1. ... Kg8 2. Rxf5) 2. Rxf5+ Kg8 3. Rg3+ and White wins.
22. Black is behind in development. White has a combination that results in either winning material or checkmate. 1. Nxf7! Kxf7 2. Bh5+ Ke7 (or 2. ... Kg8 3. Bf7#) 3. Rf7+ Ke8 4. Rxg7#.
23. Here White needs to make two sacrifices to gain a material advantage. 1. Rxg7! Kxg7 2. Qxd7! Qxd7 3. e6+ Kf8 4. exd7.
24. White uses the "mill," which are repetitive discovered checks. 1. Rg7+ Kf8 2. Rxd7+ Kg8, and now again forces the Black king back to the discovery: 3. Rg7+ Kf8 4. Rb7+ Kg8 5. Rxb8+ Nf8 6. Rxf8#.
25. White can pick up Black's pieces on the seventh rank one by one using the "mill" method: 1. Rxb7+ Ka8 2. Rxe7+ Kb8 3. Rb7+ Ka8 4. Rxf7+ Kb8 5. Rb7+ Ka8 6. Rxg7+ Kb8 7. Rb7+ Ka8, and now from the other side, winning the Black queen with 8. Rb4+ Ka7 9. Rxh4.

5

DOUBLE CHECK

Double check is the most dangerous type of discovered check. When it happens, neither of the two check-giving pieces can be taken, nor can the check be blocked.

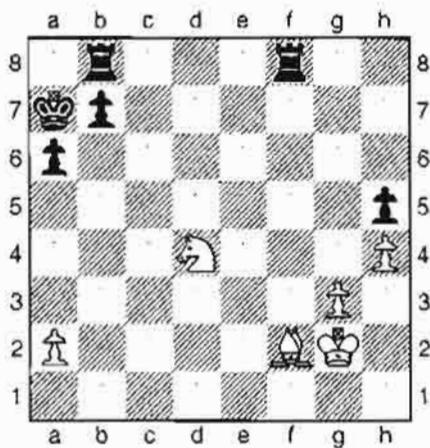
Here is a basic example showing how a double check is used to force checkmate.



1. **Bg7+**. Now the Black king is in check by two White pieces (rook and bishop) at the same time. Black has only one legal move 1. ... Kg8 and then 2. Rh8#.

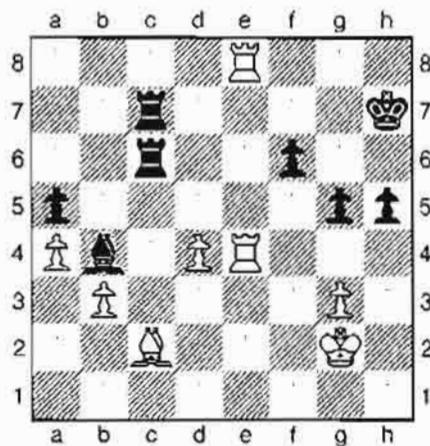
Here is another example where White can force checkmate in two moves.

CHESS TACTICS FOR CHAMPIONS

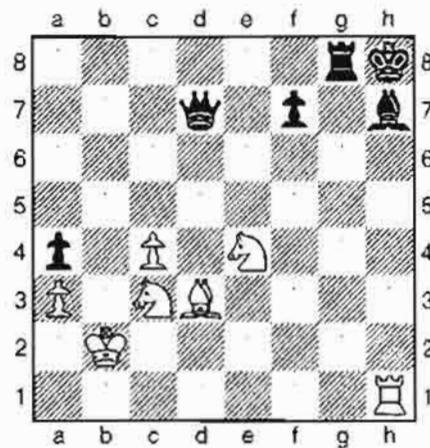


1. Nb5+. Double check. But not 1. Ne6+ because Black blocks the check with 1. ... b6. **1. ... Ka8** and **2. Nc7#.**

In the following position, White uses the same method to checkmate quickly.



The only right move is **1. R4e7+** followed by **1. ... Kh6** **2. Rh8#.**
In the next example, White uses the same tool to win material.



Double Check



Black has a significant material advantage. But White can turn things around with 1. Rxh7+! Kxh7 and now 2. Nf6+ (double check) 2. ... Kg7 3. Nxd7.

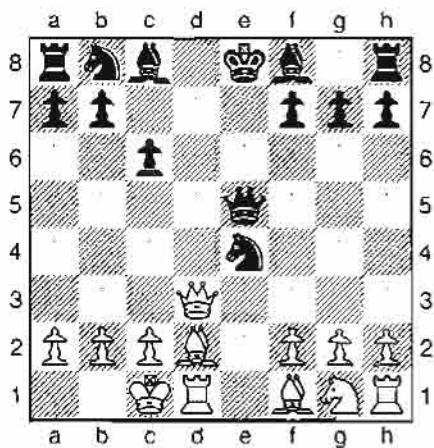
In the following famous miniature (Reti–Tartakower, Vienna 1910), White uses the double check motif as early as move 10 to decide the game.

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Nf6 5. Qd3 e5?

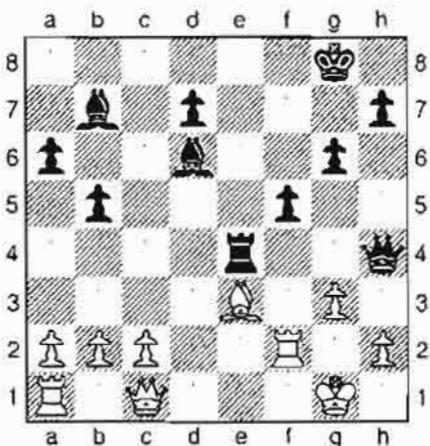
This is a premature and dubious aggression.

6. dxe5 Qa5+ 7. Bd2 Qxe5 8. 0–0–0 Nxe4?

A blunder that allows White to checkmate in three moves by force.

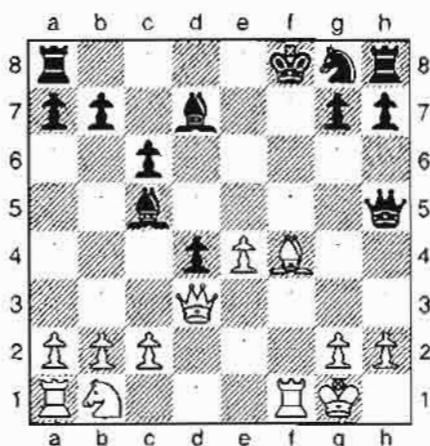


9. Qd8+! Kxd8 10. Bg5+ (double check) Kc7 (after 10. ... Ke8 11. Rd8#) 11. Bd8# 1–0.

Susan's Corner**A. Grosar—Susan Polgar
Nova Gorica, 1991**

Here I sacrificed my bishop with 31. ... $Bxg3!$ hoping for 32. $hxg3$ $Qh1+!$ 33. $Kxh1$ $Rh4+$ (double check) 34. $Kg1$ $Rh1\#$. My opponent declined the sacrifice but still lost anyway after 32. $Rg2$ $Bxh2+$ 33. $Kf1$ $Qh3$ 34. $Qd2$ $Rxe3$.

Below are 25 practice examples:

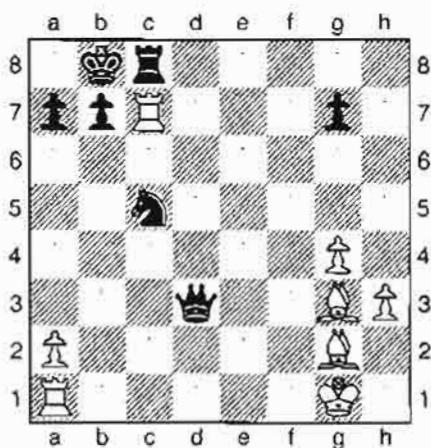
1. White to move

Double Check

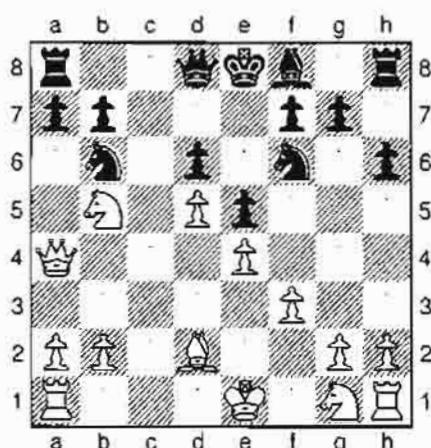
2. White to move



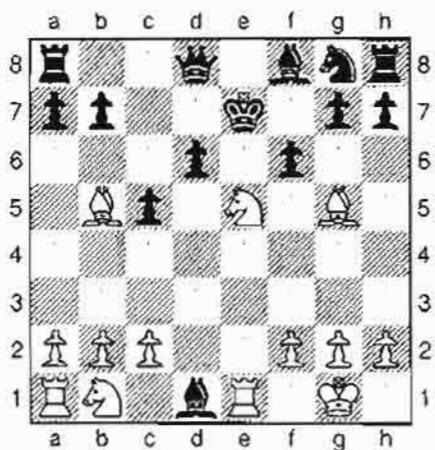
3. White to move



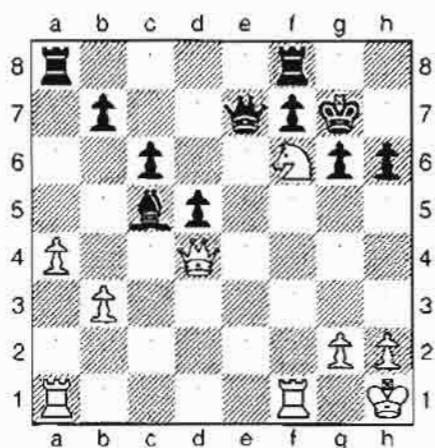
4. White to move



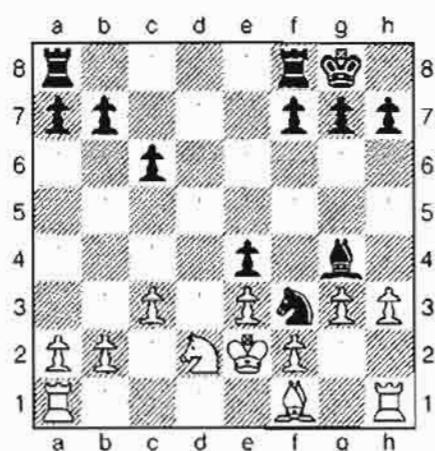
5. White to move



6. White to move

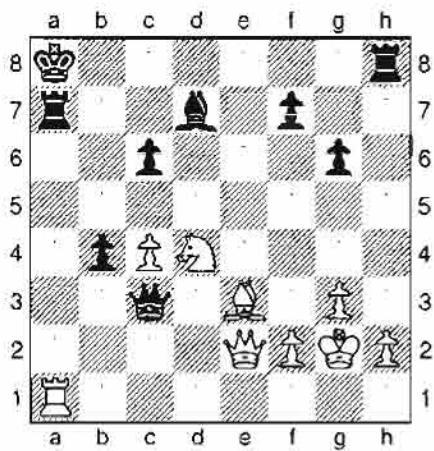


7. Black to move

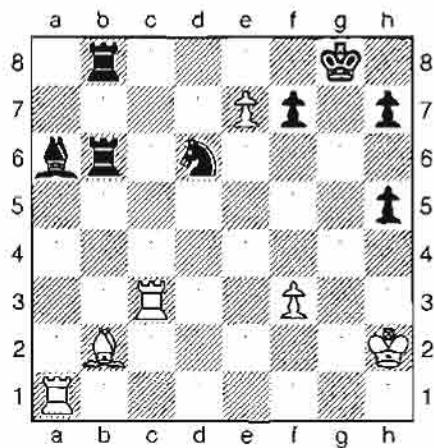


Double Check

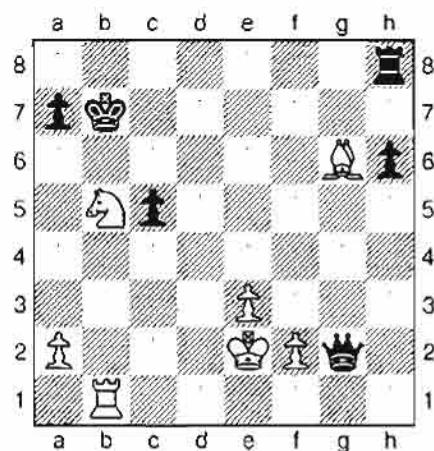
8. White to move



9. White to move

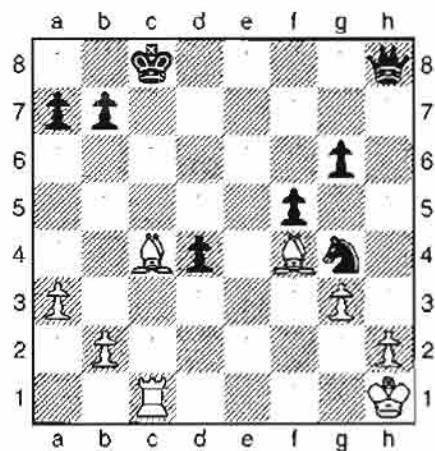


10. White to move

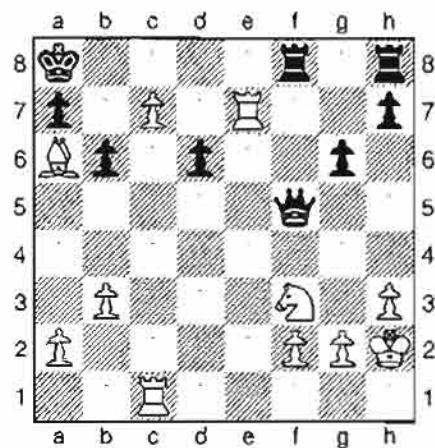




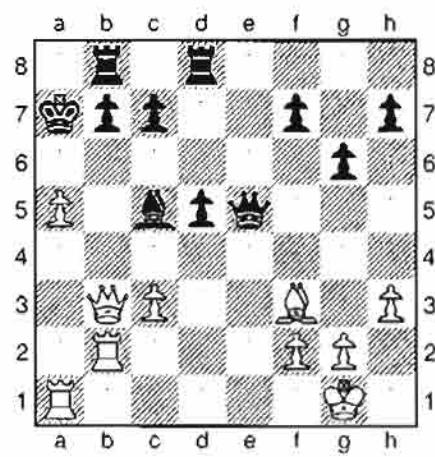
11. White to move



12. White to move

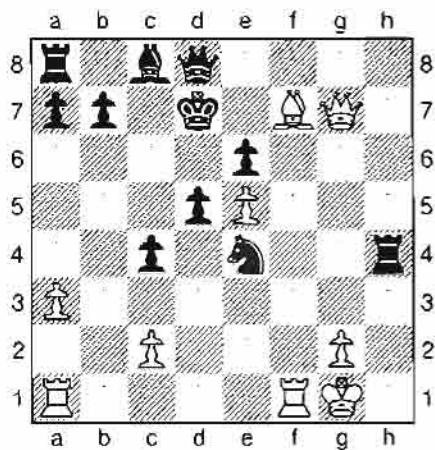


13. White to move

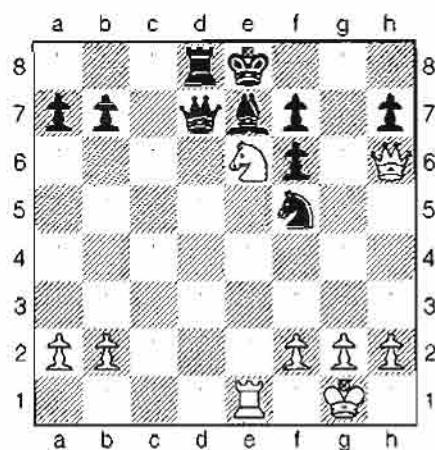


Double Check

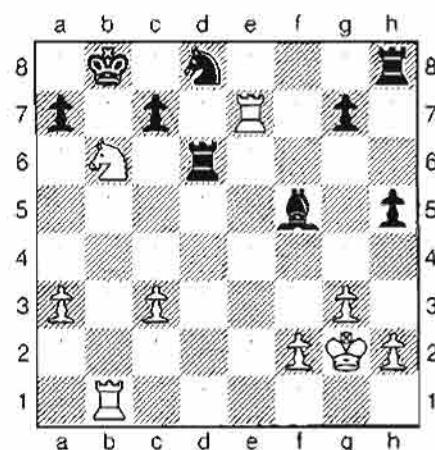
14. White to move



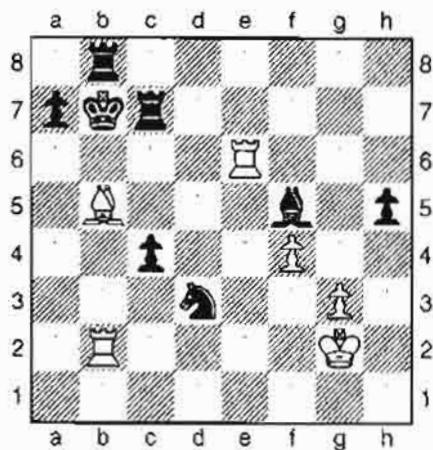
15. White to move



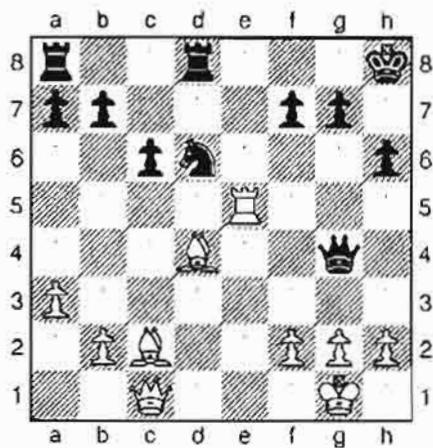
16. White to move



17. White to move



18. White to move



19. White to move

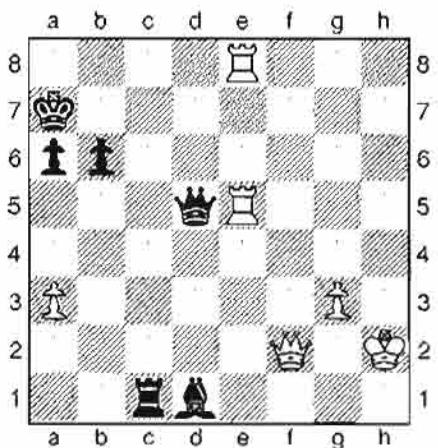




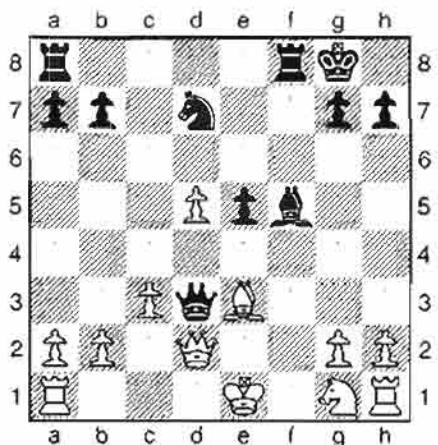
Double Check



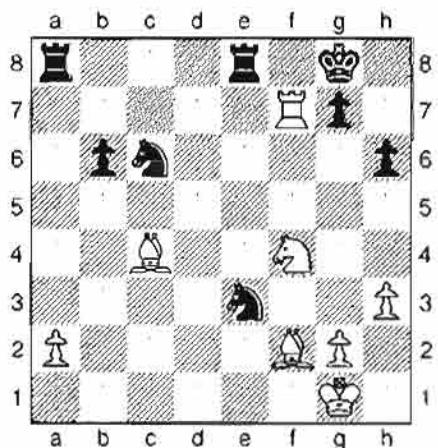
20. Black to move



21. Black to move



22. White to move

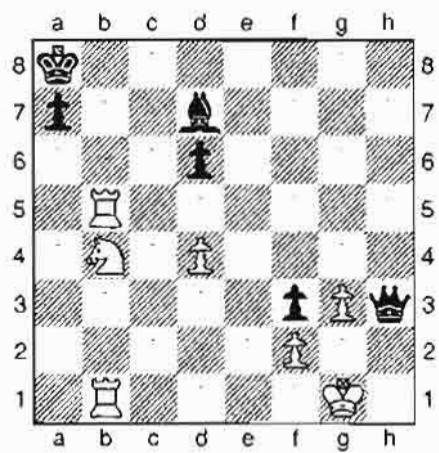




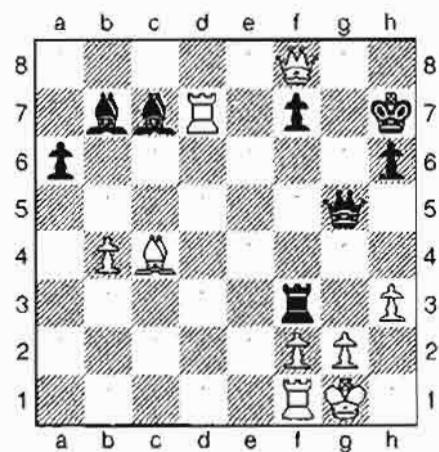
23. White to move



24. White to move



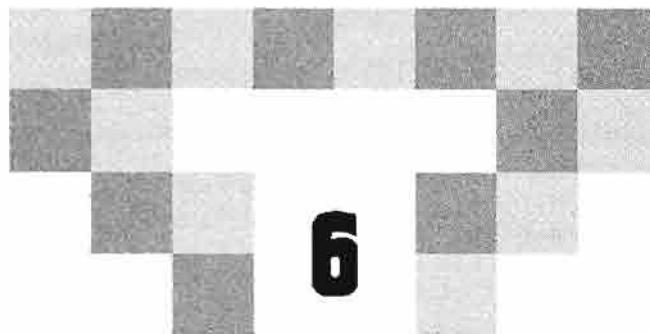
25. White to move



Solutions

1. White checkmates in two: 1. Bd6+ Ke8 2. Rf8#.
2. The White knights and queen cooperate nicely to checkmate in two moves: 1. Nd6+ Kd8 2. Qe8#.
3. Here White checkmates with two double checks in a row! 1. Rxb7+ Ka8 2. Rb8#.
4. The White queen is under attack. But the beauty of double check is that neither of the two checking pieces can ever be taken! 1. Nxd6+ Ke7 2. Nf5#.
5. After the double check, look for the checkmate in the corner! 1. Ng6+ Kf7 2. Nxh8#.
6. Here there are two equally good solutions: 1. Nh5+ Kh7 2. Qg7# or 1. Ne8+ with the same idea.
7. The Black bishop is hanging, but Black can ignore that. 1. ... Nd4+ 2. Ke1 Nc2#.
8. After a trade with 1. Rxa7+ Kxa7, White wins the queen with a double check: 2. Nb5+ Kb7 3. Nxc3.
9. White forces the Black king into a discovery with 1. Rg1+ Kh8 and White checkmates with 2. Rc8#.
10. The discovery is set on the b-file, but there is no immediate knight jump that wins for White. First, White uses a decoy to lure the Black queen to an unfortunate square. 1. Be4+! Qxe4 and now the double check 2. Nd6+ Kc6 3. Nxe4 wins the queen.
11. With a double check White forces Black into a skewer: 1. Be6+ Kd8 2. Rc8+ Ke7 3. Rxh8.
12. White sacrifices a bishop by 1. Bb7+! Kxb7 and promotes the pawn to checkmate! 2. c8Q#.
13. White checkmates in two moves by opening the a-file: 1. Qb6+! cxb6 2. axb6#.
14. The Black king tries to run away from trouble to the queenside via c6. But White can stop it! 1. Be8+! Kxe8 2. Qf7#.
15. A pretty combination to force checkmate in two: 1. Qf8+! Bxf8 2. Ng7# or 2. Nc7#.
16. Both the White knight and the rook on b1 are in danger. But when you have a double check at hand, neither can be taken. 1. Nd7+ Kc8 2. Rb8#.
17. Here White has two ways to give double check, but only one of them reaches the desired goal: 1. Bc6+ Ka6 (or 1. ... Kc8 2. Re8#) 2. Bb7+ (another double check!) 2. ... Ka5 3. Ra6#.
18. With a beautiful queen sacrifice, White forces checkmate. 1. Qxh6+! gxh6 2. Re8#. Running away does not help either: 1. ... Kg8 2. Qh7+ Kf8 3. Qh8#.
19. With an obvious check, White forces the Black king to g8: 1. Rhf1+ Kg8 and then two double

- checks end the game: 2. Nf6+ Kf8 3. Nd7#.
20. White has a material advantage and Black's king is in a dubious position. But it is Black's move, and with an impressive queen sacrifice Black forces checkmate in three! 1. ... Qh1+! 2. Kxh1 Bf3+ 3. Kh2 Rh1#.
21. After the previous example, this should be easier. Black uses the same idea. 1. ... Qf1+! 2. Kxf1 Bd3+ 3. Ke1 Rf1#.
22. White forces checkmate in no more than three moves: 1. Rf8+! Kxf8 2. Ng6# or 1. ... Kh7 2. Bg8+ Kh8 3. Ng6#.
23. The knight on e3 is ready to jump, but right now cannot attack the Black queen. The first move is a decoy: 1. Bb4! Qxb4 and now the double check 2. Nd5+ (2. Nc2+ is not effective as Black has 2. ... Qxe1+) 2. ... Kd6 3. Nxb4.
24. With a rook sacrifice, White checkmates in three: 1. Rb8+! Kxb8 2. Na6+ Kc8 3. Rb8#.
25. After a gorgeous queen sacrifice, three (!) double checks follow and checkmate: 1. ... Qxg2+! 2. Kxg2 Rg3+ 3. Kh2 Rg2+ 4. Kh1 Rh2+ 5. Kg1 Rh1#.



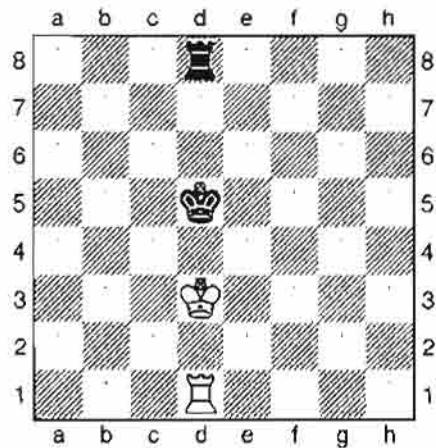
SKEWERS

The skewer is another very powerful tactical tool. It always has three participants: two enemy pieces lined up on the same file, rank, or diagonal, and an attacker that attacks the front piece along the same line. Once the front piece moves away, the piece behind can be captured.

Unlike a pin, which attacks a weaker piece shielding a stronger piece behind it, such as the queen or king, a skewer attacks the stronger piece that is shielding a weaker piece behind it on the same line. When the attacked piece moves, the weaker piece behind it is vulnerable.

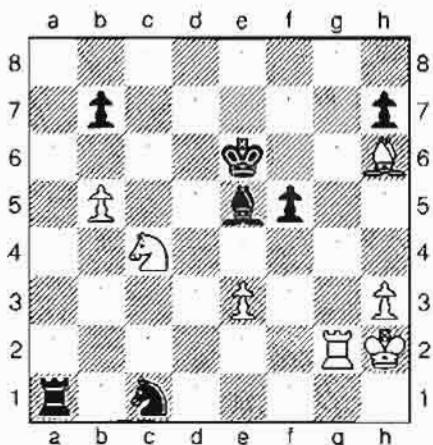
Here are three simple examples to demonstrate the idea of the skewer.

The first example seems to be a theoretical drawn position, with each side having only a rook and a king. However, because of the unfortunate position of the Black pieces, White can create a skewer in just one move.



White actually has four different ways to create a discovered check: 1. Ke3+, 1. Ke2+, 1. Kc2+, or 1. Kc3+. Each produces a skewer and wins the Black rook on the next move.

In the next position, material is balanced.



But after trading with 1. Nxe5 Kxe5, White can skewer with 2. Bg7+. After 2. ... Ke4, White simply captures the rook in the corner with 3. Bxa1.

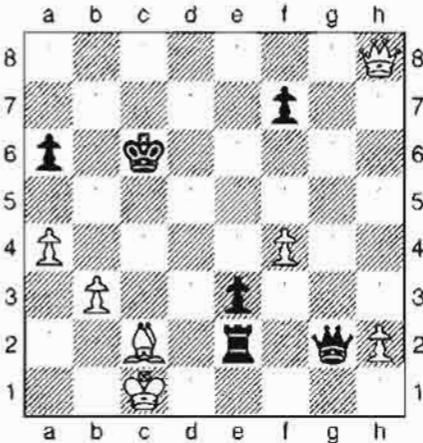
In some cases, you may need to sacrifice to create a skewer:



White sacrifices the queen with 1. Qxd4+! cxd4 but wins it right back after 2. Bxd4+ Ke6 3. Bxh8.

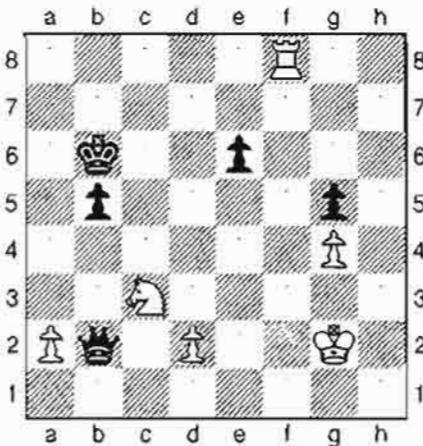
In this example, White employs a decoy to achieve the same goal:

Skewers

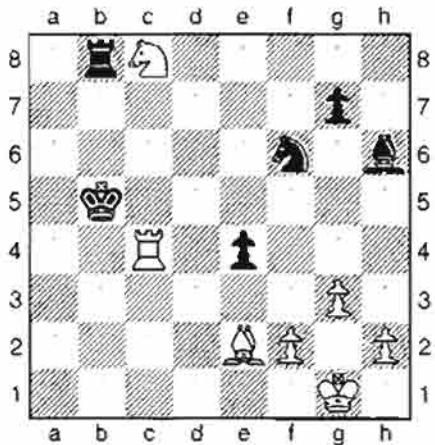


The immediate check with 1. Qa8+ does not achieve much, as the Black queen on g2 is protected at the moment by the rook. Therefore, White first sacrifices the bishop with 1. Be4+! to lure the Black queen to e4 and away from the protection of the rook. 1. ... Qxe4 and now 2. Qa8+ Kd6 3. Qxe4 wins the queen.

In the next endgame, Black seems to have the advantage, but ...

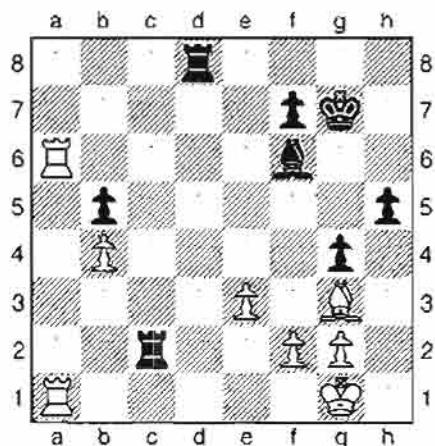


By sacrificing the knight, White opens the b-file and creates a successful skewer with 1. Na4+! bxa4 and 2. Rb8+ winning Black's queen.

Susan's Corner**Susan Polgar—De Armas**
Thessalonica, 1988

This is a game from my first Olympiad. After my next move, 43. Rc1+, my opponent resigned because of 43. ... Kb4 44. Rb1+ or 43. ... Ka4 44. Ra1+ Kb3 45. Rb1+. Black cannot avoid the skewer in either case and loses the rook on b8.

And here are 25 practice examples.

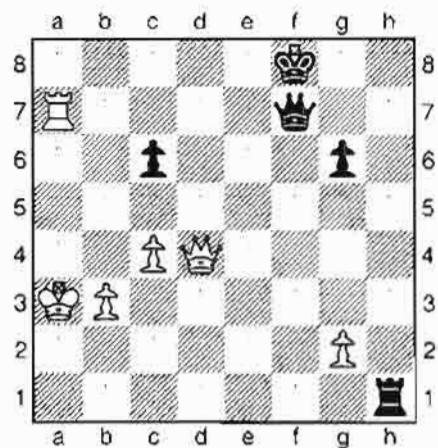
1. White to move

Skewers

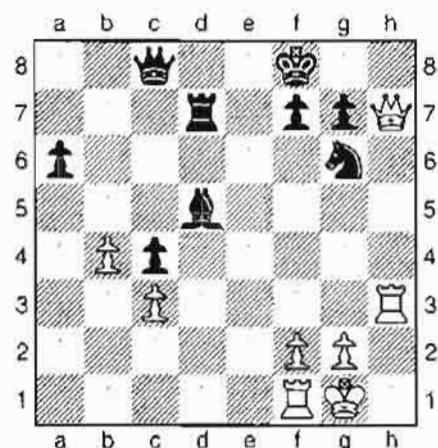
2. White to move



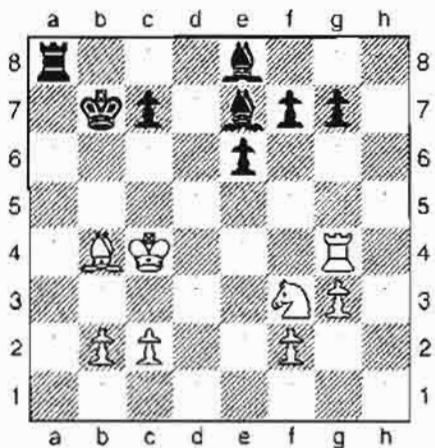
3. Black to move



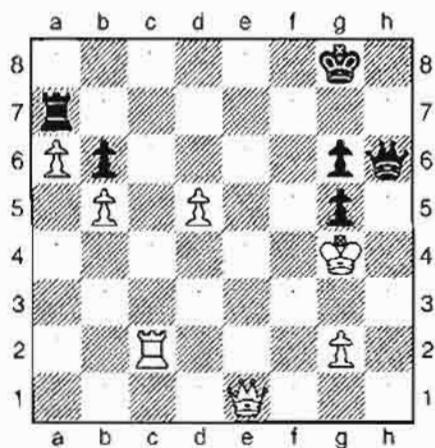
4. White to move



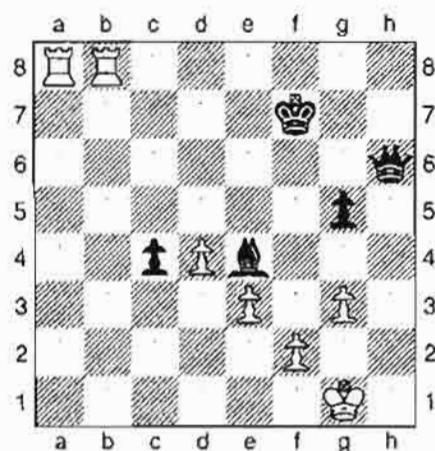
5. Black to move



6. Black to move

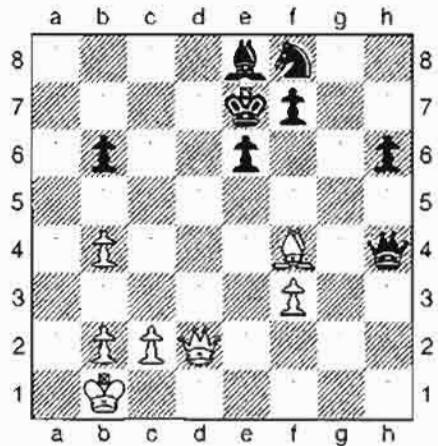


7. White to move



Skewers

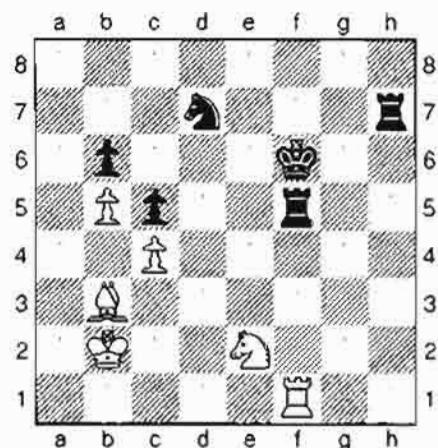
8. White to move

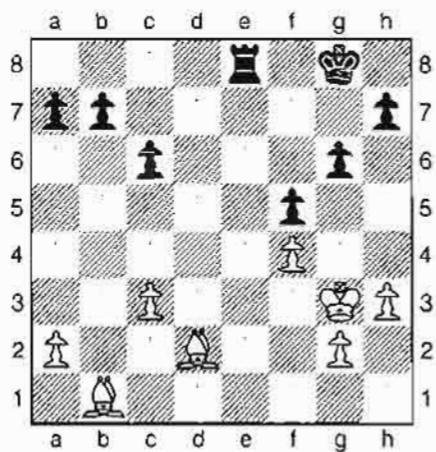
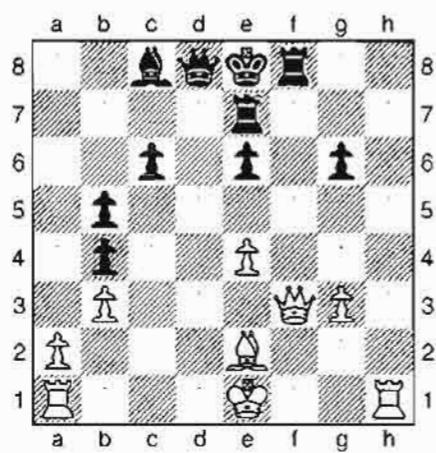
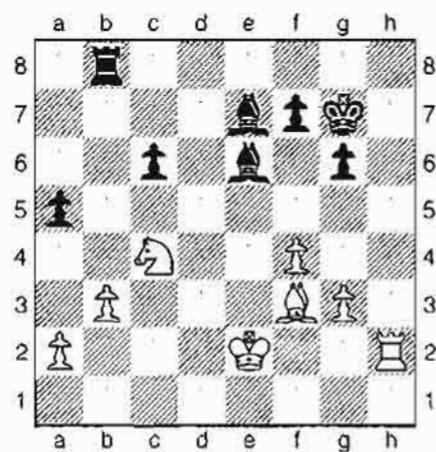


9. White to move



10. White to move

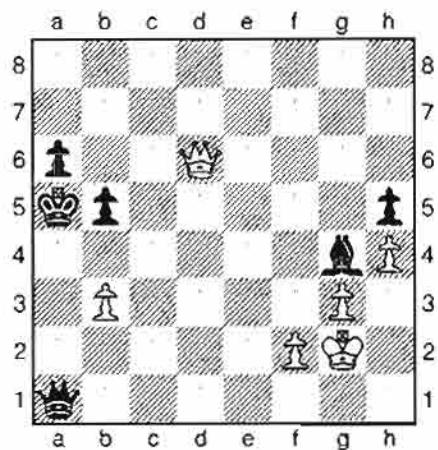


**11. Black to move****12. White to move****13. Black to move**

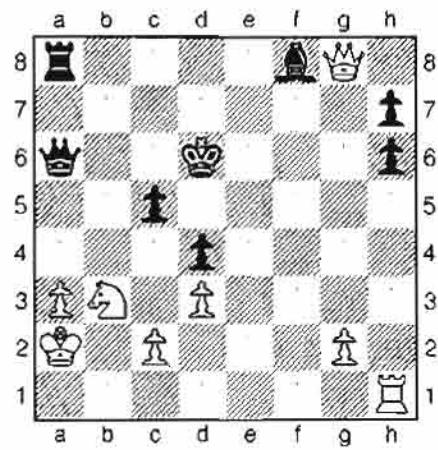


Skewers

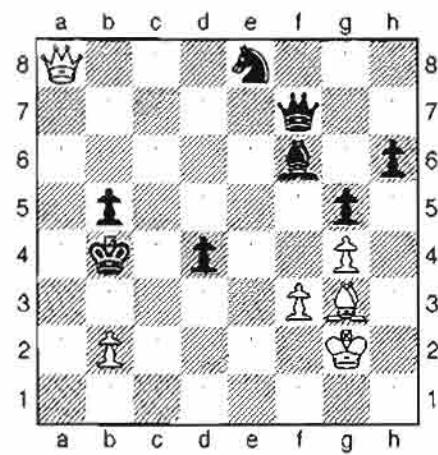
14. White to move

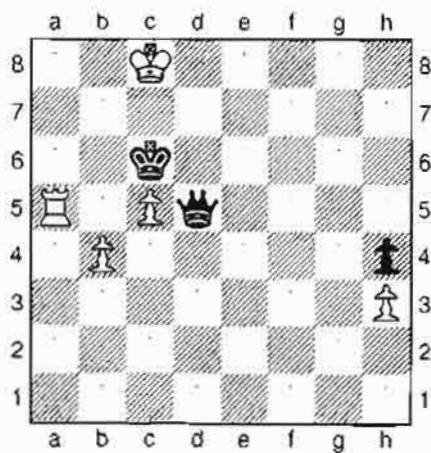
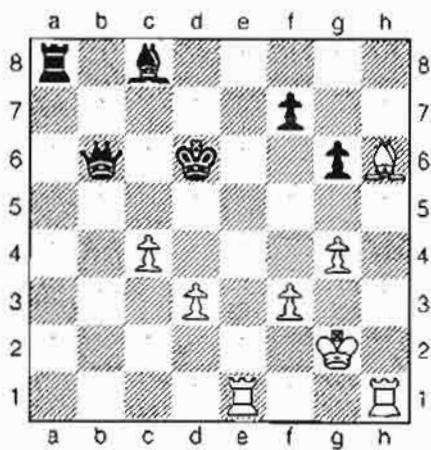
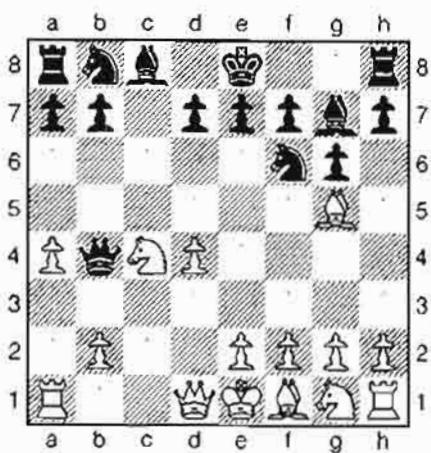


15. White to move



16. White to move



**17. White to move****18. White to move****19. White to move**



Skewers



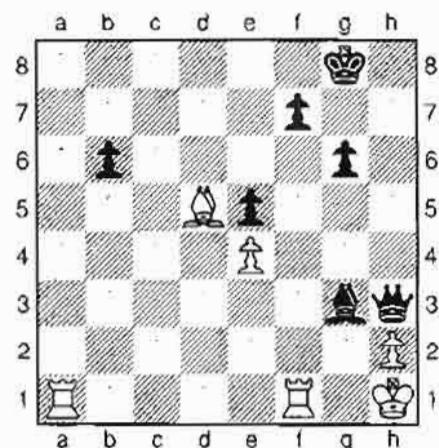
20. Black to move

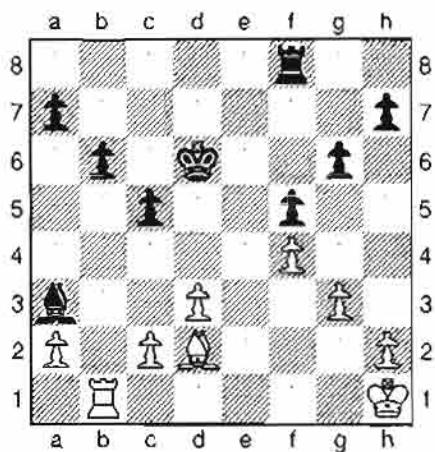
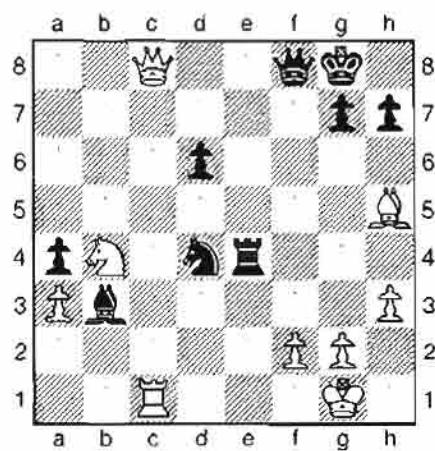
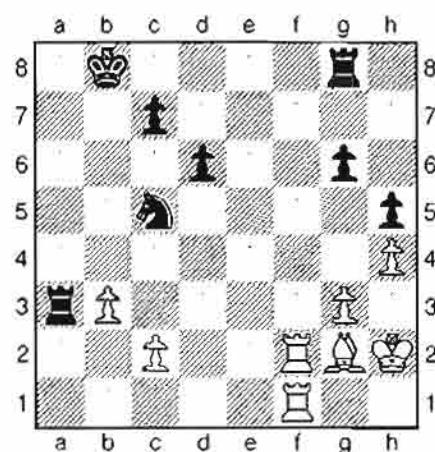


21. White to move



22. White to move



**23. White to move****24. White to move****25. White to move**

Solutions

1. With an exchange sacrifice White wins a bishop: 1. Rxf6! Kxf6 2. Bh4+ Ke5 3. Bxd8.
2. After a simple trade, White's dark-squared bishop is ready to skewer: 1. Nxc7 Qxc7 2. Bf4.
3. Black wins a rook with 1. ... Qxa7+! 2. Qxa7 Ra1+ 3. Kb4 Rxa7.
4. White wins a knight with 1. Qh8+! Nxh8 2. Rxh8+ Ke7 3. Rxc8. But not 1. Qxg6 fxg6 2. Rh8+, because 2. ... Bg8 blocks!
5. There are too many White pieces on the fourth rank: 1. ... Bxb4 2. Kxb4 Ra4+ 3. Kc3 Rxg4.
6. With 1. ... Qh5+ Black forces the White king to the same diagonal that the White queen is on. 2. Kg3 and now the skewer with 2. ... Qh4+ 3. Kf3 Qxe1.
7. Using the "stair" method, White forces the Black king to the sixth rank: 1. Ra7+ Kg6 2. Rb6+, and after 2. ... Kh5 the best continuation is 3. g4+ Kxg4 4. Rxh6.
8. Check and skewer! 1. Qd6+ Kf6 2. Qd8+ Kf5 3. Qxh4.
9. As the White rooks are doubled on the b-file, in reality they both eye the b7-square: 1. Rb7+ Rxb7 2. Rxb7+ Ke6 3. Rxg7, winning a bishop.
10. White wins a rook after 1. Rxf5+ Kxf5 2. Bc2+ Ke5 3. Bxh7.
11. Black wins one of the two bishops after 1. ... Re2 2. Bc1 Re1.
12. White wins a rook with a queen sacrifice: 1. Qxf8+! Kxf8 2. Rh8+ Kf7 3. Rxd8.
13. Black takes advantage of the fact that White's rook is on an unprotected square and on the same rank as the king. 1. ... Bxc4+ 2. bxc4 Rb2+ 3. Ke3 Rxh2.
14. White wins Black's queen quickly: 1. b4+ Ka4 2. Qxa6+ Kxb4 3. Qxa1.
15. Black's problem is that both the king and queen are on the sixth rank. 1. Qxf8+! Rxf8 2. Rxh6+ Kd5 3. Rxa6.
16. A check followed by a skewer wins the Black queen. 1. Qa3+ Kc4 2. Qa2+ Kc5 3. Qxf7.
17. Here the hero is White's b-pawn. It also involves a discovered check. 1. b5+ Kxc5 2. b6+ Kxb6 3. Rxd5.
18. A nice decoy pawn sacrifice: 1. c5+. After either capture White skewers. 1. ... Kxc5 2. Be3+ or 1. ... Qxc5 2. Bf8+.
19. Black's queen is getting trapped, as after 1. Bd2! Qxc4 2. Rc1. Black can avoid checkmate only by giving up the queen.
20. After an unexpected mate threat, Black can skewer. 1. ... Qc6 2. f3 Qb5.

21. After 1. Bb3+ Kf6 2. Qh8+ Black cannot hang on to the queen.
22. After two checks comes a skewer. 1. Ra8+ Kg7 2. Rxf7+ Kh6 3. Rh8+, winning Black's queen.
23. Black's bishop gets trapped after 1. Rb3, since 1. ... Bb4 allows 2. Rxb4! cxb4 3. Bxb4+ Ke6 4. Bxf8.
24. After a series of forced moves, White wins Black's rook on e4. 1. Qxf8+! Kxf8 2. Rc8+ Ke7 3. Re8+ Kf6 4. Rxe4.
25. White wins the Black rook on a3: 1. Rf8+ Rxf8 2. Rxf8+ Ka7 3. Ra8+ Kb6 4. Rxa3.

7

TRAPPING PIECES

Trapping a piece is one of the simpler tactical concepts in chess. You attack a piece. That piece either cannot escape at all or can escape only to another unsafe square. One major goal in chess is to trap the opponent's king and to checkmate it. In this chapter, however, we shall see only examples of trapping other pieces.

First, let us see three short games where pieces get trapped early.

Modern Defense

1. e4 g6 2. d4 Bg7 3. Nf3 d6 4. Bc4 Nd7?

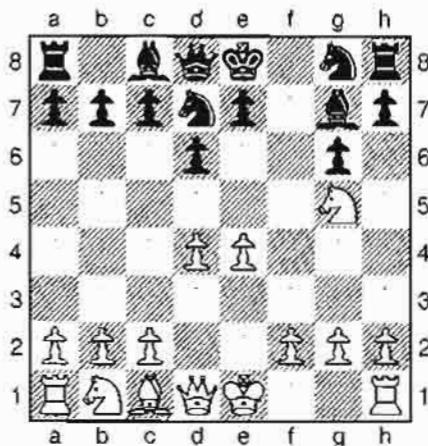
A serious error, allowing:

5. Bxf7+!

A nice sacrifice to gain decisive advantage.

5. ... Kxf7 6. Ng5+ Ke8

After 6. ... Kf6 7. Qf3# or 6. ... Kf8 7. Ne6+ forks.





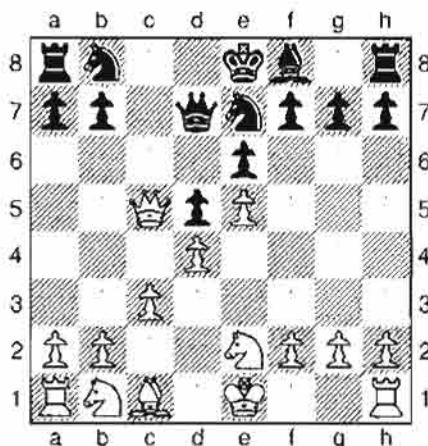
And now 7. Ne6 traps the Black queen.

In the next miniature, White is not careful with his queen.

Caro-Kann Defense

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5 4. Bd3 Bxd3 5. Qxd3 e6 6. Ne2 c5 7. c3 Ne7 8. Qb5+ Qd7 9. Qxc5?

White is too greedy...



9. ... Nf5!

Creating a discovered attack. The only escape is to 10. Qa5 after which 10. ... b6 traps the queen.

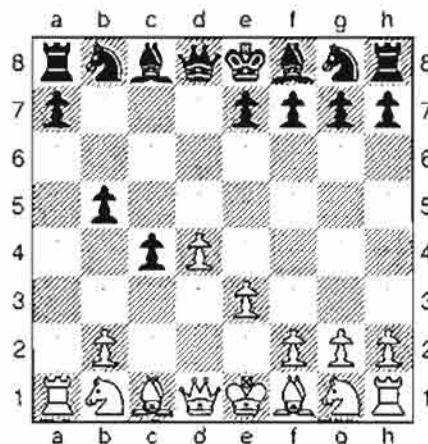
Queen's Gambit Accepted

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e3 b5

It is not a good idea to hang on to the c4 pawn.

4. a4 c6 5. axb5 cxb5?

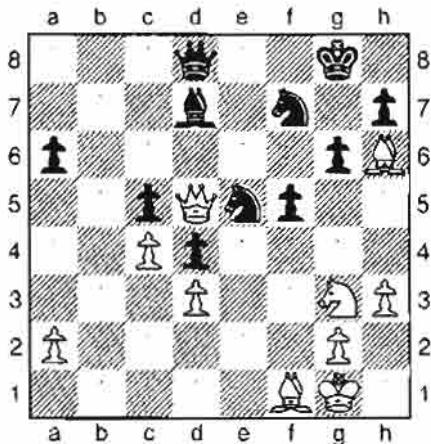
This is pure trouble.



Trapping Pieces

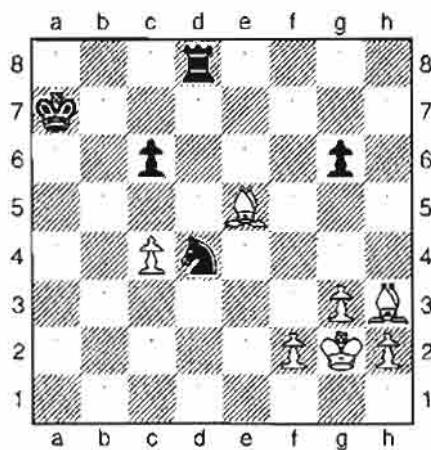
White traps the Black rook in the corner along the opened long diagonal with 6. Qf3.

In the following diagram, it is Black to move. With a quiet move, Black can set up an unstoppable threat to trap White's queen.



The White queen threatens to capture the pawn on c5. The queen can also move to b7. However, after 1. ... Qc8 both of those options are taken away. In addition, Black prepares Bd7-e6 to trap the White queen. White cannot save it.

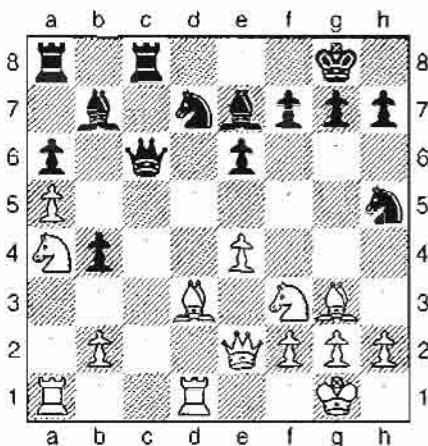
In the next endgame, the Black rook (or knight) surprisingly gets in trouble.



After 1. Bf6, the only rook move that holds the knight is 1. ... Rd6 but then 2. Be7 unexpectedly traps the rook.

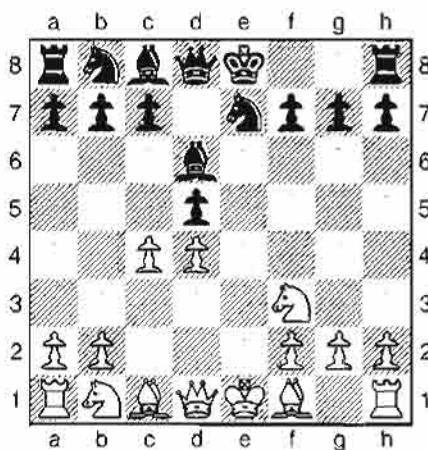


Susan's Corner

Susan Polgar—Geller
Aruba, 1992

This is the final part of one of my all-time favorite games. At first glance, it seems that Black has everything under control. After 19. Nd4, Black has planned an intermediate move—trading on g3—and then the Black queen is home free (on c7). But after a harmless-looking quiet move, 19. Be5!, Black cannot avoid losing material. My world-famous opponent played 19. ... Bf6, allowing the queen trap with 20. Nd4 and then resigned after 20. ... Nxe5 21. Nxc6 Nf4 22. Qe3 Nxd3 23. e5!. After 19. ... Nxe5 20. Nxe5 Qc7, Black would avoid losing the queen but would lose a knight after 21. Qxh5.

Now here are 25 practice puzzles for trapping pieces.

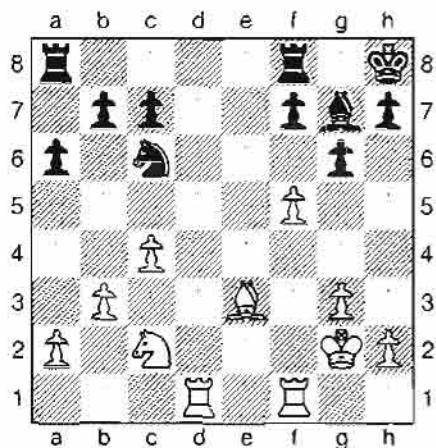
1. White to move



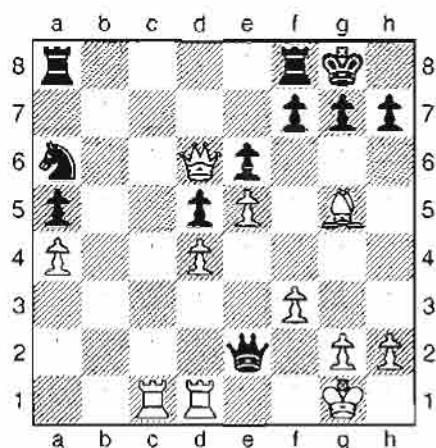
Trapping Pieces



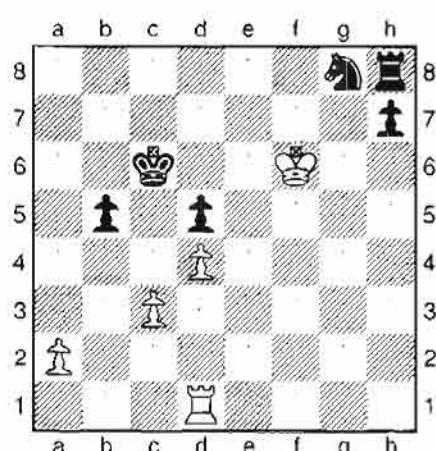
2. White to move

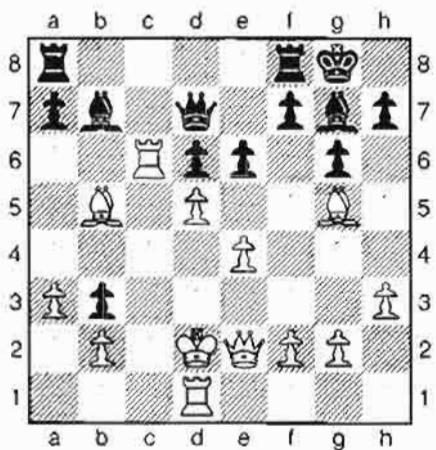
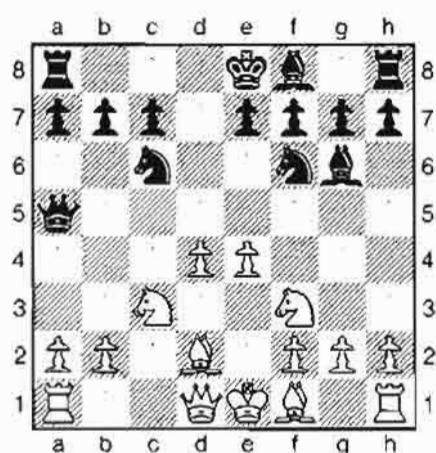


3. White to move



4. White to move

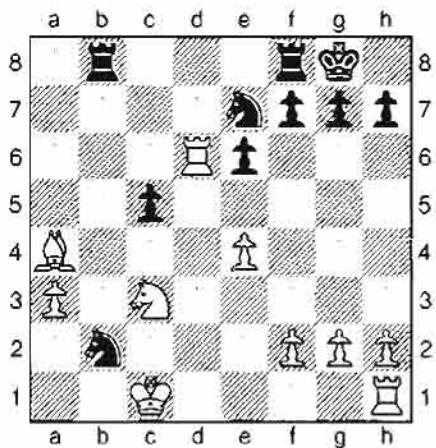


5. White to move**6. Black to move****7. White to move**

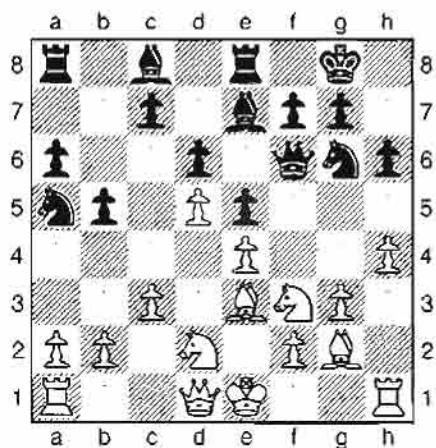


Trapping Pieces

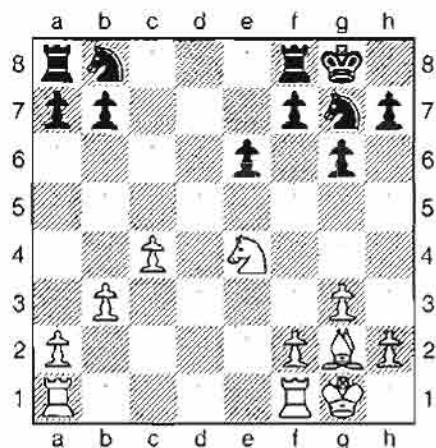
8. White to move

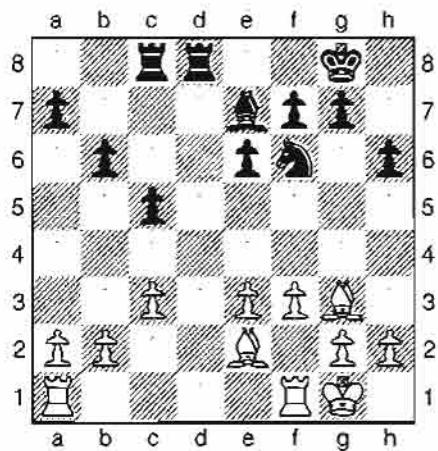
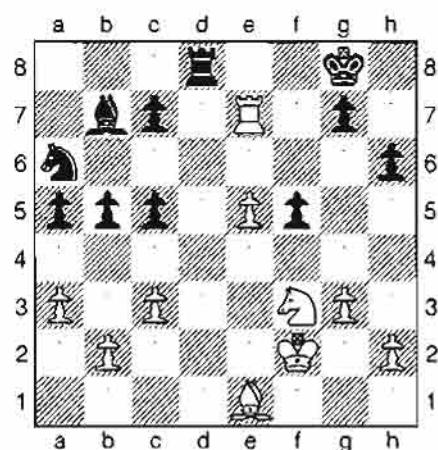
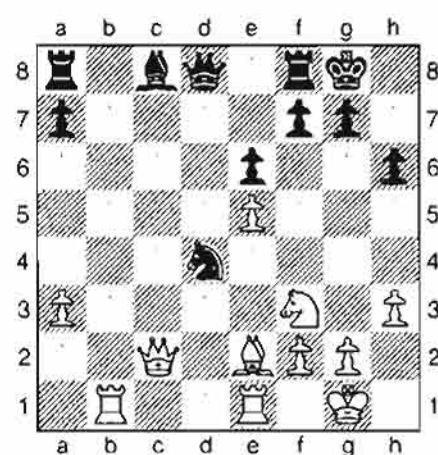


9. White to move



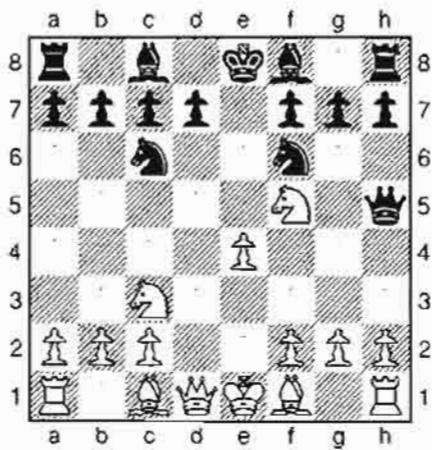
10. White to move



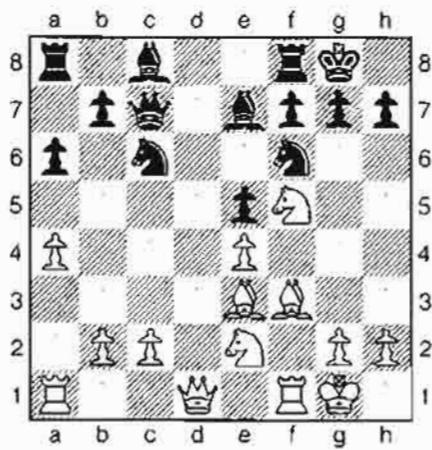
**11. White to move****12. Black to move****13. White to move**

Trapping Pieces

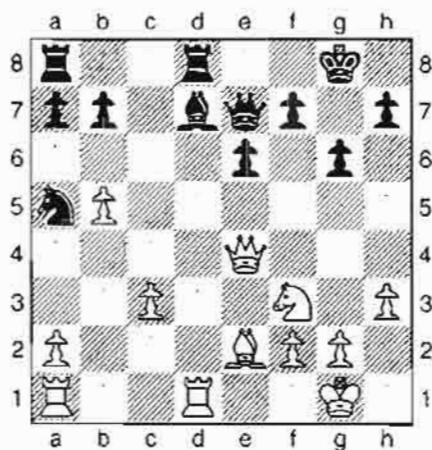
14. White to move



15. Black to move



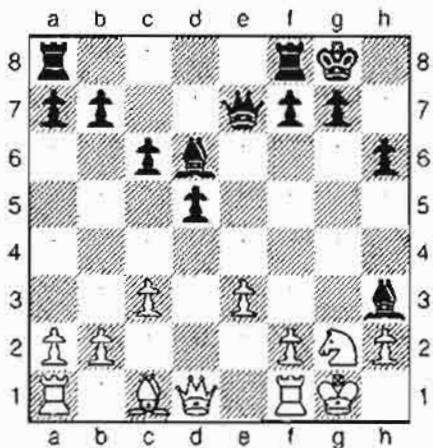
16. White to move



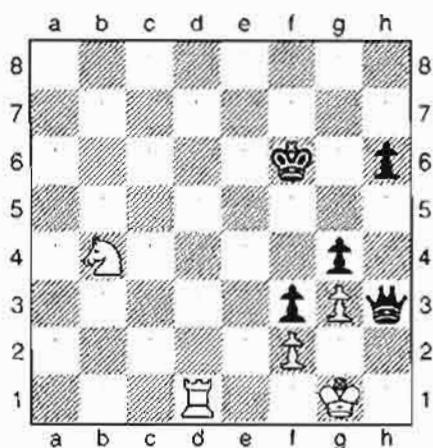
CHESS TACTICS FOR CHAMPIONS



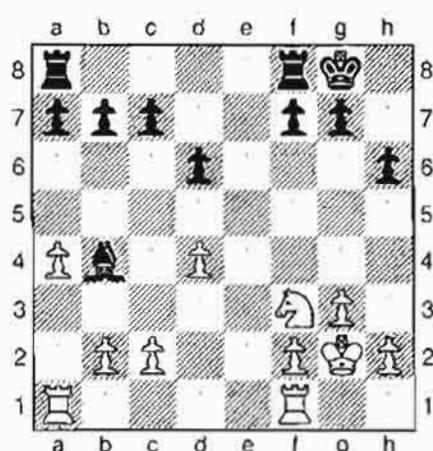
17. White to move



18. White to move

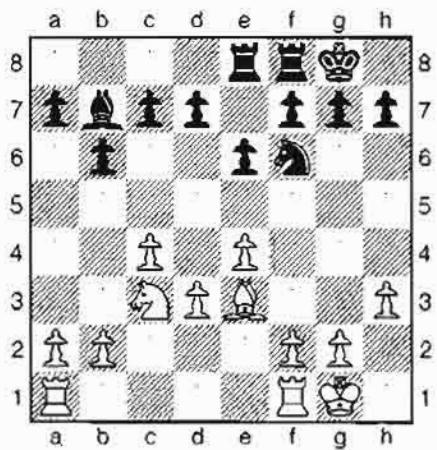


19. White to move

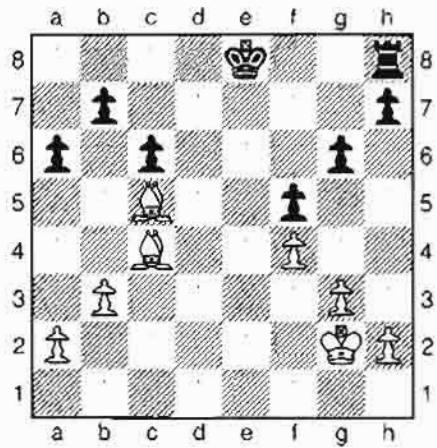


Trapping Pieces

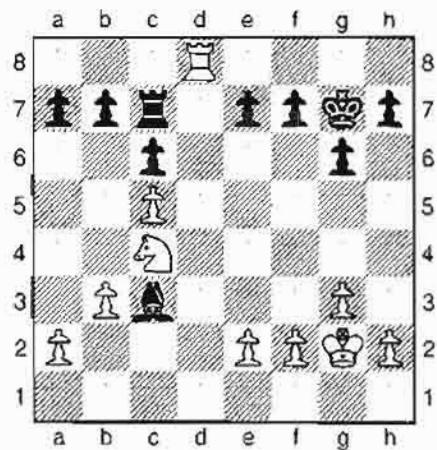
20. White to move

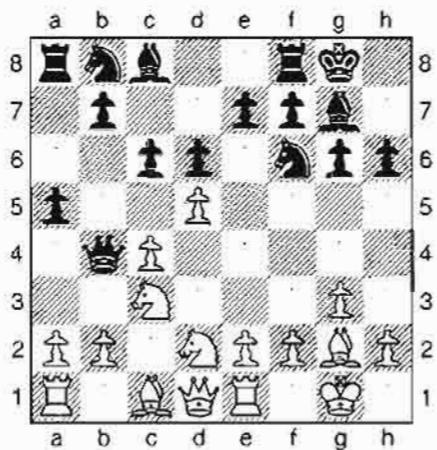
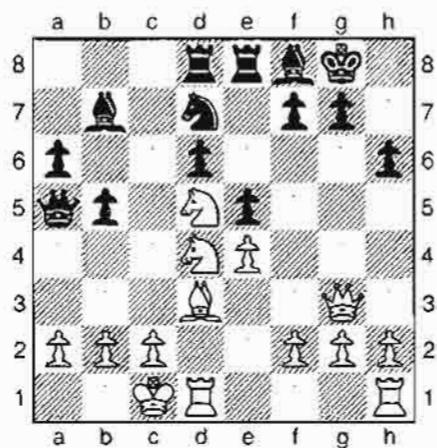
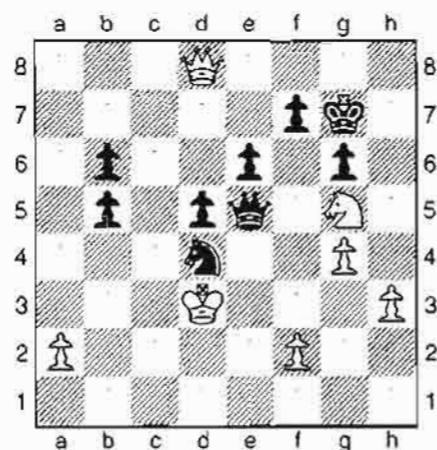


21. White to move



22. White to move



**23. White to move****24. White to move****25. White to move**

Solutions

1. White traps Black's bishop: 1. c5.
2. Again a White pawn traps Black's bishop: 1. f6.
3. The Black queen is surrounded by too many White pieces: 1. Rd2.
4. White is in check, but can get out by trapping the rook in the corner: 1. Kg7.
5. White makes a discovered attack, 1. Rcc1, and Black's queen is in trouble. Best for Black is the cross-pin 1. ... Ba6, but the bishop is still lost.
6. White cannot avoid material loss after 1. ... R8a2. For example, 2. Nxa2 Rxе1# or 2. Qxa2 Qxc3 3. Qf2 Rxс1.
7. After the discovered attack 1. Nd5, the Black queen has no hiding place.
8. The Black knight on b2 is too deep in enemy territory. After 1. Bb5 it has no road back.
9. The Black queen has no place to move; all White needs to do is to attack it: 1. Bg5! hxg5 2. hxg5.
10. A simple discovery works: 1. Nf6+ Kh8, and after 2. Bxb7 Black's rook is trapped.
11. This example demonstrates well the power of the pair of bishops. 1. Ba6 Rc6 (1. ... Ra8 2. Bb7) 2. Bb7.
12. White's rook finds itself among too many Black pieces: 1. ... Kf8 2. Re6 Kf7.
13. After the knight trade 1. Nxd4 Qxd4, White wins material by 2. Bf3.
14. Black has broken the opening rule: "Do not bring out your queen too early!" 1. Be2 Qg6 2. Nh4 and the queen is trapped.
15. White's bishop on f3 gets trapped after 1. ... Bxf5 2. exf5 e4.
16. "A knight on the rim is dim," as the saying goes. A perfect example: 1. Qb4 Qxb4 2. cxb4.
17. By threatening checkmate with 1. ... Qg5, Black forces 2. Qf3, and so can trap the queen with 2. ... Bg4. If 3. h4 Qg6 and Black is winning. White's best is 3. e4 Bxf5 4. Bxg5 hxg5, but Black has still won a bishop.
18. After the intermediate check 1. Nd5+ Ke5, White not only stops Black's checkmate threat on g2 but also traps the queen with 2. Nf4.
19. Black's bishop has no escape after 1. c3 Ba5 2. b4 Bb6 3. a5.
20. Black's knight cannot get away from the attacks: 1. e5 Nh5 2. g4.
21. Another example where the bishop pair traps a rook: 1. Bd4 Rf8 2. Bg7.
22. White traps Black's rook in an unusual way: 1. Nd6! (threatening 2. Ne8+) 1. ... exd6 2. cxd6.
23. White takes away the queen's last retreats to b6 or c5 by 1. Na4. Now Black has no way to



- rescue the queen. For example:
1. ... b5 2. a3 Qxa4 3. b3.
24. The White knights trap Black's queen. 1. Nb3 Qa4 (or 1. ... Qxa2 2. Nc3) 2. Nc3 Qb4 3. a3.
25. Here's a cute simplification combination involving a fork: 1. Qh8+! Kxh8 2. Nxf7+ Kg7 3. Nxe5 and the Black knight has no way out.

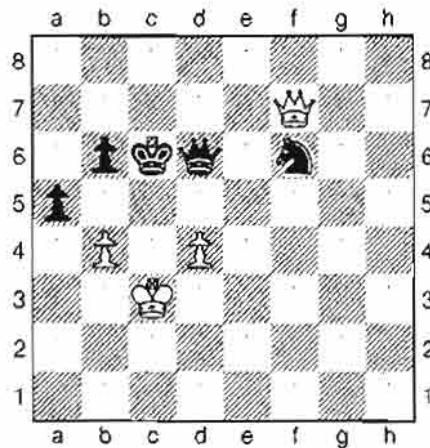
8

DECOYS

The idea of a decoy is to lure an enemy piece to an unfavorable position, thereby enabling the other side to gain some kind of advantage. We may want to make a decoy combination to checkmate or to create a fork, pin, skewer or other tactical motif to gain material.

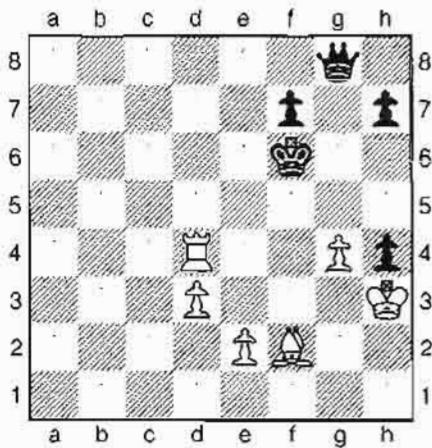
Here are some simple examples.

In the first position, White uses a decoy to force the Black king into checkmate.



Black is already a knight ahead, but White offers another pawn with pleasure: 1. $b5+!$ $Kxb5$ 2. $Qc4\#$.

In the next example, White forces the Black queen onto the same rank or diagonal as the king in order to make a skewer.



White offers his rook with 1. $Rd8!$. Now Black has no option but to lose the queen.

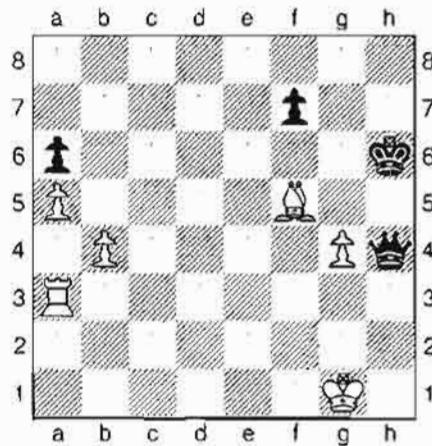
1. ... $Qxd8$.

Or 1. ... $Qg7$ 2. $Bd4+$; 1. ... $Qg6$ 2. $Rd6+$; 1. ... $Qg5$ 2. $Bxh4$ pinning the Black queen.

2. $Bxh4+$ $Kg6$ 3. $Bxd8$.

In all these variations, White wins the Black queen.

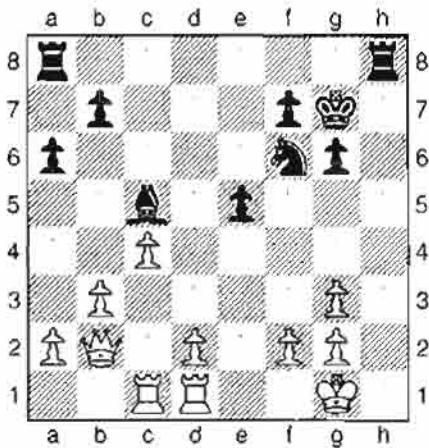
In the next position, White decoys the Black queen to a square where it will get in trouble because of a discovery.



White sacrifices the rook with 1. $Rh3!$, to tempt 1. ... $Qxh3$, when Black loses the queen after 2. $g5+!$ $Kxg5$ 3. $Bxh3$.

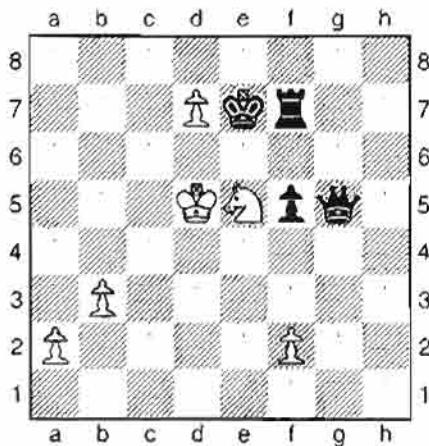
In the next example, Black lures the White king onto the “deadly” h-file.

Decoys



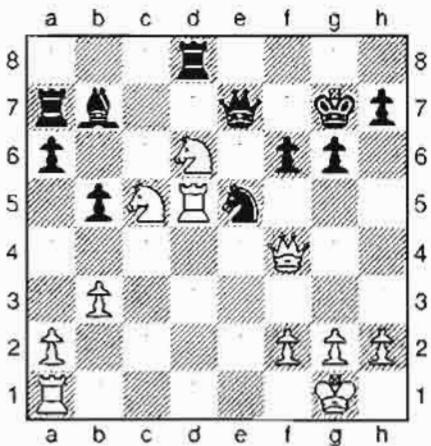
After sacrificing the rook with 1. ... Rh1+! 2. Kxh1, Black makes sure that the king does not come back to safety (g1) with 2. ... Bxf2. White is now helpless against the upcoming checkmate with Ra8-h8.

The next position is pretty amazing. Black seems to have an overwhelming material advantage. However ...



White turns things around by promoting the d-pawn with 1. d8Q+! and after 1. ... Kxd8 White takes the rook and forks with 2. Nxf7+.

Susan's Corner

**Susan Polgar-Karolyi
Hungary, 1990**

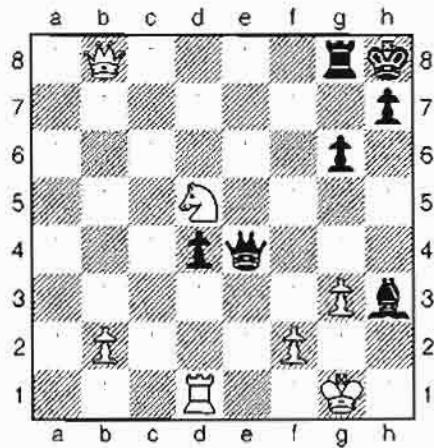
Here I noticed a potential fork: 25. Nf5+! gxf5 26. Rxd8 and if 26. ... Qxd8 27. Ne6+ forking. In the game, the Black king got into trouble: 26. ... Qxe5 27. Rc1 Qe7 28. Qg3+ Kh6 (28. ... Ng6 29. Rc7) 29. Rg8 and Black resigned.

Here are 25 positions for you to practice decoy tactics.

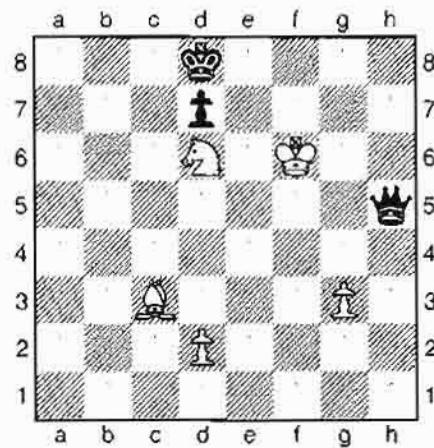
1. White to move

Decoys

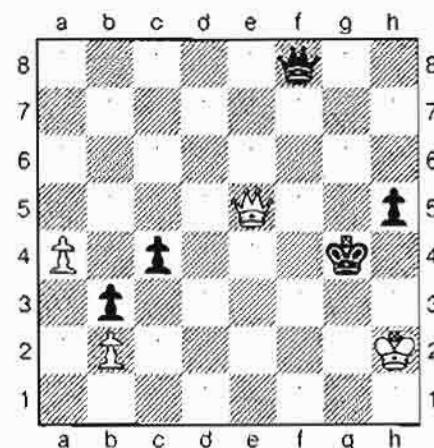
2. White to move

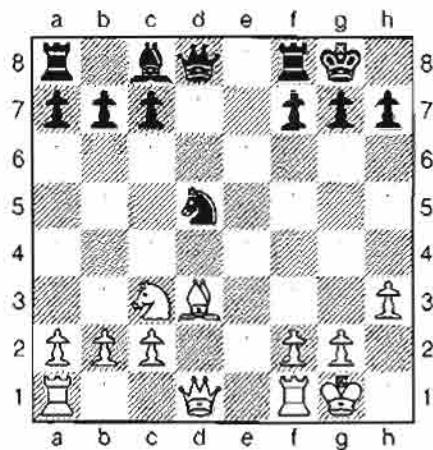
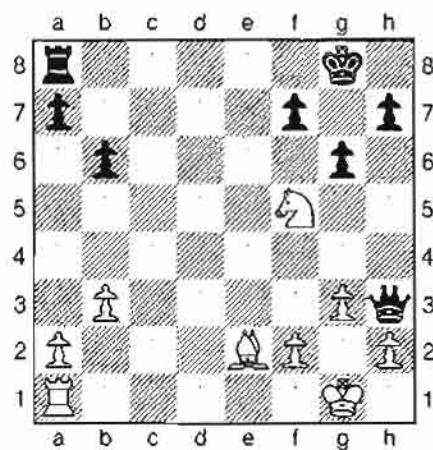
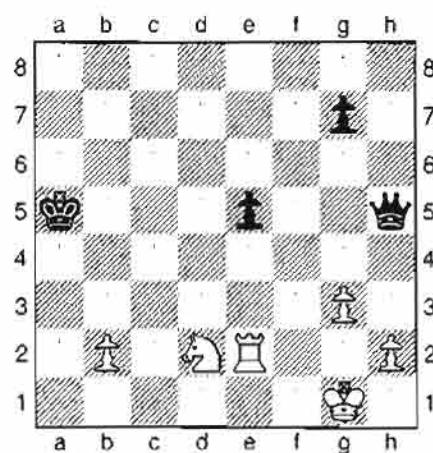


3. White to move



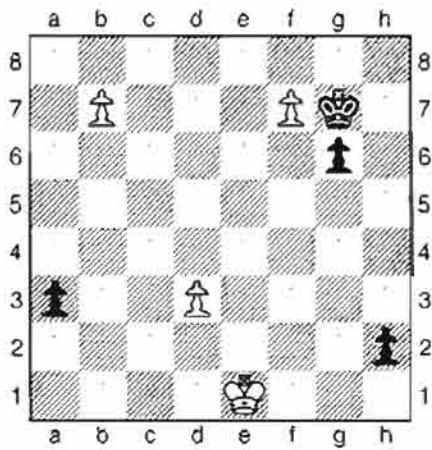
4. White to move



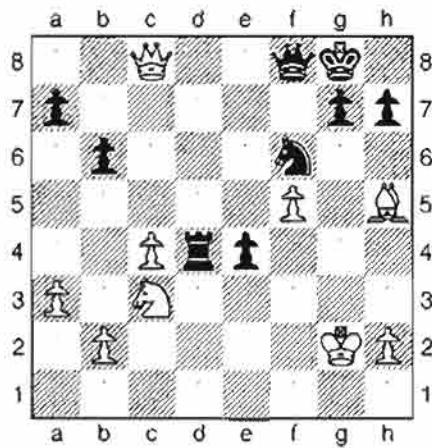
**5. White to move****6. White to move****7. White to move**

Decoys

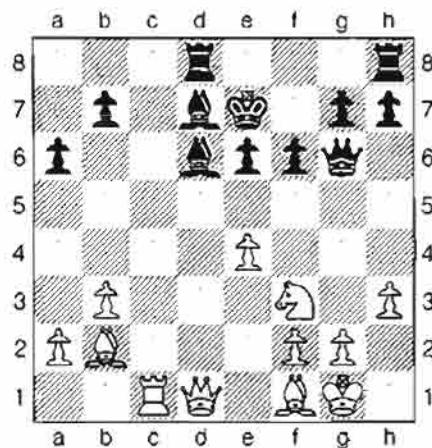
8. White to move



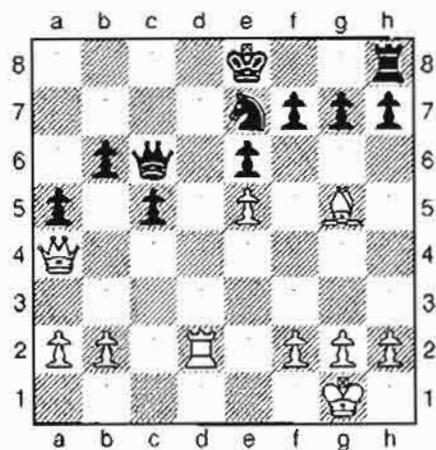
9. White to move



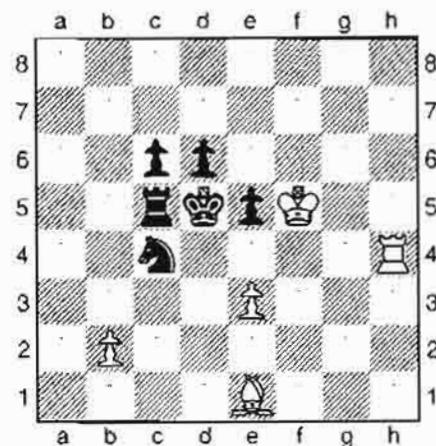
10. White to move



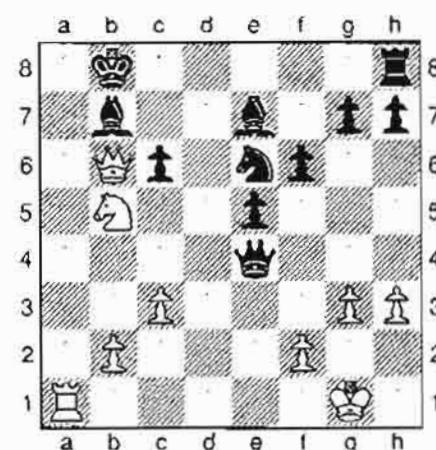
11. White to move



12. White to move

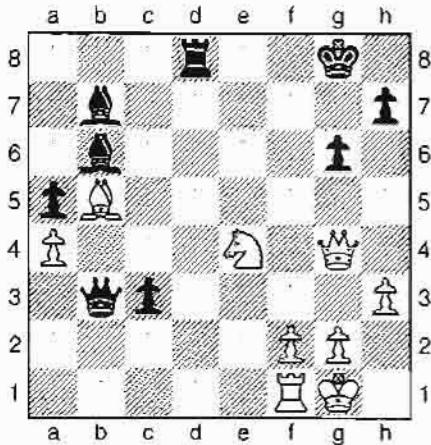


13. White to move

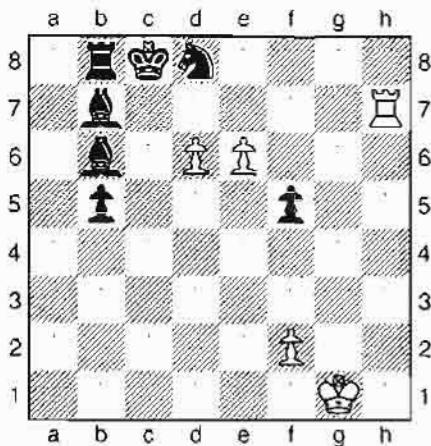


Decoys

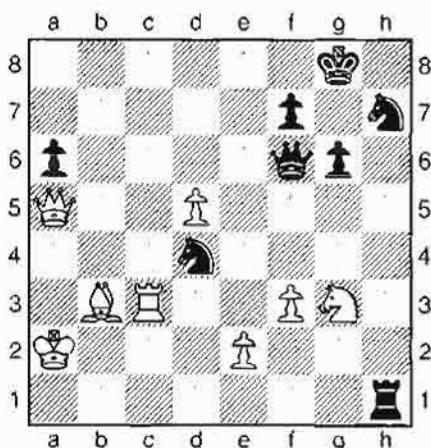
14. White to move

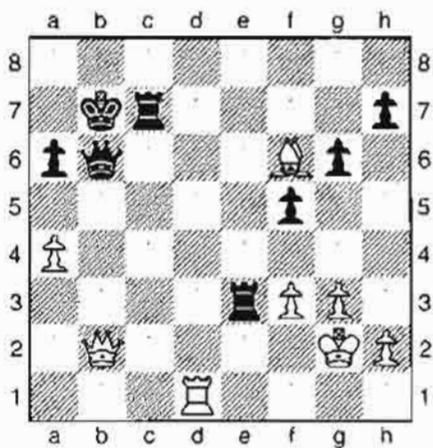
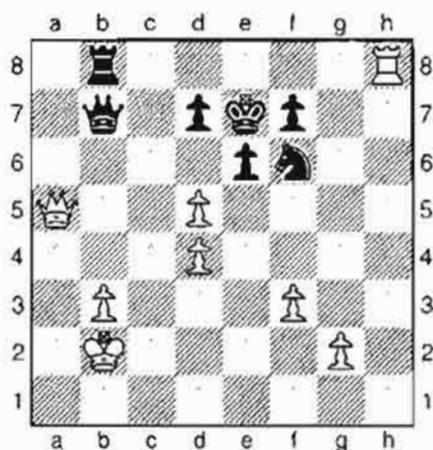


15. White to move



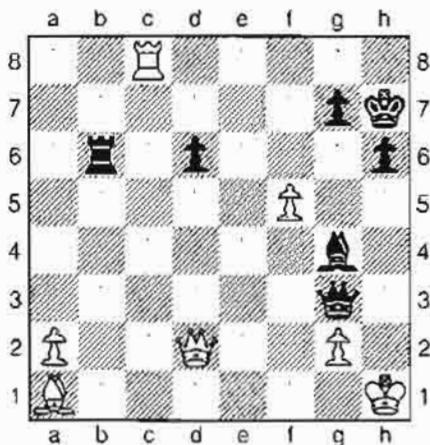
16. Black to move



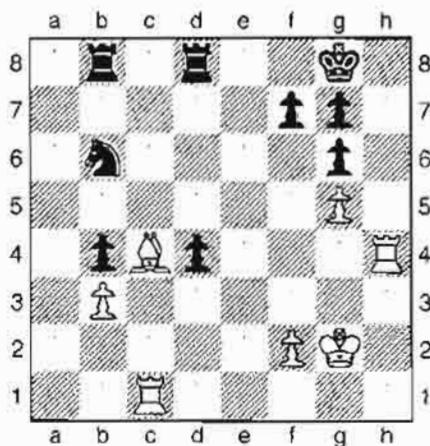
17. White to move**18. White to move****19. White to move**

Decoys

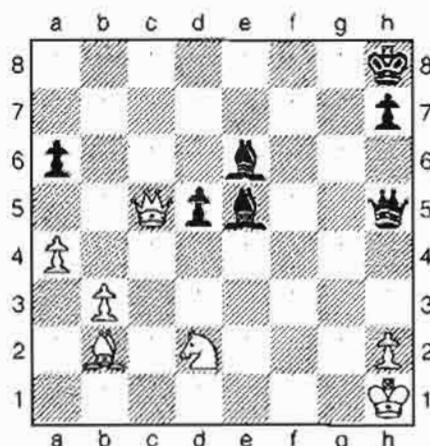
20. White to move



21. White to move

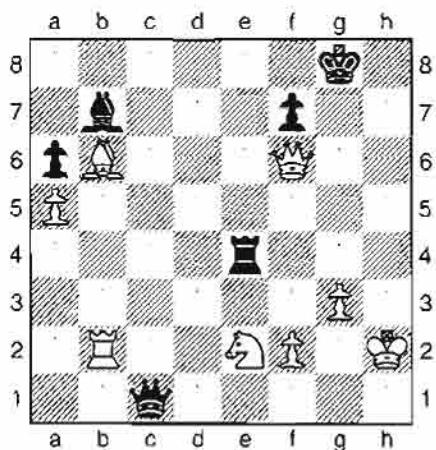


22. White to move

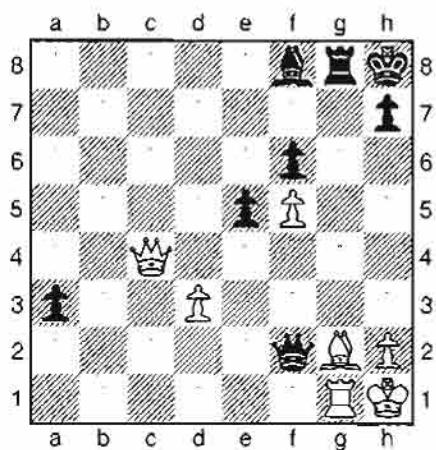




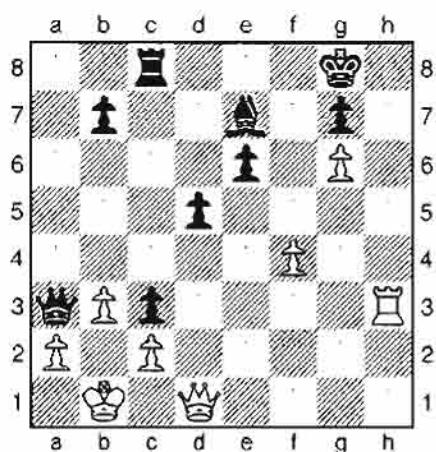
23. Black to move



24. White to move



25. White to move



Solutions

1. White sacrifices a bishop to force Black's king into a fork: 1. $Bxg7+!$ $Kxg7$ 2. $Nh5+$ $Kh8$ 3. $Nxf4$.
2. White's queen is hanging and Black is also threatening mate in one move. White can solve all these problems and win a rook with: 1. $Qxg8+!$ $Kxg8$ 2. $Nf6+$ $Kg7$ 3. $Nxe4$.
3. Black is ahead in material, but a bishop sacrifice forces the Black queen into a fork: 1. $Ba5+!$ $Qxa5$ 2. $Nb7+$ $Kc7$ 3. $Nxa5$.
4. With a simple check, White pushes the Black king onto the same file as the Black queen: 1. $Qg3+ Kf5$ 2. $Qf3+$ (skewer) 2. ... $Ke5$ 3. $Qxf8$.
5. After a knight trade, 1. $Nxd5$ $Qxd5$, the Black queen appears on an unfortunate square: 2. ... $Bxh7+!$ (discovered attack) 2. ... $Kxh7$ 3. $Qxd5$.
6. White seems to be in trouble. But by almost trapping the Black queen with 1. $Bg4!$, White "invites" 1. ... $Qxg4$, when White forks with 2. $Nh6+$ $Kg7$ 3. $Nxg4$.
7. With a rook sacrifice, White achieves a fork to win the Black queen. 1. $Rxe5+!$ $Qxe5$ 2. $Nc4+$ $Kb4$ 3. $Nxe5$.
8. If White promotes the b-pawn, Black also gets a chance to promote the h-pawn and with check! Therefore, the correct answer is to give up the f-pawn by 1. $f8Q+!$, so that after 1. ... $Kxf8$ the other pawn can promote with check! 2. $b8Q+$ $Kf7$ 3. $Qxh2$.
9. White can force mate in two moves: 1. $Bf7+!$ $Kxf7$ 2. $Qe6\#$.
10. By means of a nice queen sacrifice, White wins at least a piece or mates. 1. $Qxd6+!$ $Kxd6$ 2. $Ba3\#$.
11. With a tricky rook sacrifice, 1. $Rd8+!$, White forces Black into a pin, and after 1. ... $Kxd8$, White freely captures Black's queen with 2. $Qxc6$.
12. After the direct 1. $e4+$, Black can escape to d4. That is why White gives up the rook to block that square. 1. $Rd4+!$ $exd4$ 2. $e4\#$.
13. White forces mate in two moves: 1. $Ra8+!$ $Kxa8$ 2. $Qa7\#$.
14. After the bishop sacrifice 1. $Bc4+!$ $Qxc4$, the Black queen arrived on an unfortunate spot, as White has a discovery at hand: 2. $Nf6+$ $Kg7$ 3. $Qxc4$.
15. After solving position 12, this should be a familiar idea! 1. $Rc7+!$ $Bxc7$ 2. $d7\#$.
16. After 1. ... $Ra1+!$ 2. $Kxa1$, the White king gets into a pin and Black wins after 2. ... $Nxb3+$ 3. $Kb2$ $Nxa5$.
17. An impressive queen sacrifice leads to mate in two! 1. $Qh5+!$



- Kxh5 2. Bf7# or 1. ... Kg7 2. Qf7#.
18. After a simple queen trade, 1. Qxb6+ Kxb6, White forks and wins a rook with 2. Bd4+ Ka5 3. Bxe3.
19. With a pawn sacrifice, White forces the Black king to d6. 1. d6+! Kxd6 2. Qc5#.
20. White forces mate in three by sacrificing a rook to push the Black king into a pin. 1. Rh8+! Kxh8 2. Qxh6+ Kg8 3. Qxg7#.
21. After a rook sacrifice, 1.Rh8+! Kxh8, White makes a quiet move, but Black is helpless against the upcoming mate along the h-file. 2. Bxf7 Nd5 3. Rh1#.
22. First White forces the Black bishop to g8 by 1. Qf8+ Bg8 and then mates in two: 2. Qf6+! Bxf6 3. Bxf6#.
23. With a pretty queen sacrifice, 1. ... Qh1+! 2. Kxh1, Black creates a "killer" double check: 2. ... Rh4+ 3. Kg1 Rh1#.
24. An idea similar to the previous example: 1. Qxg8+! Kxg8 2. Bd5+ Kh8 3. Rg8#.
25. Black is about to mate on b2. So White must keep giving checks: 1. Rh8+! Kxh8 2. Qh5+ Kg8 3. Qh7+ Kf8 4. Qh8#.

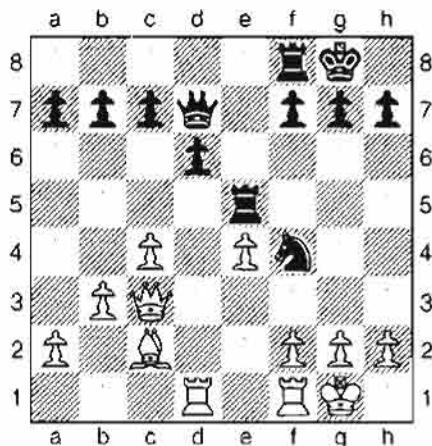
9

INTERMEDIATE MOVES

An intermediate move is also known as an in-between move, or by its German name, *zwischenzug*. The idea is to postpone an obvious move (such as a recapture or moving a piece away from attack) and instead play a check or other forcing move. It is perhaps the most commonly overlooked motif of all among strong players.

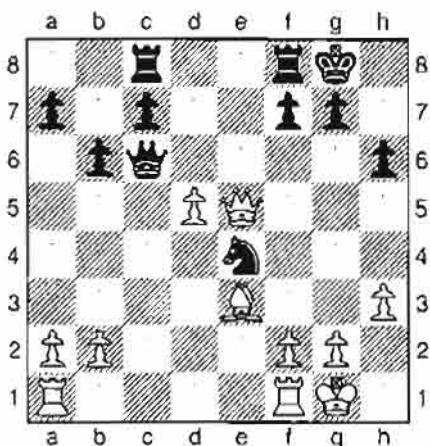
Here are a few introductory examples.

In the position below, White is counting on the pin on the d-file with the rook.



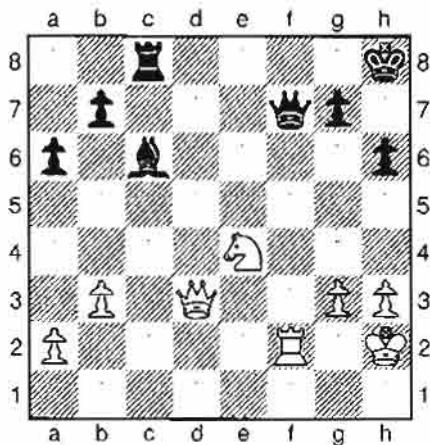
1. Qxe5? If 1. ... dxe5 then 2. Rxd7 and the pin has done its job. But Black has the in-between move 1. ... Qg4 . Now Black has two threats: checkmate on $\text{g}2$ and the attack on the White queen, since there is no longer a pin on the d-file.

Some intermediate moves look good but don't have the intended result. In the following position, White has just pushed the d-pawn to $\text{d}5$. Instead of playing the natural 1. ... Qg6 , Black decides to play the intermediate move 1. ... Rfe8? .



After 2. $d \times c6$ $R \times e5$ Black would be all right. However, White can win a piece with 2. **Qxe4!** $R \times e4$ 3. $d \times c6$.

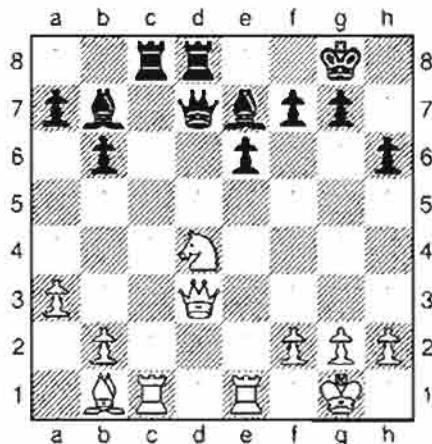
In the next example, the White rook is attacking Black queen. But Black does not have to move it!



Instead, Black wins the knight with 1. ... $B \times e4$ 2. $R \times f7$ (or even worse is 2. $Q \times e4$ $Q \times f2+$) 2. ... $B \times d3$.

In the next position, Black carelessly trades rooks with 1. ... $R \times c1?$. What is wrong with that move?

Intermediate Moves



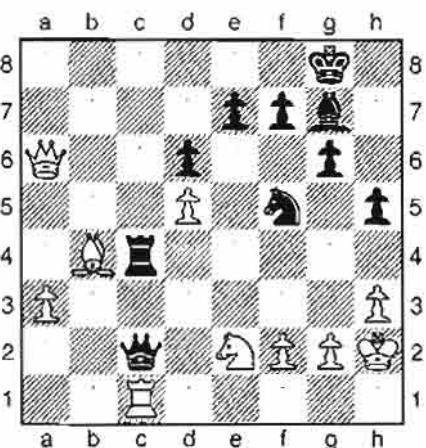
Well, the problem with that move is that White does not have to recapture. Instead, White mates in two moves with 2.Qh7+ Kf8 3. Qh8#. It would have been better for Black to prevent the entrance of the White queen on the kingside with 1...g6.

In the next position White has the opportunity to make a fork with 1.b5. Does it work?



Black can try 1...Nxc3 hoping for 2.Bxc3 Bxb5. But White has the much better move 2.Qd3! threatening to mate on h7. After Black stops that threat by 2...g6, White simply recaptures with 3.Bxc3 and maintains the fork on the Black knight and bishop. 2...Ne4 does not improve Black's case either after 3.Qxe4 Bxb5 (3...f5 4.Qxe6+) 4.Qh7#.

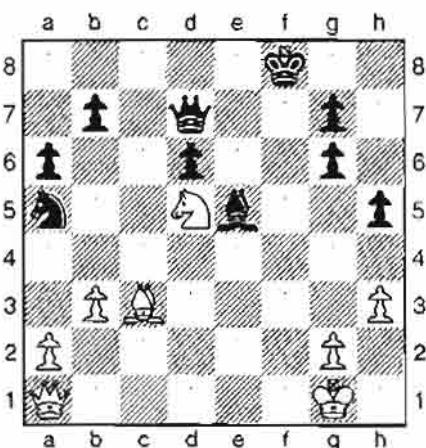
Susan's Corner

**Baumgartner—Susan Polgar
San Bernardino, 1987**

Here I could have played 29. ... Qxe2 right away (allowing 30. Qxc4), sacrificing an exchange. But there is a much better choice: 29. ... Be5+. At this point my opponent resigned in view of the following variations: 30. g3 Qxe2 31. Qxc4 Qxf2+ 32. Kh1 Nhg3#; or 30. Kg1 Qxc1+ 31. Nxc1 Rxc1+ 32. Qf1 Bh2+ 33. Kxh2 Rxf1; or 30. f4 Bxf4+ 31. Nxf4 Qxc1 with a significant material advantage for Black.

Here are 25 exercises for practicing intermediate moves.

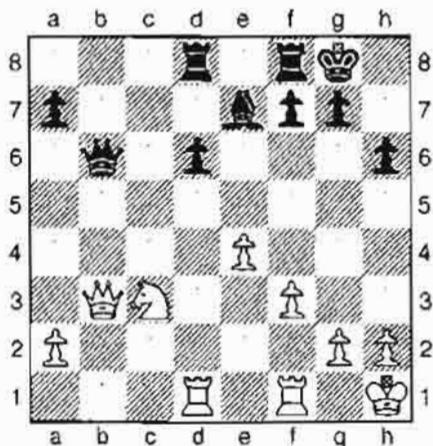
1



White would like to capture the Black knight on a5 but the bishop on c3 is in a pin. How should White solve this problem?

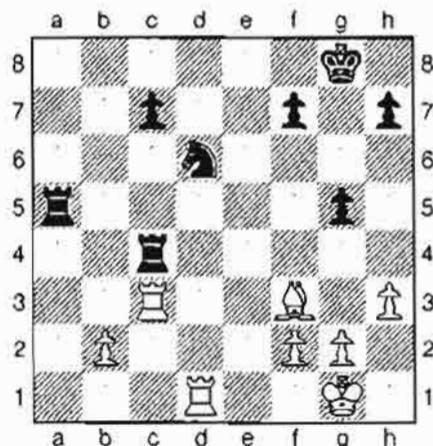
Intermediate Moves

2



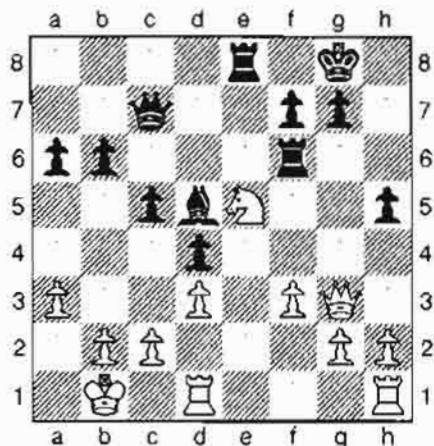
Black is offering to trade queens. How can White win a piece along the way?

3



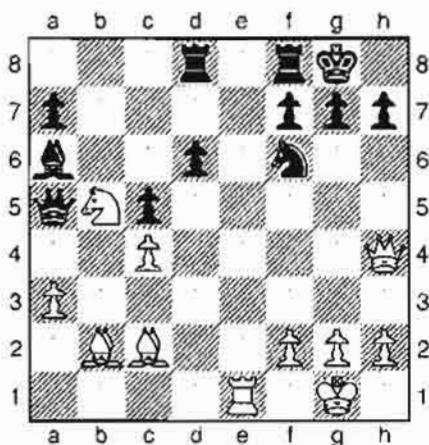
How can White gain a material advantage?

4



White can win the exchange. Can you see how?

5

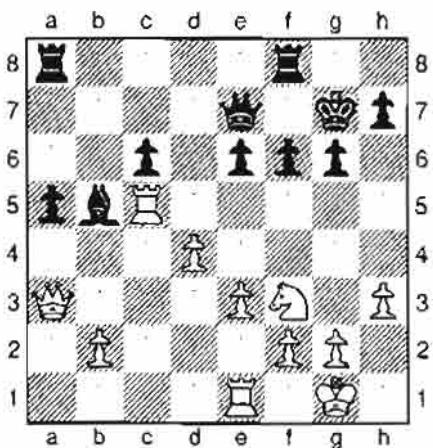


White has a dangerous attack on the kingside. Both bishops are pointing toward the Black king. After the immediate 1. Bxf6, however, there is a problem. How can White fix the problem?



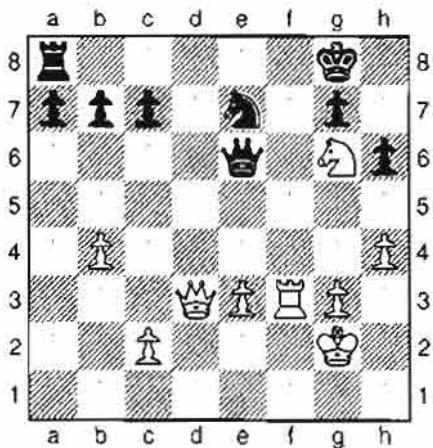
Intermediate Moves

6

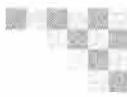


White can take advantage of the fact that the Black queen is on an unprotected square. How?

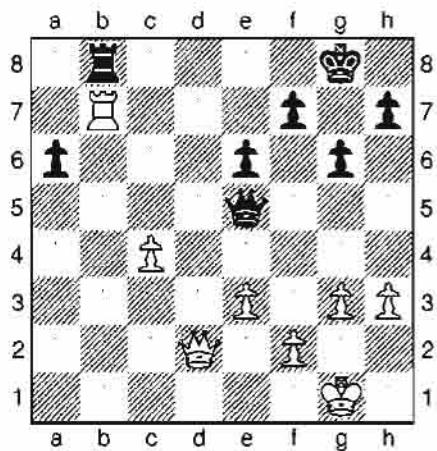
7



This position seems about equal. Black is offering to trade knights. But White can gain serious material advantage. What is the right move?

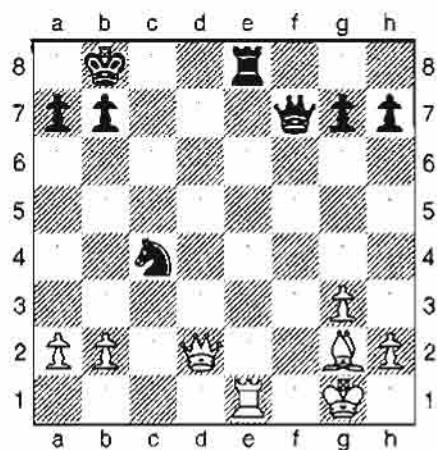


8



How can White gain a serious material advantage?

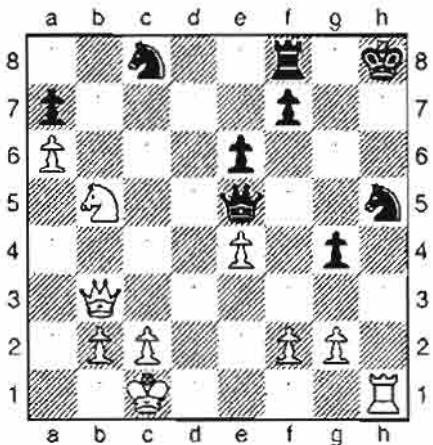
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Black has just attacked the White queen. Yet White has a winning combination. What is the right continuation?

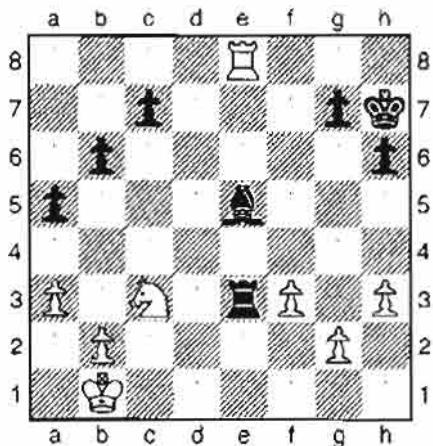
Intermediate Moves

10



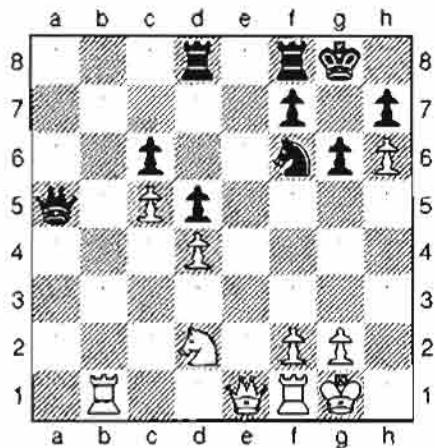
Black has an extra knight. But with the right continuation White can win it back. How?

11



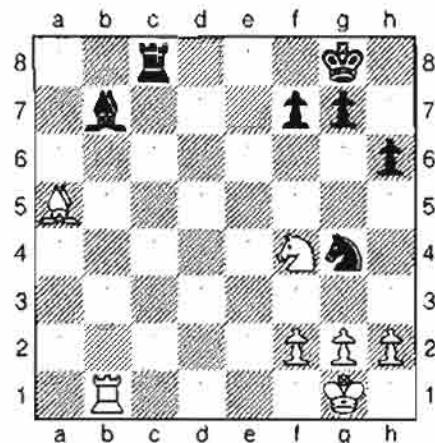
The Black bishop is pinned. After 1. ... Bxc3, Black loses the rook on e3. But with an intermediate check, Black can improve the position of the rook first.

12



Again White can take advantage of the fact that the Black queen is on an unprotected square. What should White play?

13

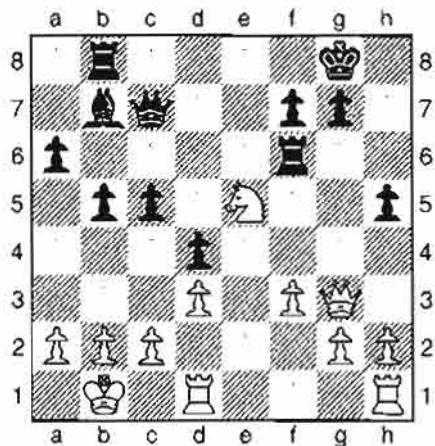


White has a back-rank problem. What should White do to fix it?



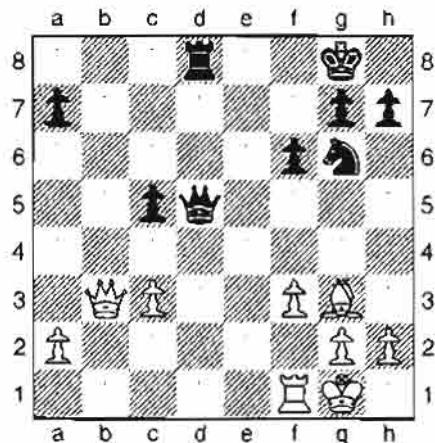
Intermediate Moves

14

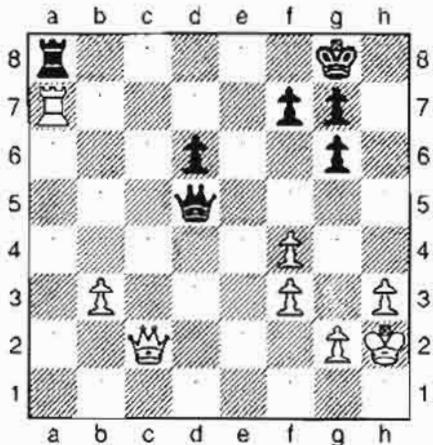


How can White win material?

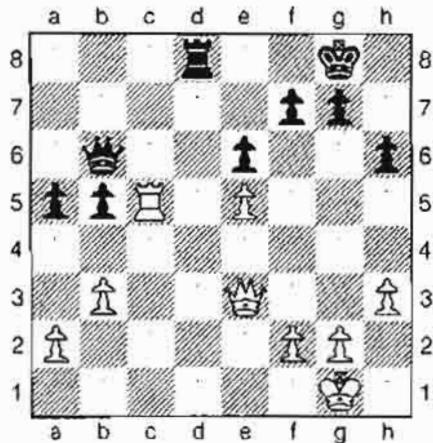
15



White can use the existing pin (on the Black queen) to gain material.
How?

16

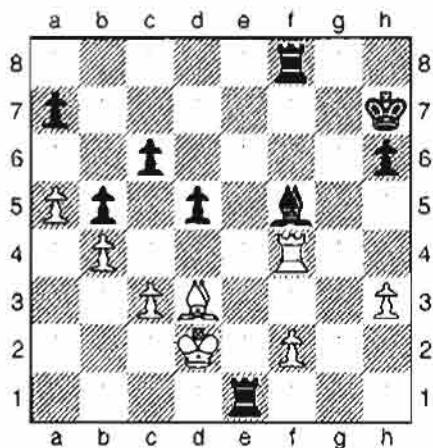
How can White take advantage of the unfortunate position of the Black pieces?

17

It seems that White has two ways to accomplish the same goal. But only one of them works. Which one?

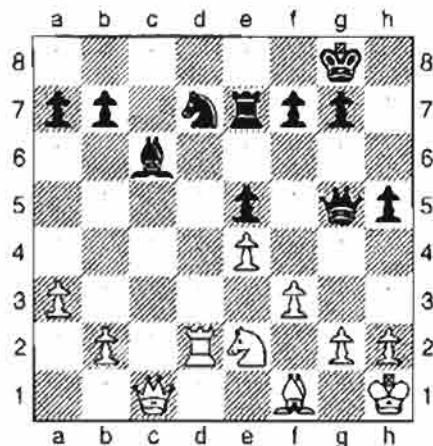
Intermediate Moves

18



Black has just captured White's rook on e1. The obvious reply would be 1. Kxe1. Does White have a better option?

19



How can White win a piece?

20

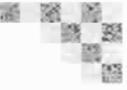


White's last move was 1. Bxd6, capturing a Black knight. Black can choose which White bishop to capture or look for something even better.

21

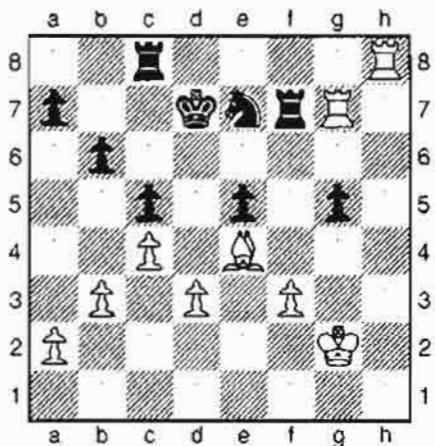


Black made an error by playing 1. ... axb4? in this position. Can you show why this was a mistake?



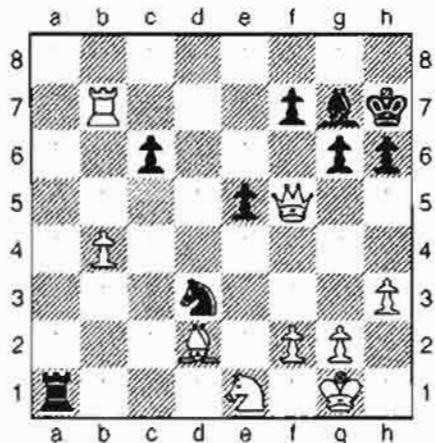
Intermediate Moves

22



All four rooks are hanging. How can White come out of this mess ahead?

23



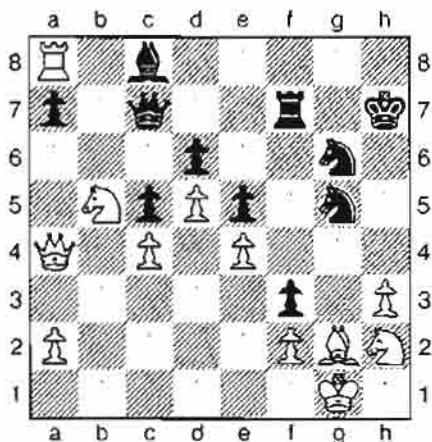
White's last move was to capture the Black queen. Does Black have a better choice than recapturing with 1. ... gxf5?

24



White can capture the Black queen but Black will still have a material advantage. How can White win the game quickly?

25



White has just played $Nc3-b5$ attacking the Black queen. How should Black react?

Solutions

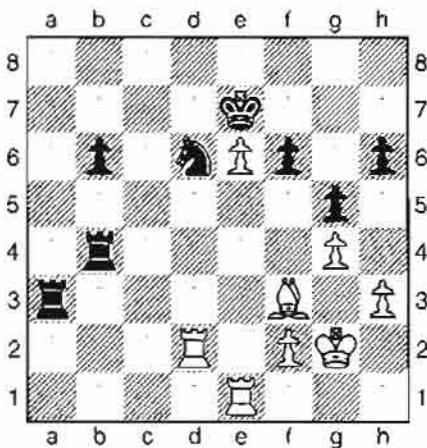
1. An intermediate check with 1. Qf1+! (1. Bxe5 dxe5 2. Qxe5 isn't good enough because after 2. ... Nc6 Black is clearly better with an extra pawn) 1. ... Qf5 (or 1. ... Kg8 2. Bxa5) 2. Qxf5+! (another important in-between move! White would spoil everything with 2. Bxa5? Why? Because Black would then win White's queen with 2. ... Bd4+ forcing the king away from protecting the queen: 3. Kh2 Qxf1.) 2. ... gxf5 and only now 3. Bxa5.
2. 1. Nd5! Qxb3 2. Nxe7+ An important intermediate check! 2. ... Kh8 3. axb3.
3. White wins a piece with 1. Rxd6! Rxc3 2. Rd8+ Kg7 3. bxc3.
4. White wins the exchange after 1. Ng4! Qxg3 (1. ... Rc6 2. Nf6+!) 2. Nxf6+ gxf6 3. hxg3.
5. 1. Bc3 (but not 1. Bxf6 because of 1. ... Qxe1#) 1. ... Qb6 and now 2. Bxf6 gxf6 (or 2. ... g6 3. Qh6) 3. Qxh7#.
6. White wins a bishop by 1. Rxb5! Qxa3 2. Rb7+ Rf7 3. Rxf7+ Kxf7 4. bxa3.
7. 1. Qb3! and after 1. ... Qxb3 2. Nxe7+ Kh8 3. cxb3.
8. By offering a trade with 1. Qd4! Qxd4 (1. ... f6 2. Qxe5 fxe5 3. Rxb8+) 2. Rxb8+ Kg7 3. exd4.
9. 1. Qf4+! Qxf4 and the in-between move 2. Rxe8+ Kc7 3. gxf4.
10. 1. Qc3! Qxc3 (1. ... f6 2. Qxe5 fxe5 3. Rxh5+) 2. Rxh5+ Kg7 3. Nxc3 winning a piece.
11. Black wins a piece with 1. ... Re1+ 2. Kc2 Bxc3.
12. White wins a piece because Black's knight on f6 is on an unprotected square. 1. Ne4! Qxe1 (1. ... Nxe4 2. Qxa5) 2. Nxf6+ Kh8 3. Rfxe1.
13. 1. f3! (1. Rxb7 is forbidden because of 1. ... Rc1+. But why doesn't 1. h3 serve the same purpose as 1. f3? Well, if Black should retreat the knight, then it would. However, Black would have the intermediate move: 1. ... Be4 followed by 2. Re1 Nf6, protecting everything just in time.) 1. ... Ne3 2. Rxb7 and Black loses a piece and has nothing left but a couple of checks (2. ... Rc1+ 3. Kf2 Nd1+ 4. Ke2).
14. 1. Nd7! (1. Ng4 is not as good because of 1. ... Rc6) 1. ... Qxg3 (1. ... Rc6 2. Qxc7 Rxc7 3. Nxb8; 1. ... Qxd7 2. Qxb8+) 2. Nxf6+ gxf6 3. hxg3.
15. Correct is 1. Rd1! Qxb3 2. Rxd8+ Kf7 3. axb3.
16. This is a similar idea to position 8. 1. Qc4! Qxc4 2. Rxa8+ Kh7 3. bxc4.
17. 1. Rc8! (but not 1. Rd5 Qb8) 1. ... Qxe3 2. Rxd8+ Kh7 3. fxe3.

- 18.** Yes, 1. Rxf5! Kg7 (1. ... Rxf5 2. Bxf5+ Kg7 3. Kxe1 or 1. ... Rfe8 2. Re5+ Kg7 3. Rxe1) 2. Kxe1. A mistake is 1. Kxe1, when after 1. ... Re8+ Black is okay. Nor does 1. Bxf5+ Rxf5 2. Rxf5 Re7 do much for White.
- 19.** 1. Rxd7! Qxc1 and the intermediate check: 2. Rd8+ Re8 3. Rxe8+ Bxe8 4. Nxc1.
- 20.** After 1. ... Rxb3? White has no problems after 2. Be5+ Kf7 3. fxe4 Bxe4 4. d6. But Black gains a material advantage after: 1. ... e5+! 2. Kxe3 Rxb3+ 3. Ke2 exd6.
- 21.** 1. Bxc5! Qxc5 and a discovery with 2. axb4 Qxc4 3. Rxa8.
- 22.** A brilliant intermediate move: 1. Bc6+! Kxc6 (or 1. ... Nxc6 2. Rxf7+ Ke6 3. Rxc8; 1. ... Rxc6 2. Rxf7) 2. Rh6+ Kd7 3. Rxf7 winning the exchange.
- 23.** Yes, 1. ... Nxe1! 2. Qxf7 Nf3#. Or 2. Kf1 Nf3+ 3. Ke2 Nd4+ 4. Kd3 Nxf5.
- 24.** White goes for the king! 1. Qg5! Qg6 2. Qxh5+ Kg8 3. Bxg6 fxg6 4. Qxg6+ Kh8 5. Qg7#.
- 25.** There is no need to move the queen away. 1. ... fxg2! 2. Nxc7 (2. Kxg2 Qd7) 2. ... Nf4 3. Qb3 Ngxh3+ 4. Qxh3+ Bxh3 followed by 5. ... Ne2.

10

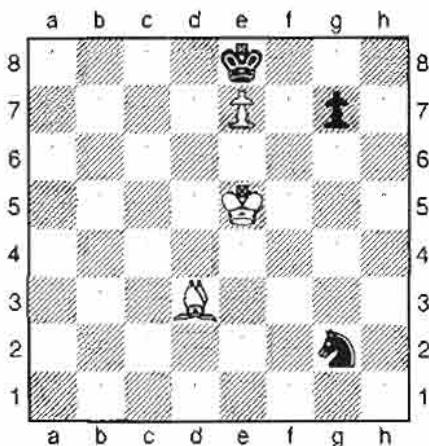
PAWN PROMOTION

Pawns are the least valuable pieces at the beginning of the game. But they have great potential if they can reach the other side of the board and are promoted to a much stronger piece. Most of the time, you will not have a chance to promote a pawn until the endgame, but there are plenty of exceptions. In this chapter I'll show you situations where the pawn is close to promotion but needs some special help or combination to get through.



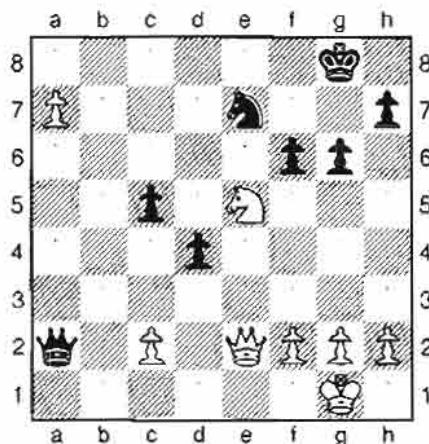
Material is balanced. White has a small combination, however, which either wins a piece or promotes the e-pawn. The solution is 1. $R \times d6!$ $K \times d6$ 2. $e7$ and the pawn promotion cannot be stopped.

In the next endgame position, very few pieces remain on the board.



As we know, a lone bishop is not capable of winning all by itself. So in this case the e7 pawn is the crucial piece. White first needs to protect the pawn with 1. Kd6, threatening to checkmate with 2. Bg6#. When Black stops that threat with 1. ... Nf4, White strikes from the other side with 2. Bb5+, chasing Black's king away from e8, 2. ... Kf7, after which White is free to promote the pawn with 3. e8Q+.

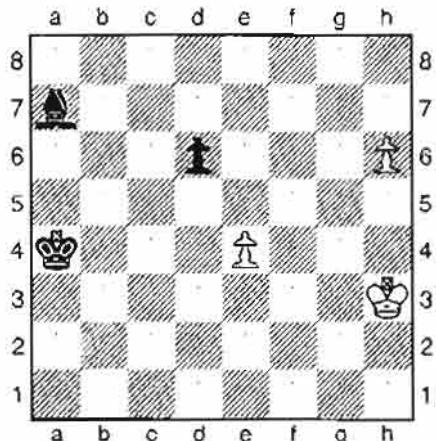
In the next example, White's a-pawn is just one square away from promotion. But the Black queen is stopping it from behind.



Here White forces the exchange of queens with 1. Qc4+ Qxc4 2. Nxc4 and now Black cannot prevent the pawn promotion.

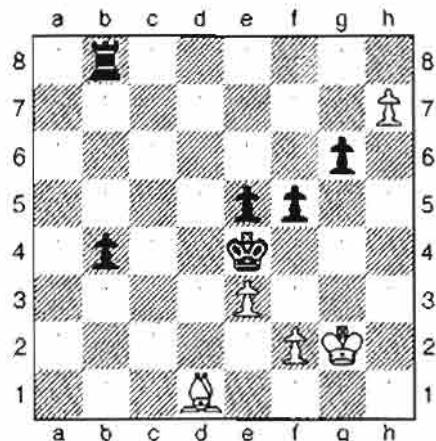
In the following simple-looking endgame, Black has a material advantage, but that is about to change when White finds the right move

Pawn Promotion



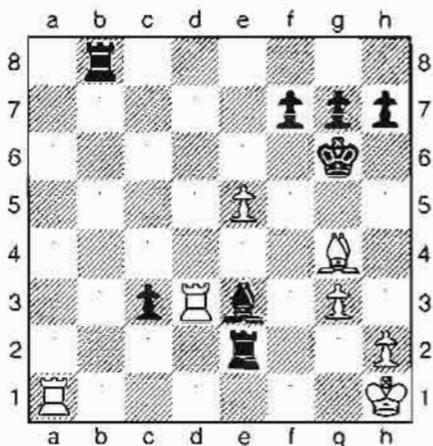
White uses a pawn sacrifice to lock up the diagonal with 1. e5! dx_e5 and only now 2. h7. It's a big mistake to push the h-pawn right away with 1. h7, allowing 1. ... Bd4, preventing the pawn promotion.

Let's see how White gets the h-pawn promoted in the next endgame:



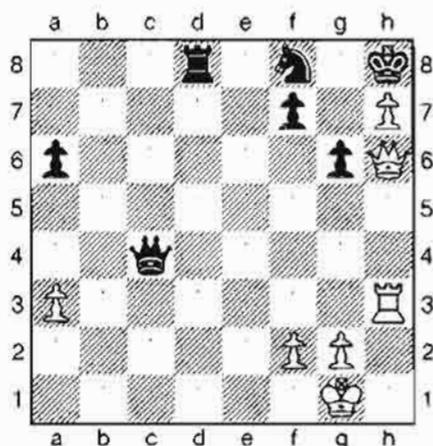
With two simple checks: 1. Bc2+ Kd5 2. Bb3+ Kc5 and then 3. Bg8, cutting off Black's rook from the queening square h8. If White plays 1. Bb3 instead, Black can play 1. ... Rh8 and the rook can never be dislodged.

Susan's Corner

Van Wely—Susan Polgar
Amsterdam, 1990

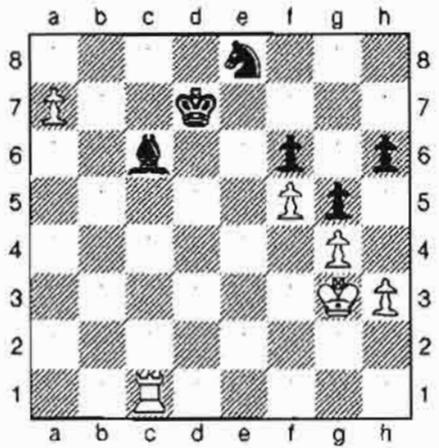
My opponent has just attacked my rook on e2. If I move it, my bishop on e3 will be in danger. That is why I looked for a way to give up my rook but promote my c-pawn. 28. ... c2 and White cannot prevent ... Rb8-b1+. 29. Bxe2 Rb1+ and White resigned.

And here are the 25 practice examples:

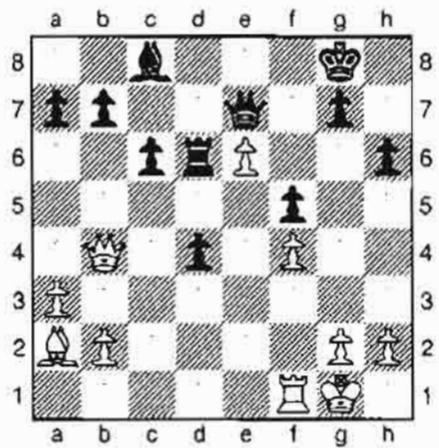
1. White to move

Pawn Promotion

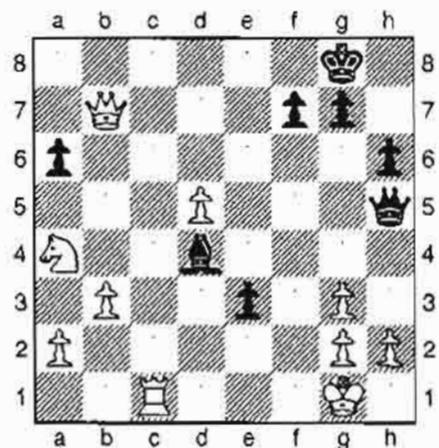
2. White to move



3. White to move

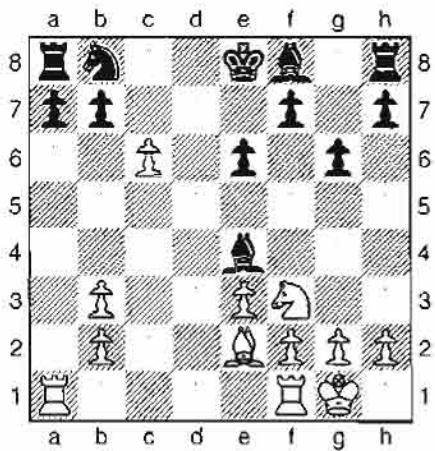


4. Black to move

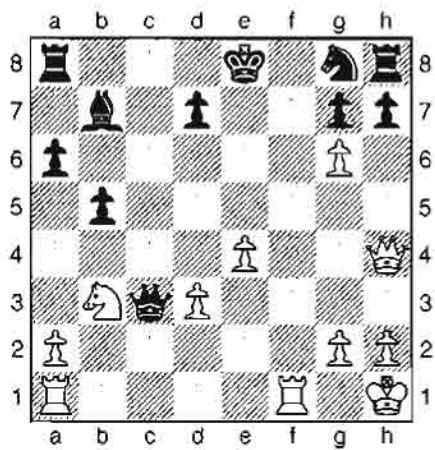




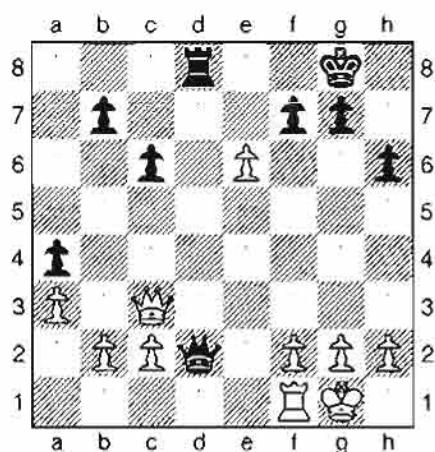
5. White to move



6. White to move

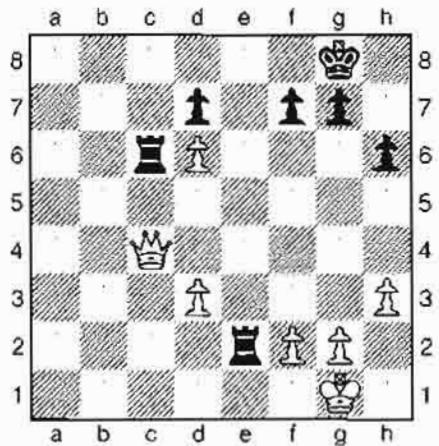


7. White to move

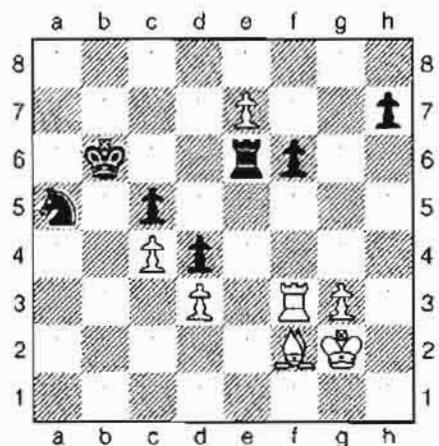


Pawn Promotion

8. White to move



9. White to move

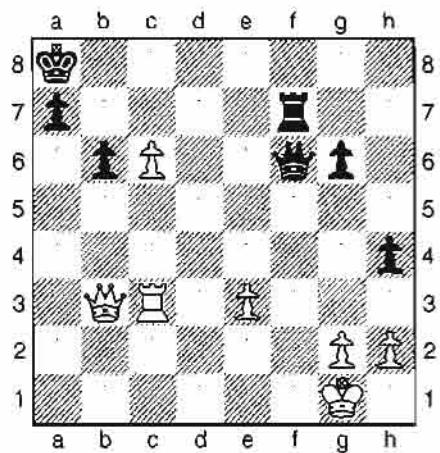


10. Black to move

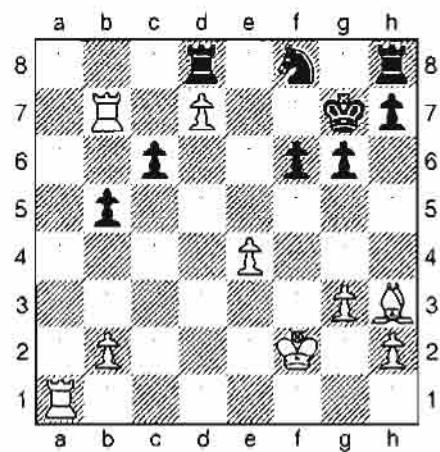




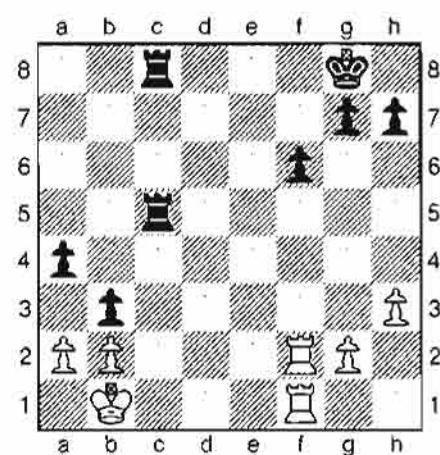
11. White to move



12. White to move

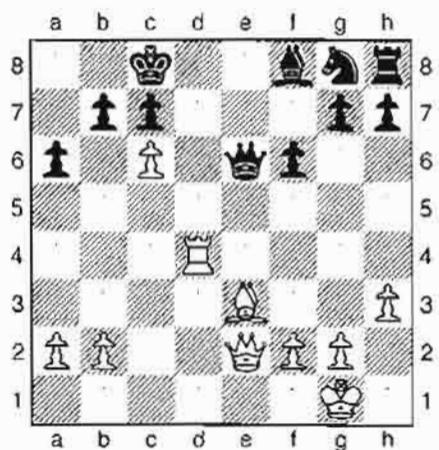


13. Black to move

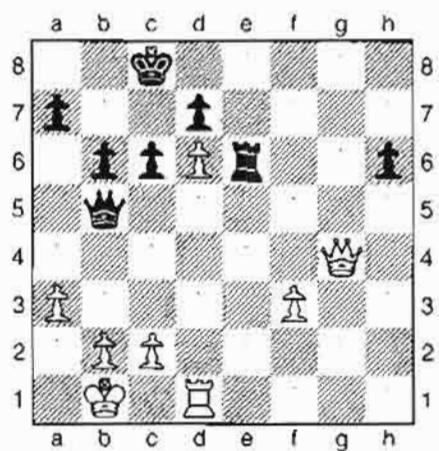


Pawn Promotion

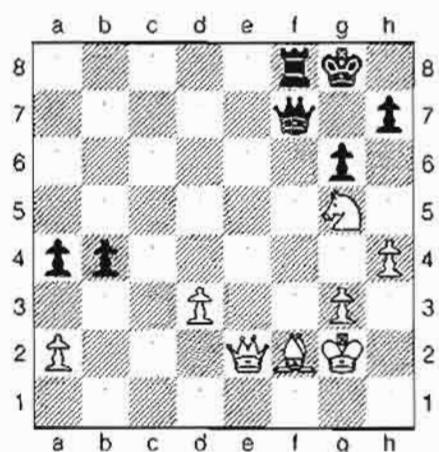
14. White to move



15. White to move



16. Black to move

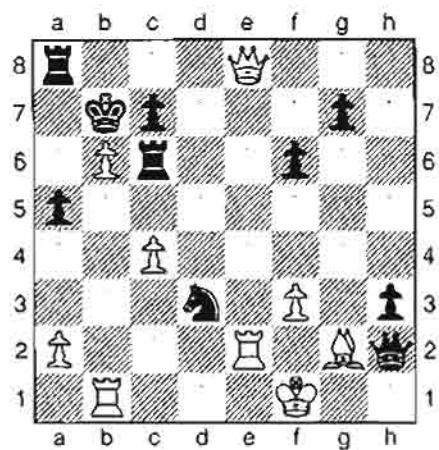




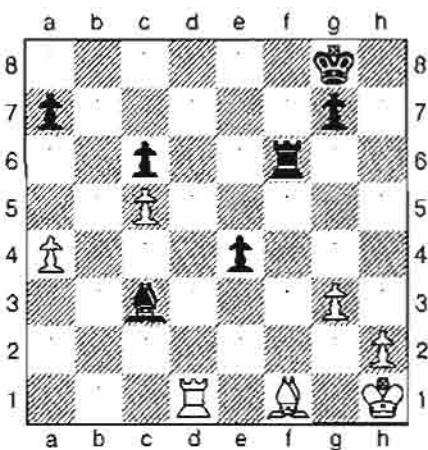
17. White to move



18. White to move

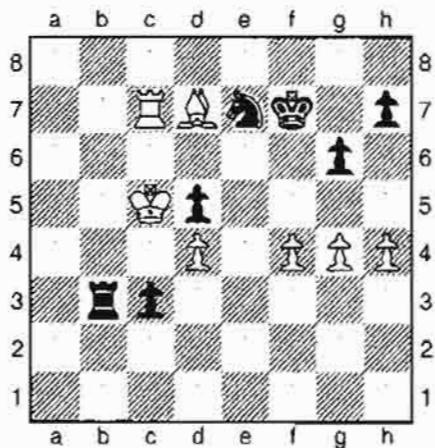


19. Black to move

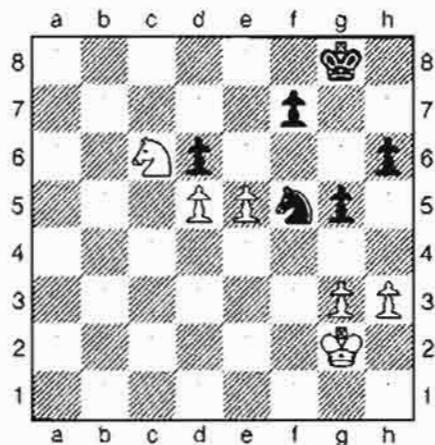


Pawn Promotion

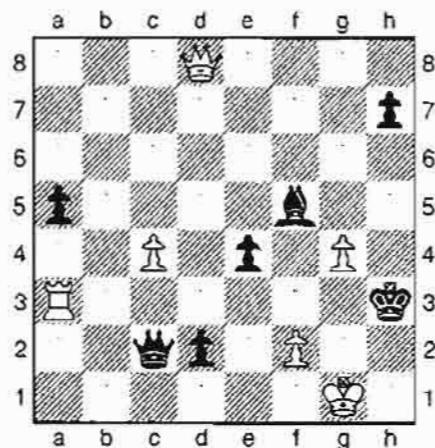
20. Black to move



21. White to move



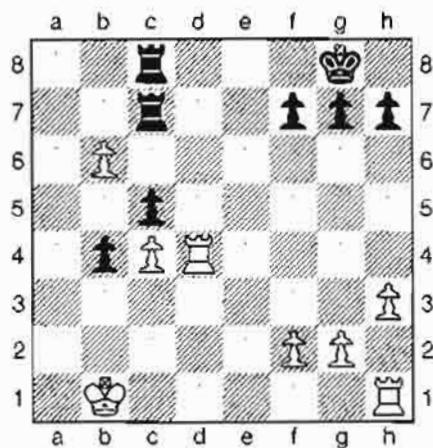
22. Black to move



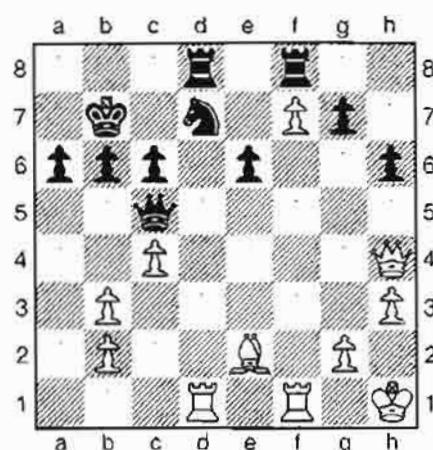
23. Black to move



24. White to move



25. White to move



Solutions

1. With a nice queen sacrifice, White forces the Black king to leave the corner, allowing the h-pawn to promote with checkmate: 1. Qg7+! Kxg7 2. h8Q#.
2. White needs to remove the guard of the a8 promotion square: 1. Rxc6! Kxc6 2. a8Q+.
3. Here White uses a discovery to help the e-pawn promote: 1. Qxd6! Qxd6 2. e7+ Kh7 3. e8Q.
4. With a nice decoy combination, Black mates in three moves by promoting the e-pawn: 1. ... Qd1+! 2. Rxd1 e2+ 3. Kh1 exd1Q#.
5. The simple 1. c7 does not lead to any gain after 1. ... Nc6. The impressive solution is: 1. Rxa7! Rxa7 2. c7.
6. A queen sacrifice leads to serious material gain for White: 1. Qxh7! Rxh7 2. gxh7 Ke7 3. h8Q.
7. After 1. e7 Black only has bad choices. If 1. ... Qxc3 White has an intermediate check with 2. exd8Q+. Also, the Black rook cannot keep protecting the queen (on d2) and the promotion square (e8) simultaneously.
8. A typical breakthrough example: 1. Qxc6! dxcc6 2. d7.
9. With the help of a pin, and removing the guard, White succeeds in promoting the e-pawn. 1. Rxf6! Rxf6 2. e8Q.
10. After the immediate pawn push 1. ... h2, White can defend by retreating the rook to the first rank. That is why the right move is to clog up the first rank with 1. ... Rc1! 2. Kxc1 and only now 2. ... h2.
11. Black threatens checkmate with ... Qf6-f1. But it is White's turn: 1. Qxf7! Qxf7 2. c7.
12. If Black's rook were not on d8, White could promote the d-pawn with a discovered check. So White needs to deflect the rook: 1. Ra8! Rxa8 2. d8Q+.
13. With a rook sacrifice, Black can promote the b3 pawn: 1. ... Rc1+! 2. Rxc1 Rxc1+ 3. Kxc1 bxa2.
14. White gives up the rook, but promotes the c6 pawn: 1. Rd8+! Kxd8 2. cxb7.
15. First an intermediate check with 1. Qg8+ Kb7 and now a breakthrough combination: 2. Qxe6! dxec6 3. d7.
16. White's pieces are all on the kingside. After a nice simplifying combination, the White king ends up too far away to catch Black's queenside pawns. 1. ... Qxf2+! 2. Qxf2 Rxf2+ 3. Kxf2 b3 4. axb3 a3! (but not 4. ... axb3? 5. Ne4 b2 6. Nc3) 5. Ne4 a2.

17. The goal is to lure the Black king out of g8: 1. Bxh7+! Rxh7 2. Rxh7 Kxh7 3. g8Q+.
18. White forces checkmate in four moves: 1. Qxa8+! Kxa8 2. b7+ Kb8 3. Re8+ Ka7 4. Ra8# or 2. ... Ka7 3. b8Q+ Ka6 4. Qb7#.
19. Endgames with opposite-color bishops often end as draws. Here Black has a nice "petite" combination to win: 1. ... Rxf1+! 2. Rxf1 e3 3. Kg2 e2.
20. After 1. ... c2 White stops the pawn promotion with 2. Kd6. Black first deflects the White rook from the c-file: 1. ... Rb7! 2. Rxb7 c2.
21. A nice knight sacrifice: 1. Ne7+! Nxe7 2. exd6 Kf8 3. d7.
22. Black is in check, yet manages to win! 1. ... Qd3! 2. Rxd3+ exd3 or 2. Qxd3+ exd3 3. Ra1 Bxg4.
23. 1. ... c4!! This is one of the most amazing moves I have ever seen! 2. Rb4 (2. Re6 cxb2 3. Re1 c3 4. Rb1 c2; 2. Nxc4 c2) 2. ... a5 3. Nxc4 (3. Rxc4 cxb2) 3. ... c2. This is the only solution to win the game!
24. After 1. bxc7 cxd4 the c7 pawn is lost. Here is the right sequence: 1. Rd8+! Rxd8 2. bxc7 Rc8 3. Rd1 Rxc7 4. Rd8#. Black suffered from a back-rank problem.
25. After queen and rook sacrifices, White comes out ahead: 1. Qxd8! Rxd8 2. Rxd7+! Rxd7 3. f8Q.

11

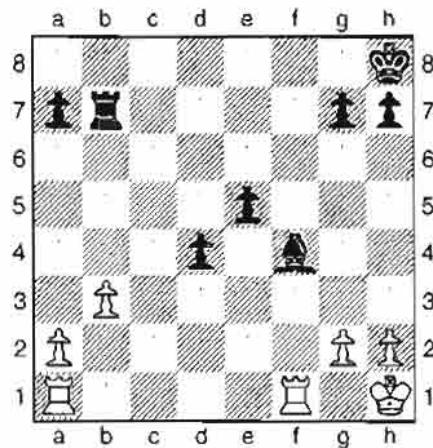
THE BACK-RANK PROBLEM

The back-rank problem occurs when a king is in danger of being checkmated on the eighth rank (for Black) or the first rank (for White) because:

- a) in one direction the king's escape is barred by the edge of the board;
- b) its escape in the other direction is usually blocked by its own pieces.

We also can use the same term for situations where a king is imprisoned on the a- or h-file (sometimes called "corridor" mates).

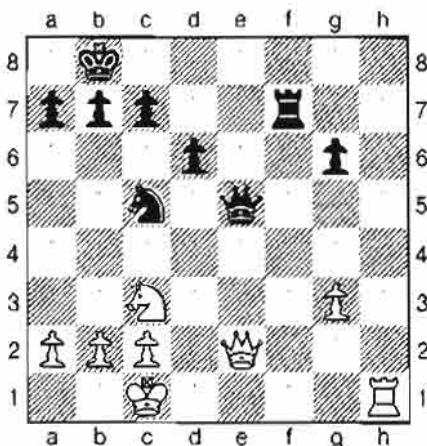
Here are a few basic examples. In some positions, one side can force checkmate within a couple of moves. In others, the opponent can either give up a piece (or pieces) or allow the checkmate.



In this position, White has only a minimal material advantage but can significantly increase it with the right move. 1. g3! Now the Black

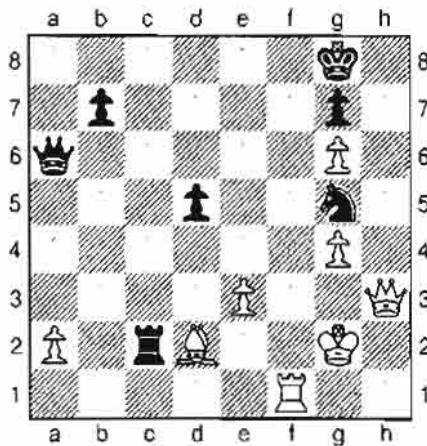
bishop is attacked. When the bishop moves, for example 1. ... $Bg5$, then the f-file is cleared and White mates with 2. $Rf8\#$. If the bishop stays put, White simply takes it.

In the next example, the Black queen stops the immediate back-rank checkmate.



So White's first task is to get rid of the guard by trading queens with 1. $Qxe5$ $dxe5$ and then 2. $Rh8+$ and Black cannot avoid checkmate.

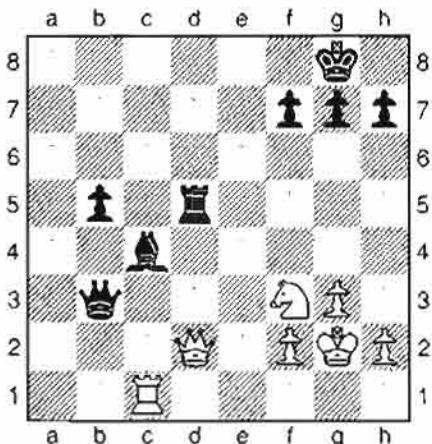
In the next position, White needs to find a pretty sacrifice in order to achieve the goal of creating a back-rank mate.



White forces mate in two with 1. $Qh8+!$ $Kxh8$ 2. $Rf8\#$.

In the next example, White uses an unusual pin:

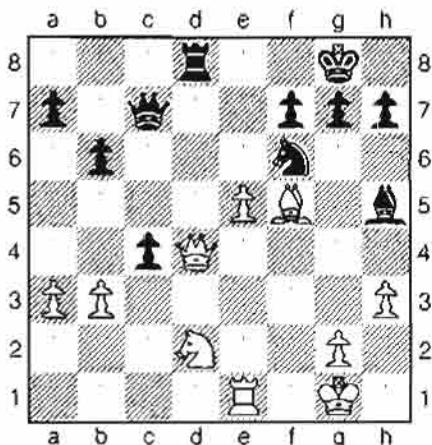
The Back-Rank Problem



After 1. Qxd5! Black cannot recapture with 1. ... Bxd5 because the bishop is pinned: 2. Rc8# on the back rank would follow.

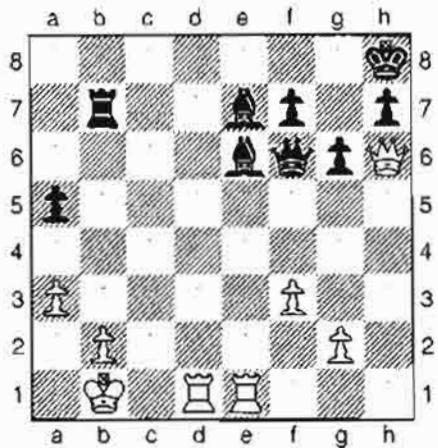
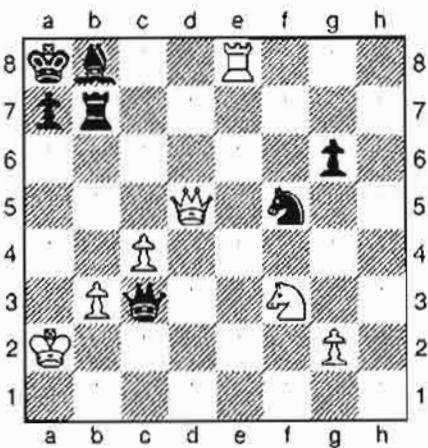
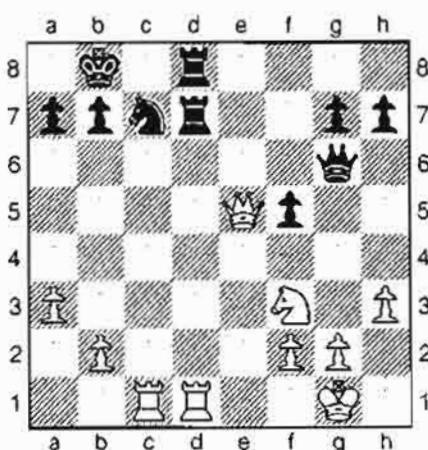
Susan's Corner

Susan Polgar—Yudasin Munich, 1991



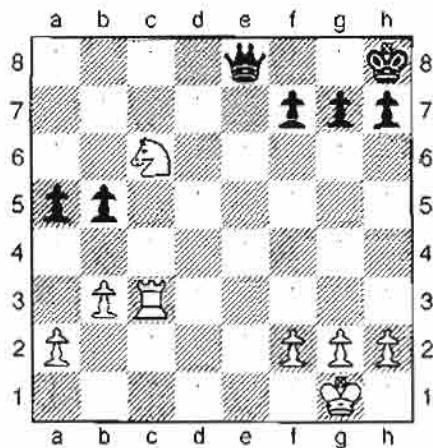
It seems White has to move the queen. But that is not the only choice. 25. exf6! The White queen cannot be taken because of the weakness of the back rank. The game continued 25. ... gxf6 26. Qxf6 c3 27. Ne4 c2 28. Qh6 Bg6 29. Nf6+ Kh8 30. Ne8 1–0. Mate cannot be avoided.

Now let's practice this motif with the following 25 examples.

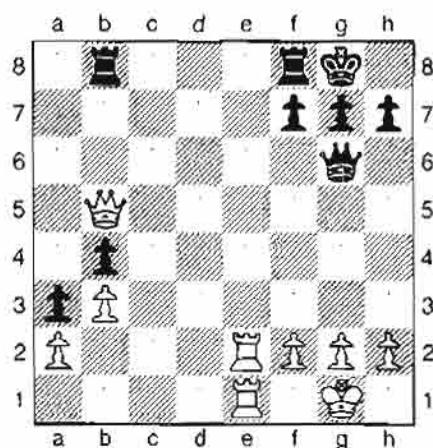
**1. White to move****2. White to move****3. White to move**

The Back-Rank Problem

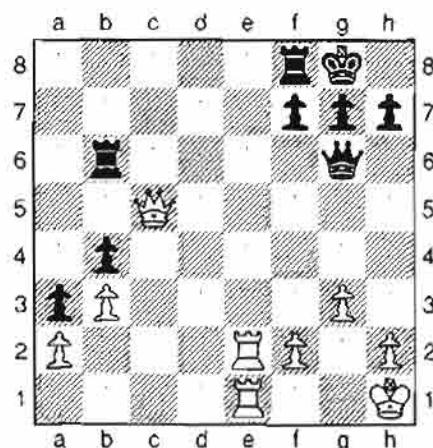
4. White to move



5. White to move



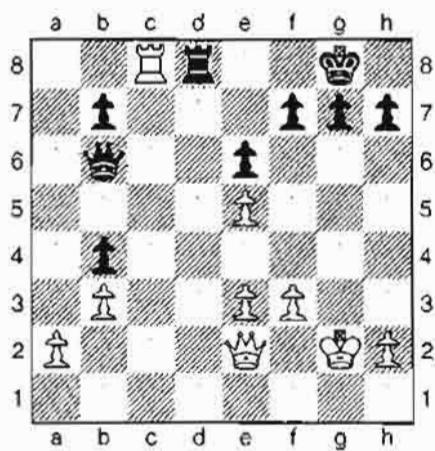
6. White to move



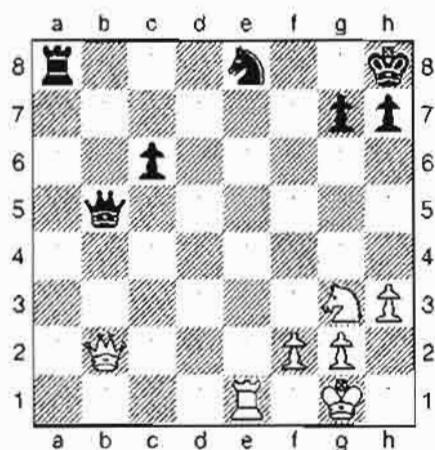
7. Black to move



8. White to move

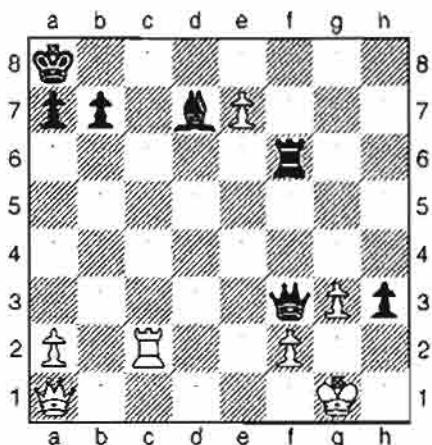


9. White to move

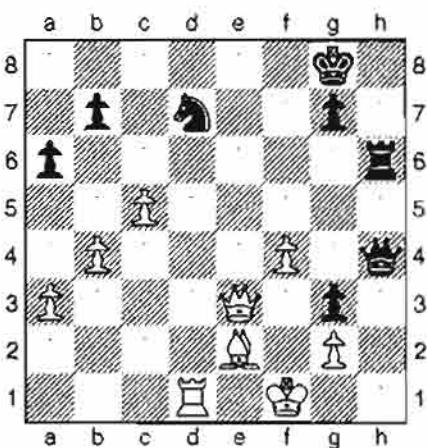


The Back-Rank Problem

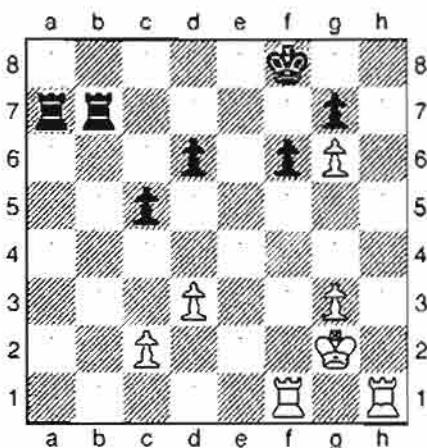
10. White to move



11. Black to move



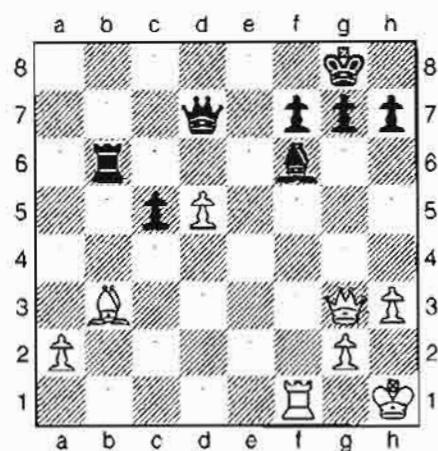
12. White to move



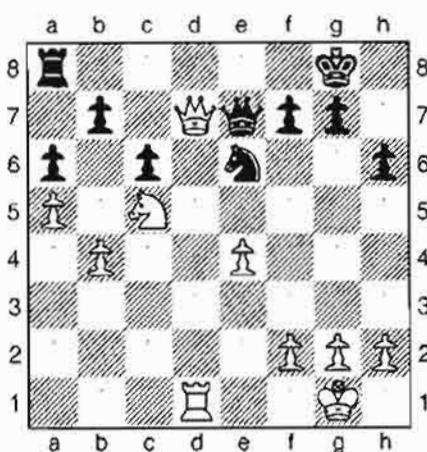
13. Black to move



14. White to move

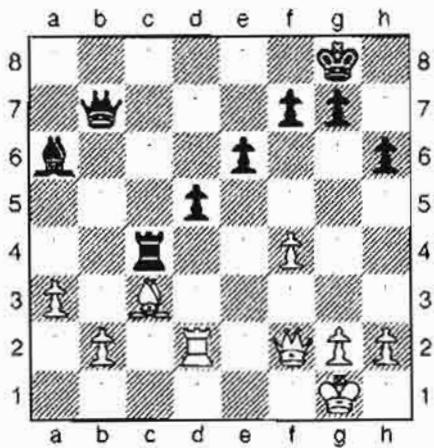


15. Black to move

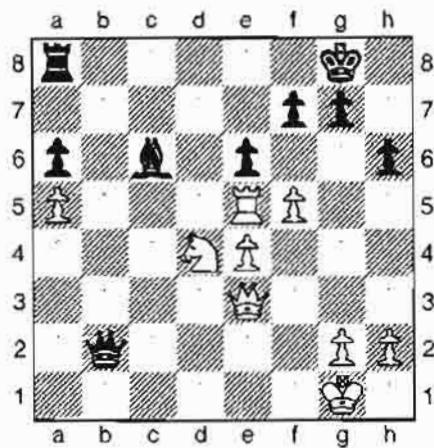


The Back-Rank Problem

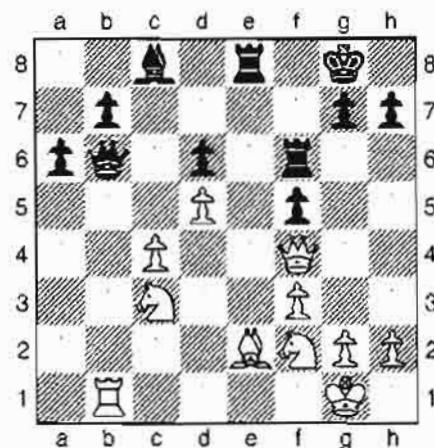
16. Black to move



17. Black to move



18. Black to move



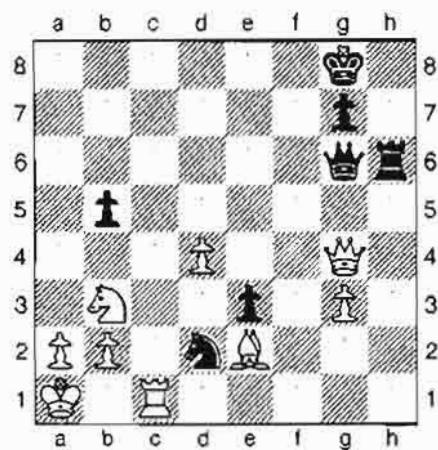
CHESS TACTICS FOR CHAMPIONS



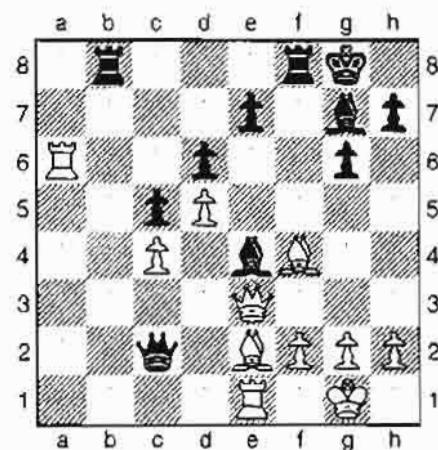
19. White to move



20. Black to move

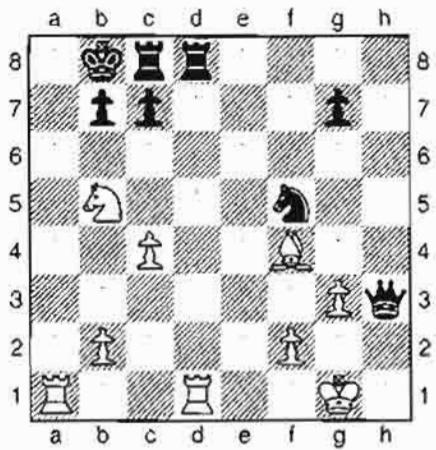


21. Black to move

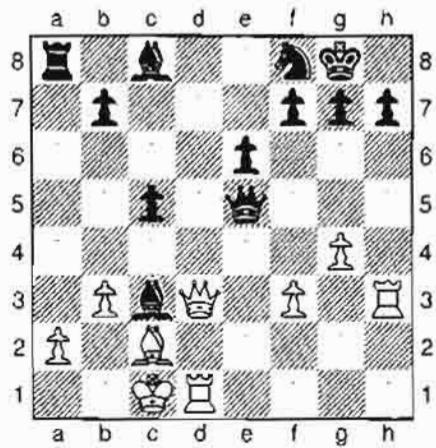


The Back-Rank Problem

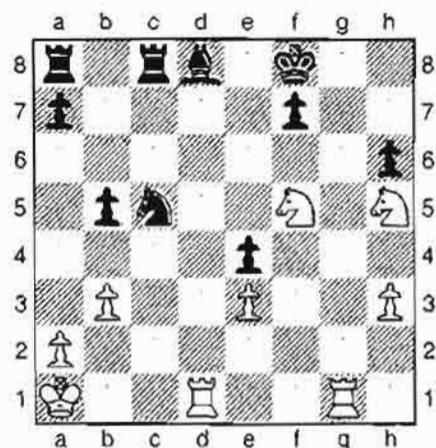
22. White to move



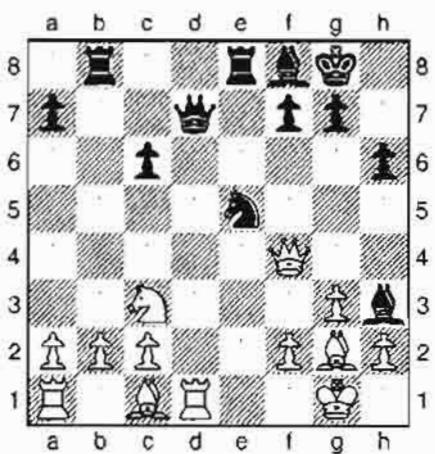
23. White to move



24. White to move



25. Black to move



Solutions

1. White needs to deflect Black's bishop from the f8 square. 1. Rd8+! Bxd8 2. Qf8#.
2. White forces mate in two: 1. Rxb8+! Kxb8 2. Qd8#.
3. Starting with a nice queen sacrifice, White mates in three: 1. Qxc7+! Rxc7 2. Rxd8+ Rc8 3. Rxc8#.
4. A quiet move by White and Black cannot avoid losing the queen or getting mated on the back rank. 1. Ne7! Qxe7 2. Rc8+. After 1. ... g6 2. Rc8 pins the Black queen.
5. White wins a rook or checkmates. 1. Qxb8! Rxb8 2. Re8+ Rxe8 3. Rxe8#.
6. White sacrifices the queen and checkmates in just two moves. 1. Qxf8+! Kxf8 2. Re8#. On the other hand, 1. Re8 does not work because Black can trade queens with 1. ... Qc6+.
7. Black gives up the rook on the d-file to open the e-file! 1. ... Rd1+! 2. Nxd1 Re1#.
8. After 1. Qb5! Black either has to give up the queen or allow a back-rank mate. 1. ... Qxb5 2. Rxd8+.
9. White makes a pretty double attack with: 1. Qa3!. Now Black's rook is under attack and also there is a threat of 2. Qf8#. After 1. ... Rxa3 the game ends with 2. Rxe8#.
10. Here White needs to remove the guard of the c8 square. 1. e8Q+! Bxe8 2. Rc8#.
11. After 1. ... Qh1+ White can defend by blocking the check with 2. Qg1. The correct solution is: 1. ... Qxf4+! 2. Qxf4 Rh1#.
12. With the quiet 1. Re1, White stops the Black king from running away, and threatens 2. Rh8#. After 1. ... Kg8 2. Re8# ends the game.
13. Black has to watch out, as after 1. ... Qxd6? White captures 2. Qxc8#. But with a surprising quite move, 1. ... Re8!, exploiting White's back-rank problem, Black wins a piece. 2. h3 Qxd6 or 2. Qxd7 Re1#.
14. Using a pin on the g-file, White deflects Black's rook. 1. Rxf6! Rxf6 2. Qb8+ and checkmate on the following move.
15. White offers to trade queens, but Black can ignore this by 1. ... Rd8! as after 2. Qxe7 comes Rxd1#.
16. Black wins a piece thanks to White's lack of defense on the back rank. 1. ... Rxc3! 2. bxc3 Qb1+.
17. Black's bishop is under attack, but it doesn't have to be moved. 1. ... Rd8! 2. Nxc6 Rd1+ or 2. Nf3 Rd1+ 3. Ne1 Qxe5.

18. Surprisingly, Black does not have to move the queen: 1. ... Rxe2! and if 2. Rxb6 Re1#.
19. White forces a nice checkmate in three with: 1. Qxc8+! Kxc8 2. Ba6+ Kb8 3. Rd8#.
20. Black takes advantage of the weakness of the side of the board (the a-file) instead of the back rank. This is practically identical to the back-rank problem. 1. ... Qb1+! 2. Rxb1 Nxb3+ 3. axb3 Ra6#.
21. With two deflections, Black achieves the goal: 1. ... Rxf4! 2. Qxf4 Qxe2! 3. Rxe2 Rb1+.
22. White forces mate in four: 1. Bxc7+! Rxc7 2. Rxd8+ Rc8 3. Ra8+! Kxa8 4. Rxc8#.
23. White starts with a pretty queen sacrifice, throws in a rook, and mates in four moves: 1. Qxh7+! Nxh7 2. Rd8+ Nf8 3. Rh8+! Kxh8 4. Rxf8#.
24. After a nice exchange sacrifice, 1. Rxd8+! Rxd8, White is able to draw a mating net with 2. Nf6.
25. Black forces checkmate in four: 1. ... Qxd1+! 2. Nxd1 Nf3+! 3. Qxf3 Re1+ 4. Bf1 Rxf1#.

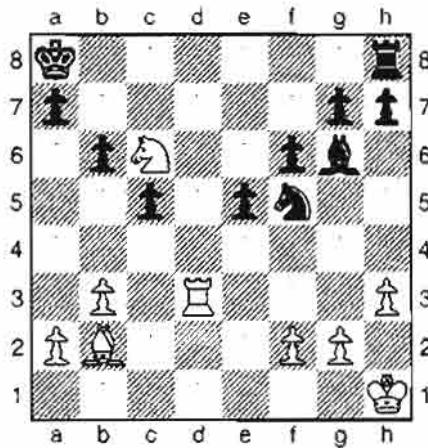
12

DESTROYING THE CASTLED KING'S DEFENSES

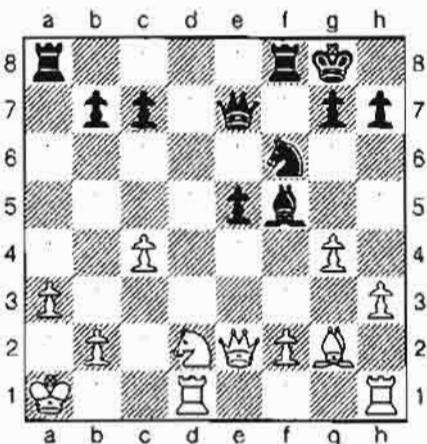
It is commonly known that it is dangerous to keep the king in the middle of the board, and I always recommend to my students that they castle early. In this chapter we shall see, however, that even after castling there may be dangers.

Let's walk through a few typical examples.

In our first position, White, by entering the seventh rank with the rook, puts Black face to face with an unstoppable checkmate.

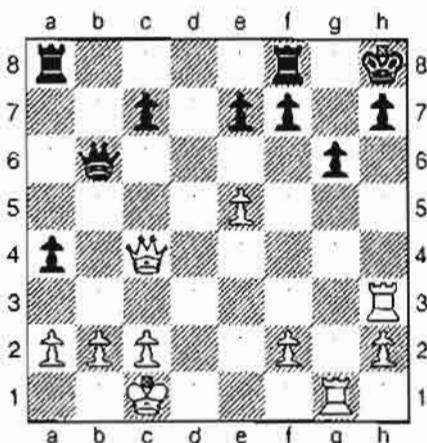


After 1. Rd7 Black is helpless against 2. Rxa7#.
In the next example, it is Black's turn to move.



With a rook sacrifice, Black forces mate in two. 1.... Rxa3+! 2. bxa3 Qxa3#.

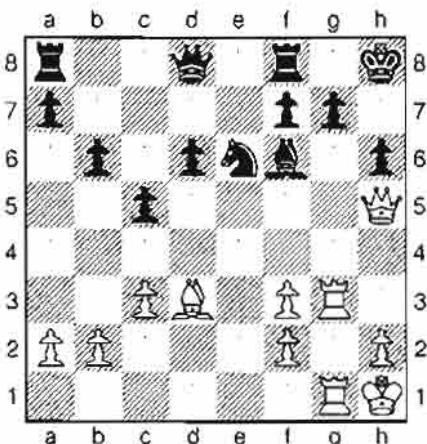
In the next position, the two sides have castled on opposite sides. As so often happens in such situations, it is a race to see who checkmates first.



White brings the queen closer to the opponent's king with 1. Qh4, forcing further weakening of the Black kingside. After 1.... h5 comes a pretty finish: 2. Qxh5+! gxh5 3.Rxh5#

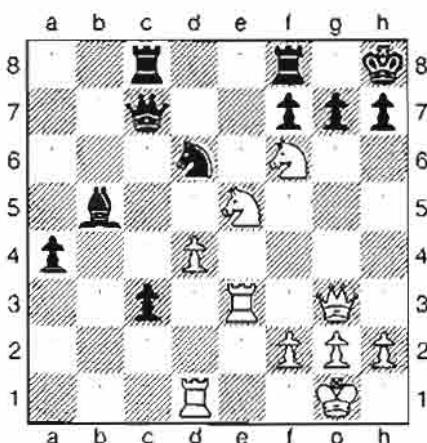
In the next case, White is ready for the sacrifice.

Destroying the Castled King's Defenses



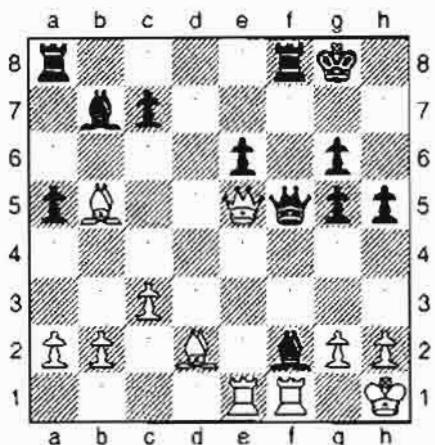
1. **Rxg7!** **Bxg7.** Or 1. ... **Nxg7** 2. **Qxh6+** **Kg8** 3. **Qh7#.** Now a quiet but killing move: 2. **Qf5 Ng5** 3. **Rxg5!** **Qxg5** 4. **Qh7#.**

In this example, White has a brilliant idea.



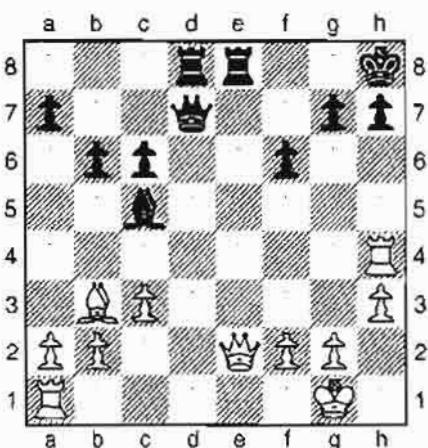
White has a beautiful queen sacrifice to force checkmate. 1. **Qg6!** **fxg6** 2. **Nxg6+!** **hxg6** 3. **Rh3#.**

Susan's Corner

J. Horvath—Susan Polgar
Hungary, 1981

Can you see how I ended the game quickly? After my next move, 22. ... Bxg2+!, my opponent resigned in view of 23. Kxg2 Qf3#.

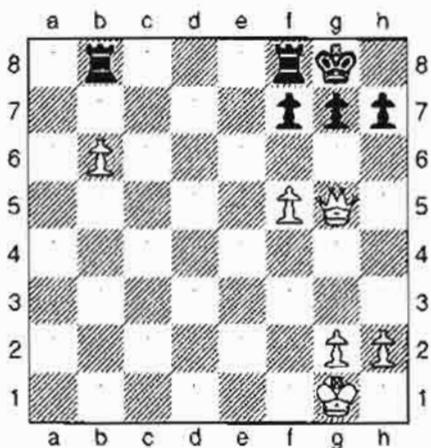
Here are 25 positions where you can practice attacking the castled king.

1. White to move

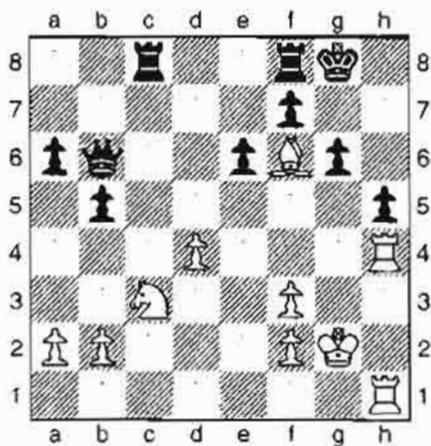


Destroying the Castled King's Defenses

2. White to move



3. White to move

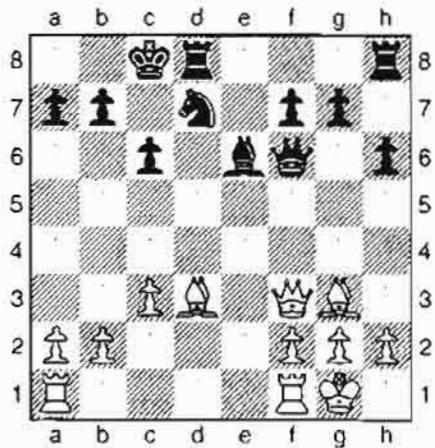


4. White to move

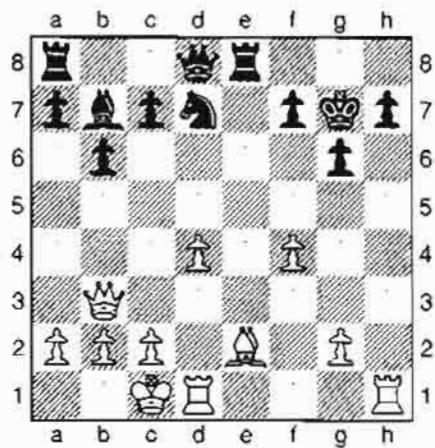




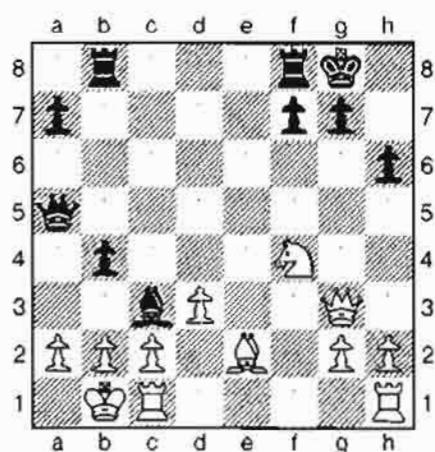
5. White to move



6. White to move

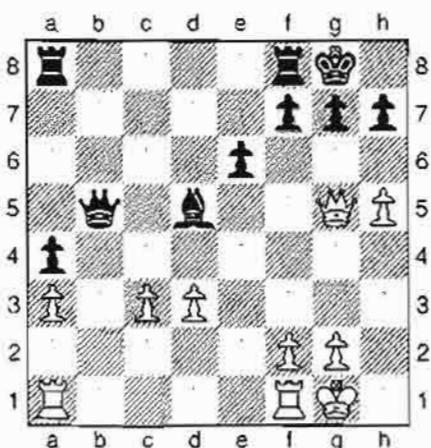


7. Black to move

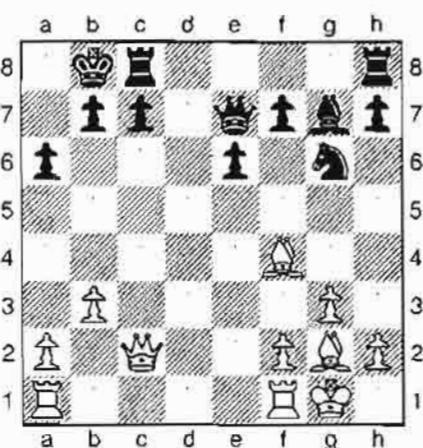


Destroying the Castled King's Defenses

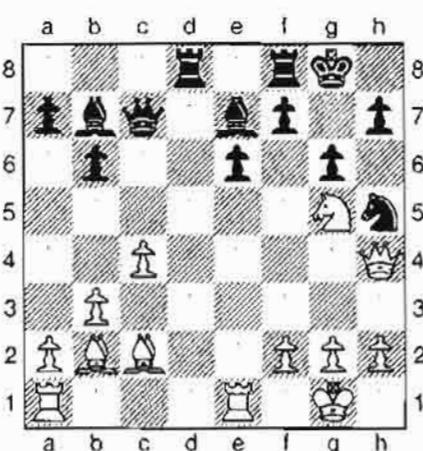
8. White to move



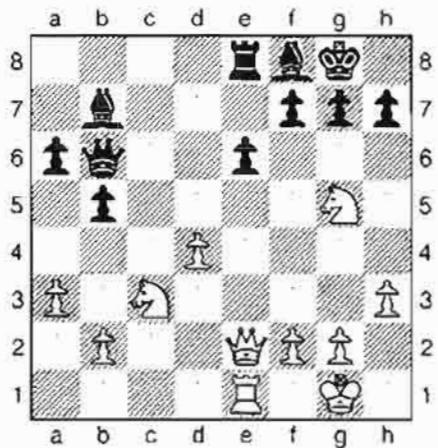
9. White to move



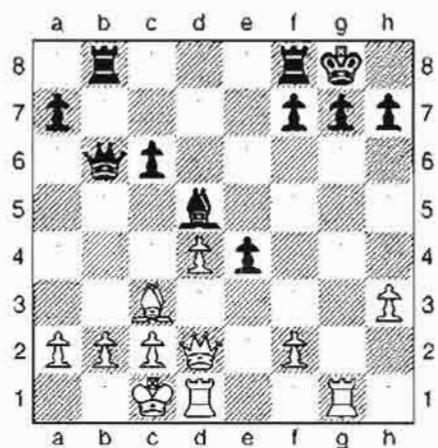
10. White to move



11. White to move



12. White to move



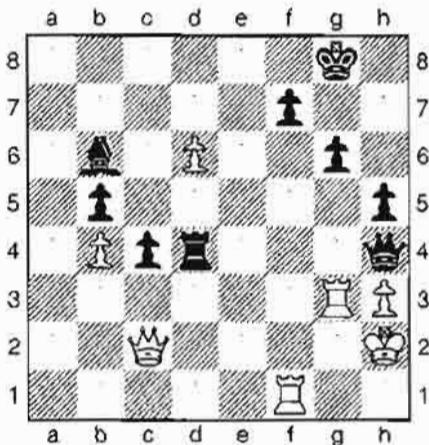
13. White to move



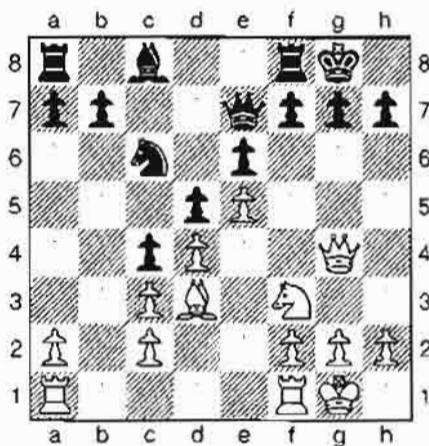


Destroying the Castled King's Defenses

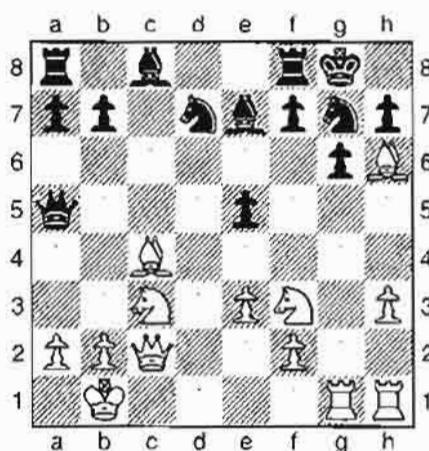
14. White to move



15. White to move

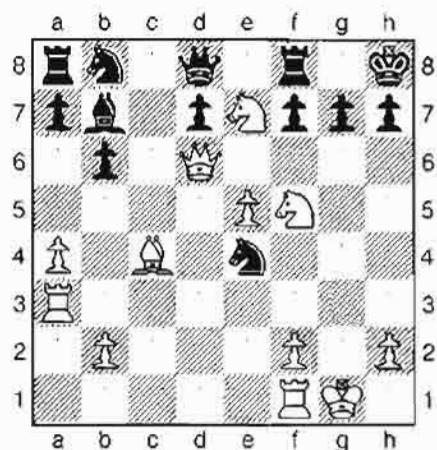


16. White to move

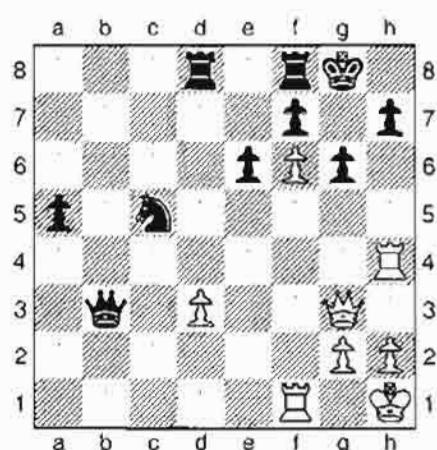




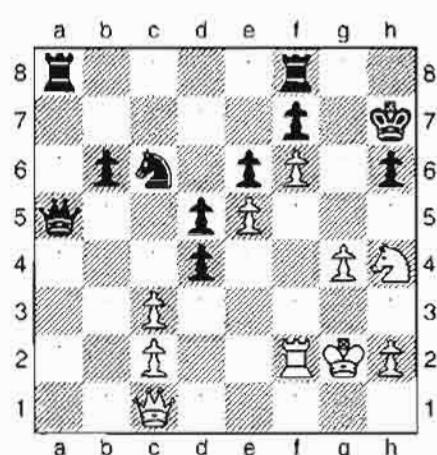
17. White to move



18. White to move

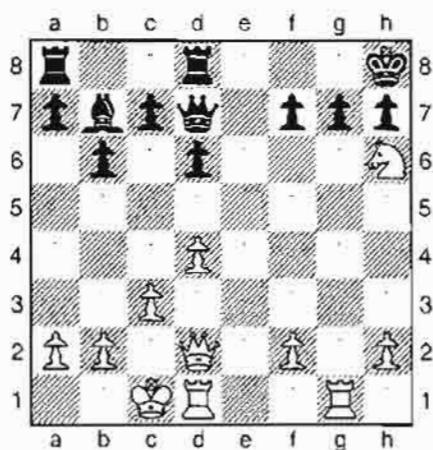


19. White to move

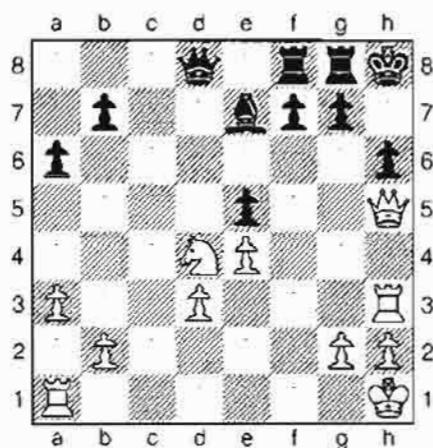


Destroying the Castled King's Defenses

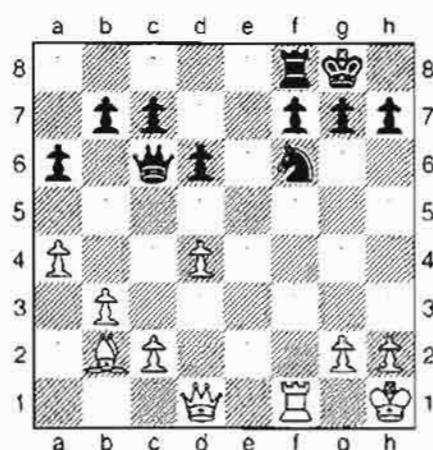
20. White to move

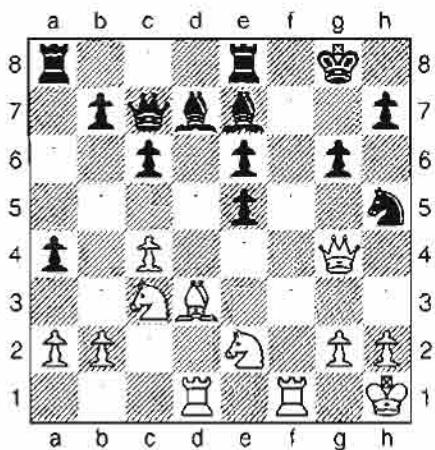
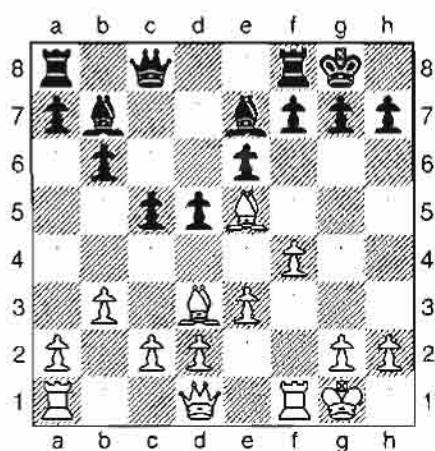
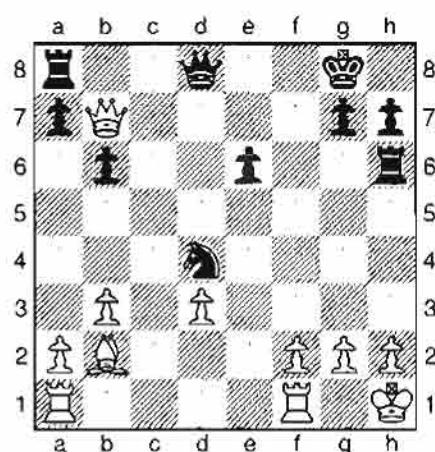


21. White to move



22. White to move



**23. White to move****24. White to move****25. Black to move**

Solutions

1. With a rook sacrifice White opens the h-file for a checkmate: 1. Rxh7+! Kxh7 2. Qh5#.
2. White uses a pin (on the g7 pawn) to force a weakness: 1. f6 g6, and then 2. Qh6 puts Black in front of an unsolvable problem—stopping 3. Qg7#.
3. White's bishop on f6 rules. If White could get a rook to h8 the game would be over. After a rook sacrifice White achieves that: 1. Rxh5! gxh5 2. Rxh5.
4. Here the idea is similar to the previous example; a nice cooperation between the White rook and bishop: 1. Qxa7+! Kxa7 2. axb6+ Kb8 3. Ra8#.
5. In this example, White checkmates in two moves demonstrating the optimal power of the pair of bishops: 1. Qxc6+! bxc6 2. Ba6#.
6. Black has an extra knight, but White has a winning combination: 1. Rxh7+! Kxh7 2. Qxf7+ Kh6 3. Rh1+.
7. Black wins with a very beautiful queen move: 1. ... Qa3!. If White captures the queen, 2. bxa3, Black checkmates with a discovered check, 2. ... bxa3#. If White captures the bishop, 2. bxc3, checkmate follows in two moves: 2. ... bxc3+ 3. Ka1 Qb2#.
8. If you remember position #2, finding the solution here should be easy: 1. h6 g6 2. Qf6.
9. Here a simple quiet move, 1.Qe4, decides the game because Black's c7 pawn is pinned.
10. This is a perfect demonstration of the successful collaboration of White's pair of bishops and knight: 1. Qxh5! gxh5 2. Bxh7#. Instead, Black could settle for "only" losing a knight after 1. ... Bxg5 2. Qxg5.
11. White wins by creating a double attack: 1. Qh5 h6 2. Qxf7+.
12. Checkmate in four! 1. Rxg7+! Kxg7 2. Qg5+ Kh8 3. Qf6+ Kg8 4. Rg1#.
13. Black threatens to mate in one, but with four forceful moves White gets there first: 1. Rxh7+! Kxh7 2. Qh5+ Kg8 3. Qf7+ Kh8 4. Qxg7#. Not accepting the sacrifice by 1. ... Kg8 ends the game even quicker: 2. Rhxg7+ Kh8 (or 2. ... Kf8 3. Raf7#) 3. Qh5#.
14. With a standard rook sacrifice White forces mate in three or four moves: 1. Rxg6+! fxg6 2. Qxg6+ Kh8 3. Rf8#. Black can only delay the end by one move by declining the sacrifice. 1. ... Kh8 2. Rh6+ Kg8 3. Qh7+ Kf8 4. Qxf7# or 1. ... Kf8 2. Rxf7+! Kxf7 (2. ... Ke8 3. Rg8+ Kxf7 4. Qg6#) 3. Qf5+ Ke8 4. Rg8#.

15. Here we see the most typical bishop sacrifice that arises in the French Defense. 1. $Bxh7+!$ $Kxh7$ (after 1. ... $Kh8$ 2. $Qh5$ Black is no better) 2. $Qh5+$ $Kg8$ 3. $Ng5$ (now White threatens mate with 4. $Qh7$) 3. ... $Rd8$ (making room for the king to run; the only other option was to give up the queen with 3. ... $Qxg5$ 4. $Qxg5$) 4. $Qh7+ Kf8$ and 5. $Qh8\#$.
16. Here White has a decisive winning combination, thanks to the pin along the a2-g8 diagonal. 1. $Rxg6!$ $hxg6$ (if 1. ... $Bf6$ 2. $Rhg1$ $hxg6$ 3. $Qxg6$) 2. $Qxg6$ $Bf6$ 3. $Bxg7$ $Bxg7$ and Black is helpless after 4. $Rg1$.
17. In this brilliant combination, White puts the queen under double attack: 1. $Qg6!!$, threatening 2. $Qg7\#$. After 1. ... $Rg8$ White offers the queen a second time with 2. $Qxh7+!$ $Kxh7$ followed by 3. $Rh3\#$. If 1. ... $hxg6$ 2. $Rh3\#$ or 1. ... $fxg6$ 2. $Nxg6+!$ $hxg6$ 3. $Rh3+$ followed by checkmate on the next move.
18. Seeing a White pawn on f6 is a hint to try to get the queen to g7 with mate. This is how White gets there: 1. $Rxh7!$ $Kxh7$ (if 1. ... $Qxd3$ 2. $Rg7+ Kh8$ 3. $Qh4\#$). Now White gains the important tempo (gain of time) by giving check: 2. $Qh4+ Kg8$ and 3. $Qh6$ $Qxd3$ (or any other Black response) 4. $Qg7\#$.
19. White has an obvious attack against the Black king. Though down a rook, White can build an amazing mating net just in time: 1. $Rf5!$ (threatening 2. $Qxh6+!!$ $Kxh6$ 3. $Rh5\#$) 1. ... $exf5$ 2. $Nxf5$ $Qxc3$ 3. $Qxh6+ Kg8$ 4. $Qg7\#$.
20. White's knight on h6 is hanging. If the knight moves away, Black will be safe. But White strikes immediately: 1. $Rxg7!$ $Kxg7$ 2. $Qg5+ Kh8$ 3. $Qf6\#$ or 2. ... $Kf8$ 3. $Qg8+ Ke7$ 4. $Qxf7\#$.
21. With a pretty queen sacrifice, White forces mate in three: 1. $Qxh6+!$ $gxh6$ 2. $Rxh6+ Kg7$ 3. $Nf5\#$.
22. Black is a pawn up. Unless White shows something immediate, White is in trouble. White can take advantage of the lack of coordination among the Black pieces. 1. $Rxf6!$ $gxf6$ 2. $Qg4+ Kh8$ and now an important discovery: 3. $d5!$ $Qxd5$ 4. $Bxf6\#$.
23. White destroys Black's defense on the kingside with: 1. $Bxg6!$ $hxg6$ 2. $Qxg6+ Ng7$ followed by 3. $Rf7 Bf8$ and now either 4. $Ne4$ or 4. $Rxd7$ leads to a winning position. 1. ... $Nf6$ does not help, as White responds with 2. $Rxf6!$ $Bxf6$ 3. $Bxe8+$ $Kh8$ 4. $Rxd7$.
24. This is the famous Lasker combination, where White sacrifices both bishops to open the g- and h-files in front of



Destroying the Castled King's Defenses



Black's king: 1. Bxh7+! Kxh7 (after 1. ... Kh8 2. Qh5 Black cannot escape with 2. ... f6 because of 3. Bg6+ Kg8 4. Qh7#) 2. Qh5+ Kg8 3. Bxg7! Kxg7 (or 3. ... f5 4. Be5 Rf6 5. Rf3) 4. Qg4+ Kh7 (4. ... Kf6 5.

Qg5#) and White brings the rook into the game with 5. Rf3, deciding the issue.

25. Black forces checkmate in three moves by opening the h-file. 1. ... Rxh2+! 2. Kxh2 Qh4+ 3. Kg1 Ne2#.

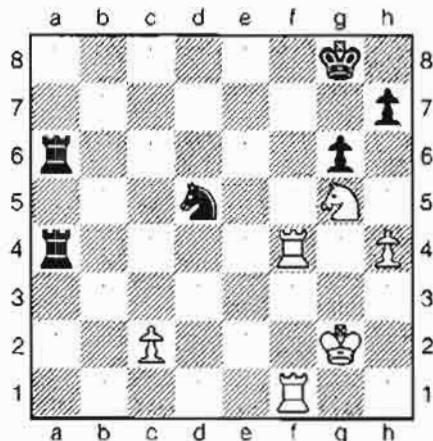
13

KING CHASE

The king is the most vulnerable piece in chess. As a rule, we usually try to hide the king in the corner for safety and only bring it back out in the endgame. Sometimes there are opportunities to exploit the lack of sufficient defense around the enemy king. In this chapter we'll see examples of how to chase a king to checkmate.

Kings can get in even more trouble if the queens are still on the board. On the defensive side, you should try as much as possible to avoid letting your king be chased, as the following positions will demonstrate.

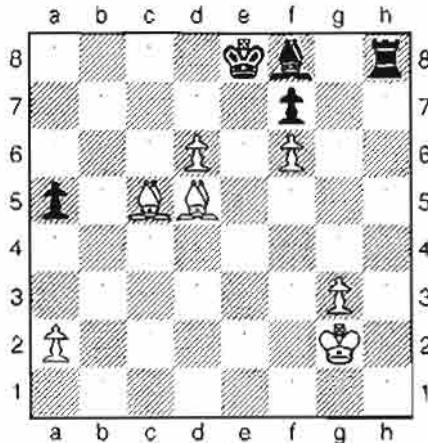
Here White has full control of the f-file and capitalizes on it.



The solution is 1. Rf8+ Kg7 2. R1f7+ Kh6 and 3. Rxh7#

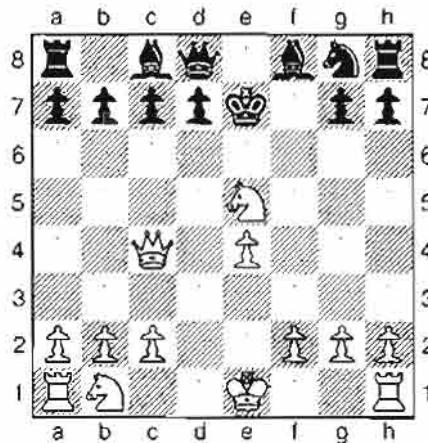
In the next endgame, material is balanced but the Black king is not safe.

King Chase



White quickly forces promotion of the d6 pawn: 1. Bc6+ Kd8 2. Bb6+ Kc8 and now 3. d7+ Kb8 4. d8Q#.

In the next position, White again chases the Black king toward the other side of the board.



Black is suffering because the king is stuck in the middle of the board. 1. Qf7+ Kd6 2. Nc4+ Kc5 3. Qd5+ Kb4 4. a3+ Ka4 5. Nc3#.

Here are two short games that end with king chases.

Greco—Unknown Europe, 1620

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 f6?

This is a common, yet inferior, move played by beginners to protect the pawn on e5.

3. Nxe5

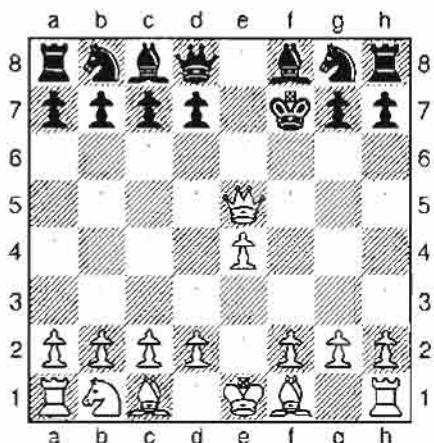
White sacrifices the knight to open the position in front of the Black king and gets ready for the chase.



3. ... fxe5 4. Qh5+ Ke7

After 4. ... g6 the White queen just captures the pawn on e5, forking the Black king and rook.

5. Qxe5+ Kf7



6. Bc4+ Kg6

A more stubborn defense is 6. ... d5, but White gets a winning position after 7. Bxd5+ Kg6 8. h4 h5 9. Bxb7! and if 9. ... Bxb7 10. Qf5+.

7. Qf5+ Kh6 11. d4+ discovered check. 8. ... g5 9. h4

Using the existing pin on the c1-h6 diagonal and also opening the h-file for the rook, Black is completely lost.

9. ... Kg7 10. Qf7+ Kh6 11. hxg5#.

In the next game, White uses the Smith-Morra Gambit of the Sicilian Defense.

Motwani—Rockwell Dundee, 1974

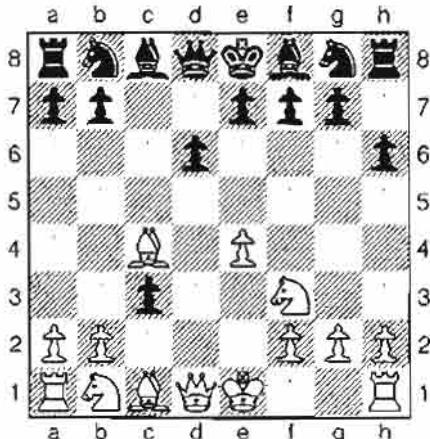
1. e4 c5 2. d4 cxd4 3. Nf3 d6 4. Bc4 h6

A waste of time.

5. c3 dxc3?

This is already a serious mistake.

King Chase



6. Bxf7+!

A pretty combination. It is not a good idea for Black to accept the sacrifice, as we shall see.

6. ... Kxf7

Better is 6. ... Kd7, but White has a clearly superior position anyway after the simple 7. Nxc3, as the Black king will never be able to castle.

7. Ne5+

Here comes the first of many checks exploiting the pin on Black's d6-pawn.

7. ... Kf6

After 7. ... dxe5 Black loses the queen by 8. Qxd8. If 7. ... Ke8 8. Qh5+, or 7. ... Ke6 leads to a king-chase as in the game by 8. Qd5+ Kf6 9. Qf7+ Kxe5 10. Bf4+ Kxe4 11. Nxc3+ Kd3 12. 0-0-0#.

8. Qf3+ Kxe5

Black wins another piece but the king goes more and more into White's territory.

9. Qf4+ Kd4

If 9. ... Ke6 the game ends with 10. Qf5#.

10. Be3+ Kd3

White mates after 10. ... Kc4 by 11. Na3+ Kb4 12. e5+ Ka5 13. b4+ Ka4 14. Qc4 Be6 15. Qb5+ Kxa3 16. Bc1#.

11. Na3

Preparing the participation of the rook on a1.

11. ... c2

If Black plays 11. ... cxb2 12. Rd1+ Kc3 13. Bd2+ Kd4 14. Bb4#.

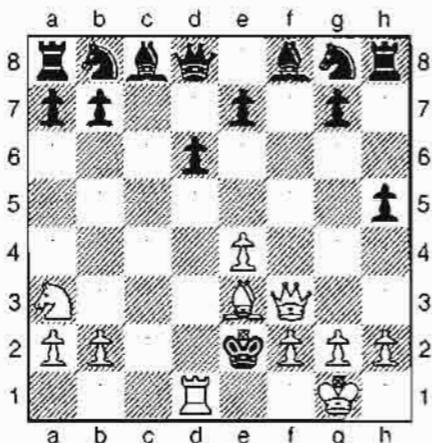
12. 0-0

White finally completes development. All of White's pieces are ready to attack Black's wandering king!

12. ... h5

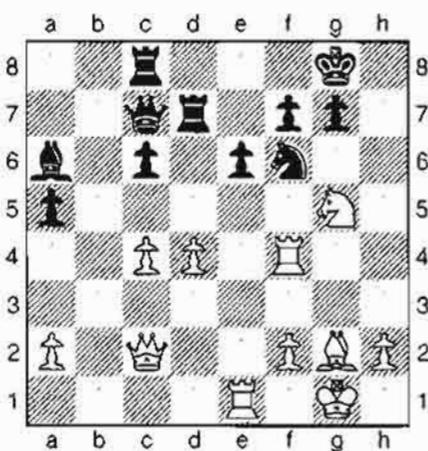
White's answer would be similar against other Black responses.

13. Rad1+ cxd1Q 14. Rxd1+ Ke2 15. Qf3#.



Susan's Corner

Susan Polgar—Voiska Budapest, 1992



This game is from the 1992 Women's World Rapid Championship, which I won. Here I found a nice combination to force the Black king out of safety.

30. Rxf6! gxf6 31. Qh7+ Kf8 32. Qh8+ Ke7

Now a second rook sacrifice!



King Chase



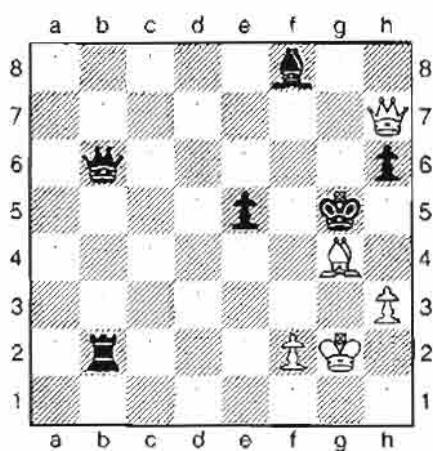
33. Rxe6+! fxe6 34. Qg7+ Ke8

Or 34. ... Kd6 35. Ne4#; or 34. ... Kd8 35. Qf8#.

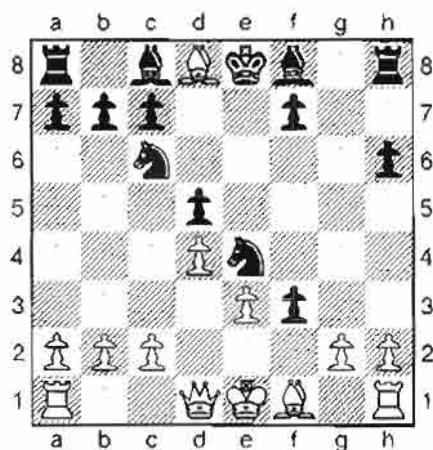
35. Qg8+ Ke7 36. Qf7+ and Black resigned, as checkmate is unavoidable on the next move.

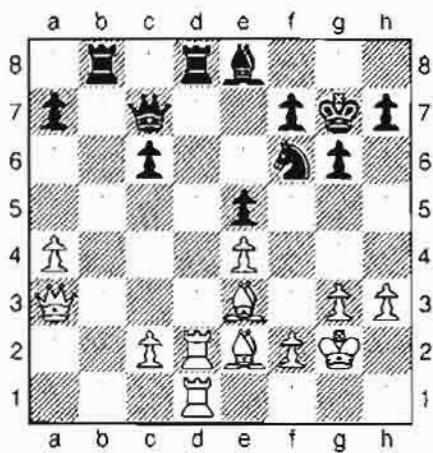
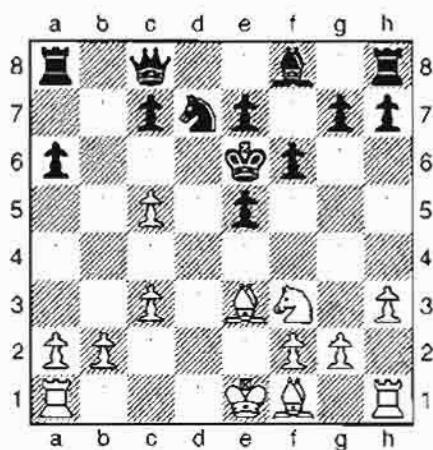
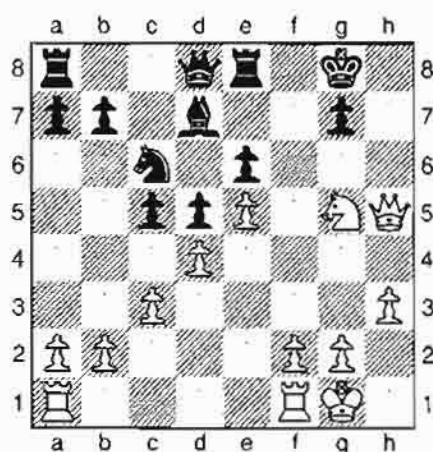
Now let's practice chasing the king!

1. White to move



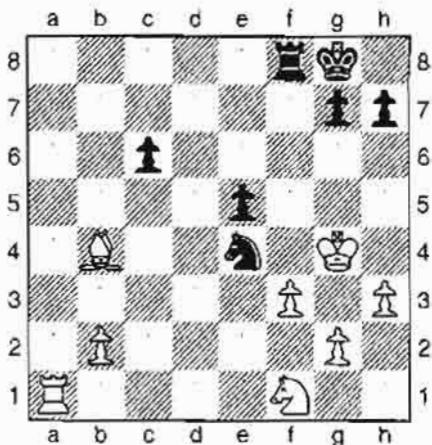
2. Black to move



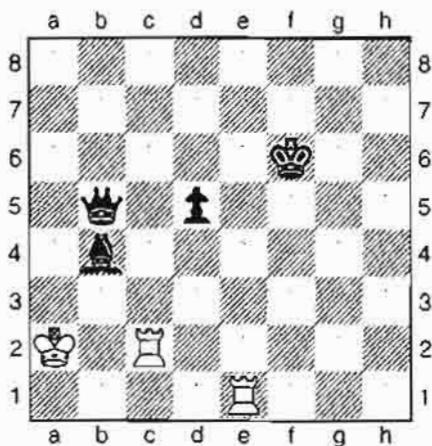
3. White to move**4. White to move****5. White to move**

King Chase

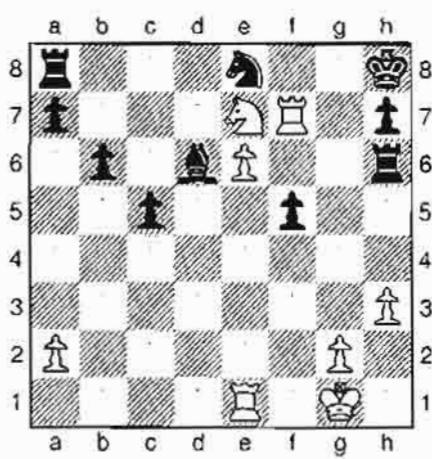
6. Black to move

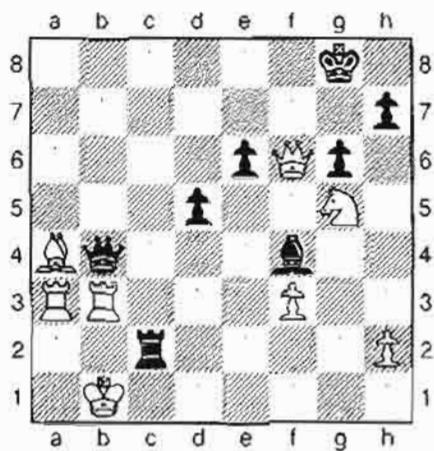
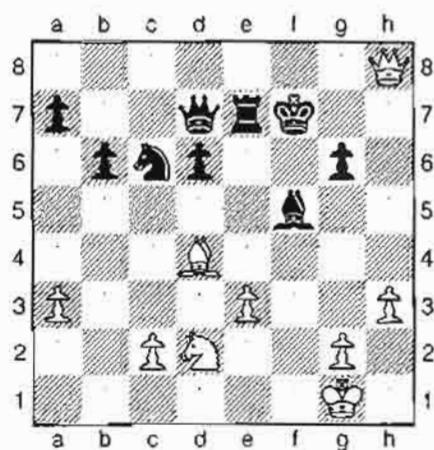
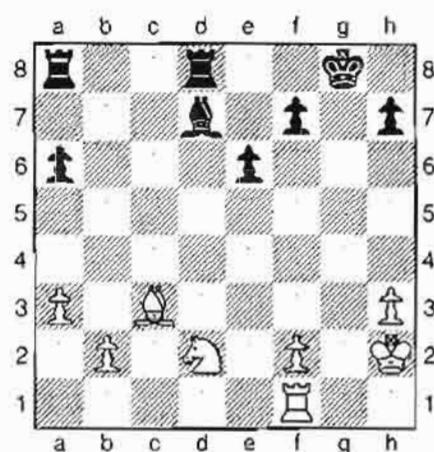


7. White to move



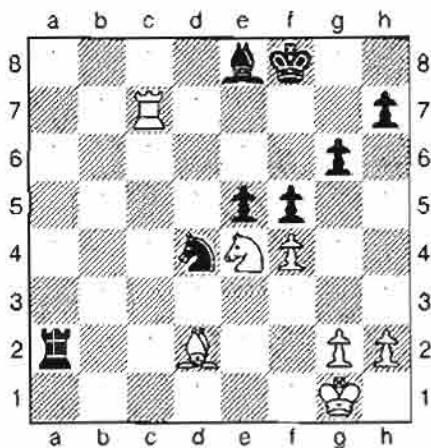
8. White to move



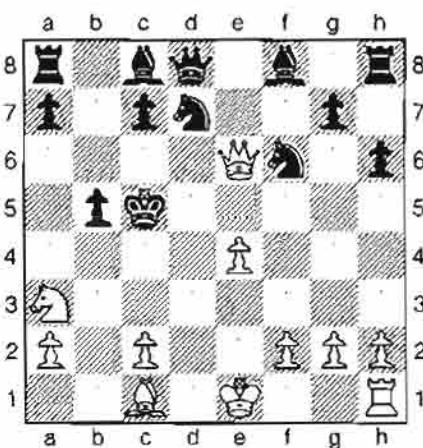
**9. Black to move****10. White to move****11. White to move**

King Chase

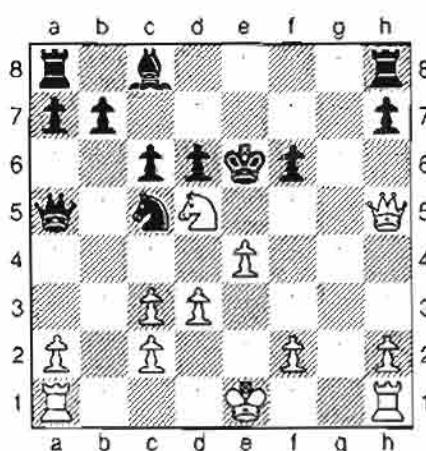
12. White to move

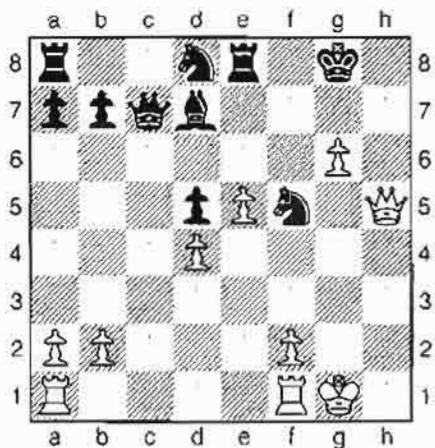
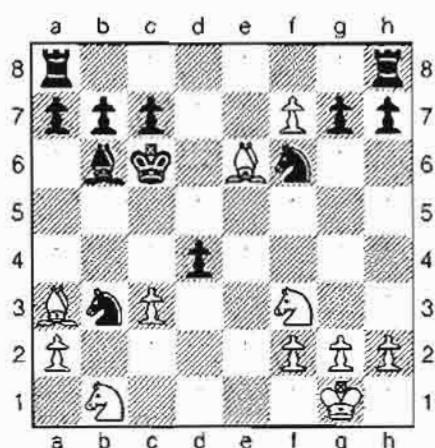
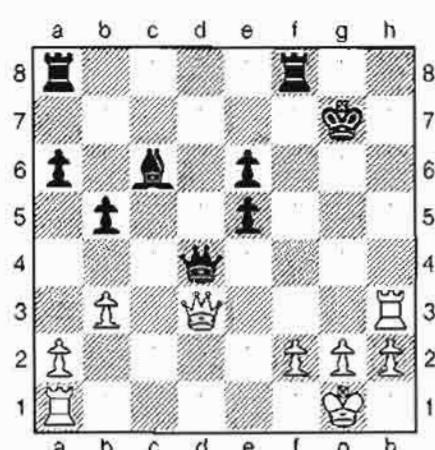


13. White to move



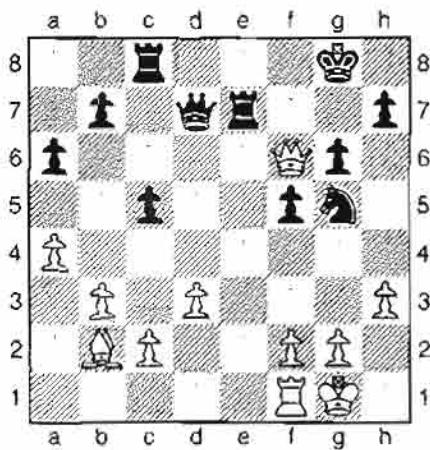
14. White to move



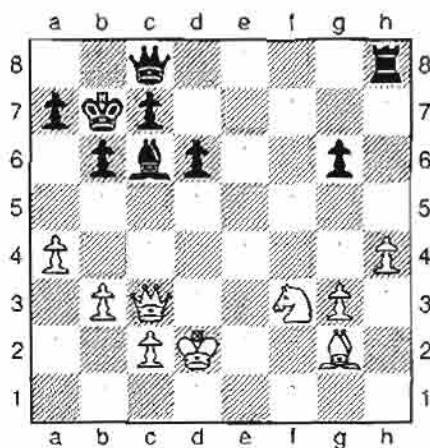
**15. White to move****16. White to move****17. White to move**

King Chase

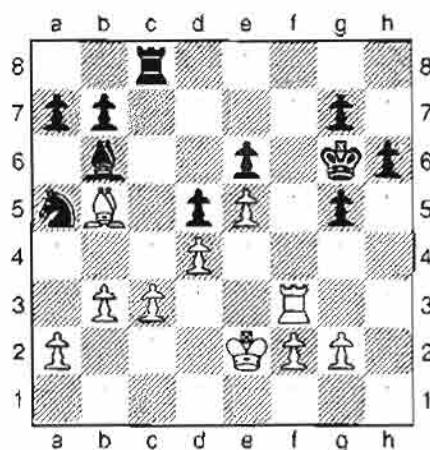
18. White to move

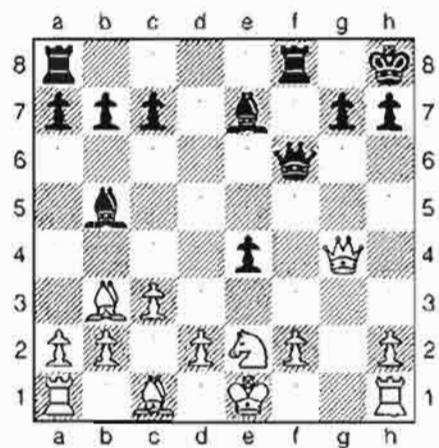
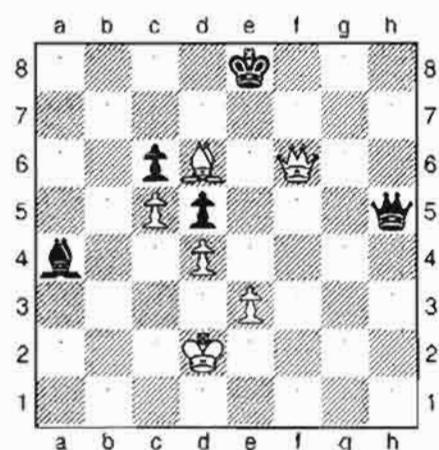


19. White to move



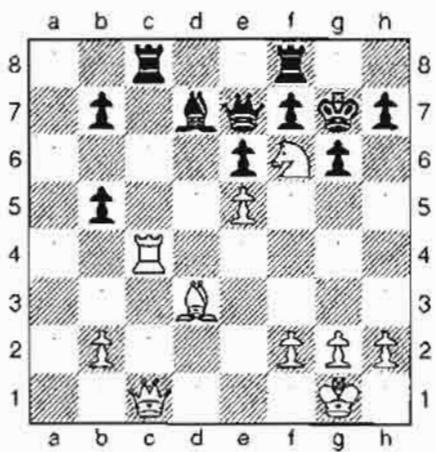
20. White to move



21. Black to move**22. Black to move****23. Black to move**

King Chase

24. White to move



25. White to move



Solutions

1. The Black king is already out in the “wild”; only two more checks and the chase is over: 1. Qf5+ Kh4 2. Qh5#.
2. Black has just sacrificed the queen to set up a forced mate in three: 1. ... f2+ 2. Ke2 Bg4+ 3. Kd3 Nb4#.
3. Here White needs to sacrifice a bishop to lure Black’s king out of its safe spot. 1. Bh6+! Kxh6 2. Qf8+ Kg5 3. h4#. Also 1. ... Kh8 results in checkmate after 2. Qf8+ Ng8 3. Qg7#.
4. White has given up the queen to achieve this position. Now, after two checks, the third one ends the game: 1. Bc4+ Kf5 2. g4+ Kg6 (or 2. ... Ke4 3. Nd2#) 3. Nh4#.
5. Black has an extra bishop but cannot avoid getting checkmated: 1. Qh7+ Kf8 2. Qh8+ Ke7 3. Qxg7#.
6. The Black knight on e4 does not allow the White king to retreat via g3. So, after 1. ... Rf4+ the only response is 2. Kh5 and then checkmate in two follows with 2. ... g6+ 3. Kh6 Rh4#.
7. This is the famous “ladder mate” when the two rooks work together perfectly: 1. Rf2+ Kg5 2. Rg1+ Kh4 3. Rh2#.
8. Black is a bishop and a pawn ahead, but White can force checkmate in three by 1. Rf8+ Kg7 2. Rg8+ Kf6 and 3. Nd5#.
9. Black’s rook on c2 is under attack, but there’s no need to worry: 1. ... Qe1+! 2. Kxc2 Qc1+ 3. Kd3 Qd2#.
10. Black’s extra rook does not help save the game. 1. Qg7+ Ke6 (or 1. ... Ke8 2. Qg8#) 2. Qf6+ Kd5 and a pawn mates with 3. c4#.
11. After two simple checks, 1. Rg1+ Kf8 2. Bb4+ Ke8, the third one ends the game: 3. Rg8#.
12. We see here the optimal harmony among the White pieces, resulting in checkmate: 1. Bb4+ Kg8 2. Nf6+ Kh8 3. Rxh7#.
13. When a king wanders around in the middle of the board with queens still in play, the result is often like this: 1. Be3+ Kb4 2. Qb3+ Ka5 3. Qxb5#.
14. After the obvious checks, Black can only choose whether to get mated by White’s knight or queen: 1. Qf5+ Kf7 2. Qxf6+ and either 2. ... Kg8 3. Ne7# or 2. ... Ke8 3. Qe7#.
15. Black has three extra pieces, yet White forces checkmate in three: 1. Qh7+ Kf8 2. Qh8+ Ke7 3. Qf6#.
16. White continues the chase with 1. Ne5+ Kb5 2. Bc4+ Ka5 3. Bb4+ Ka4 4. axb3#.
17. A good demonstration of the power of a queen and rook

King Chase

- working together: 1. Qh7+ Kf6 2. Rh6+ Kg5 3. Qg6+ Kf4 4. Rh4#.
18. White can capture Black's knight on g5, but there is a much better choice: 1. Qh8+ Kf7 2. Qg7+ Ke6 (2. ... Ke8 3. Qg8#) 3. Qf6+ Kd5 4. c4#.
19. White wins by a pretty queen sacrifice based on a double check and chasing Black's king right to the middle of the board: 1. Qxc6+! Kxc6 2. Ne5+ Kc5 3. Nd3+ Kd4 4. c3#.
20. White just needs to keep chasing Black's king until... 1. Bd3+ Kh5 2. Rh3+ Kg4 3. f3+ Kf4, and the final check comes: 4. g3#.
21. The two Black rooks will not leave White's king in peace: 1. ... R8a2+ 2. Kc3 Rc1+ 3. Kd4 (or 3. Kb4 c5#) 3. ... Rd2+ 4. Bd3 Rxd3#.
22. After the natural 1. ... Qxf2+ 2. Kd1 Black has a pretty queen sacrifice to force checkmate in three: 2. ... Qf1+! 3. Rxf1 Rxf1+ 4. Kc2 Bd3#.
23. White threatens checkmate in one, but it is Black's turn to start checking: 1. ... Qd1+ 2. Kc3 Qc2+ 3. Kb4 Qb3+ 4. Ka5 Qb5#.
24. By sacrificing the queen White forces checkmate in five moves or fewer: 1. Qh6+! Kxh6 2. Rh4+ Kg5 and now a rook sacrifice: 3. f4+ Kxh4 4. g3+ Kh3 5. Bf1#.
25. After a few simple checks, 1. Rf8+ Kb7 2. Rb8+ Ka6 3. b5+ cxb5 4. axb5+ Ka5, White mates with 5. Be1#.

14

MIXED CHECKMATES IN TWO MOVES

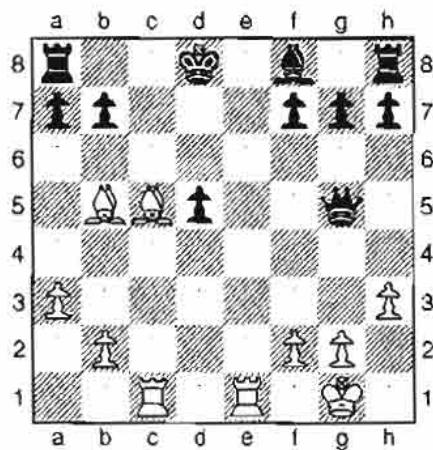
In this chapter, you can practice solving puzzles in which the task is to checkmate in two moves. In some cases, you check first and then checkmate on the second move. In others, you need to sacrifice something on the first move in order to set up the mate. In various cases, you need to make a quiet move to threaten an unstoppable mate. Here are 25 problems for you to enjoy.

1. White to move

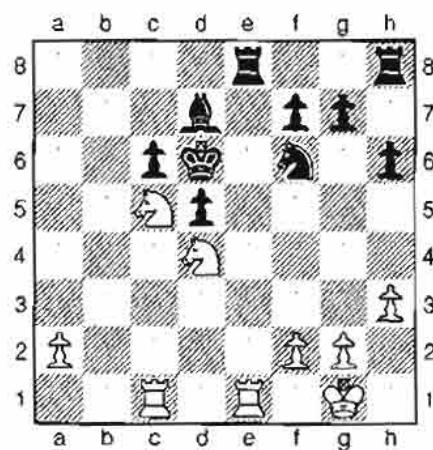


Mixed Checkmates in Two Moves

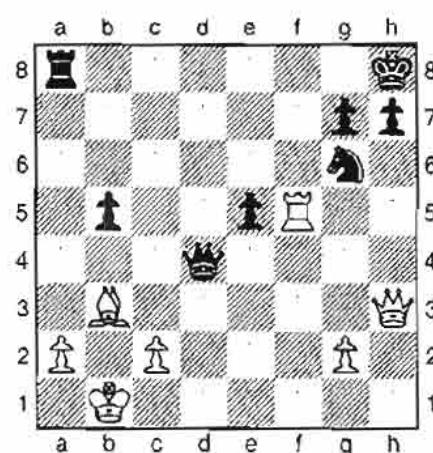
2. White to move

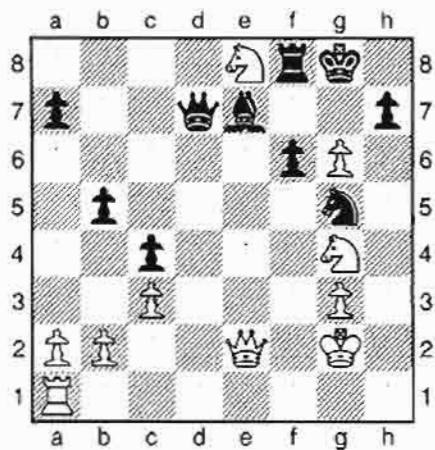
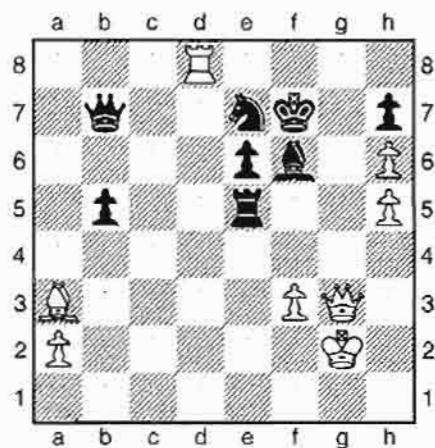
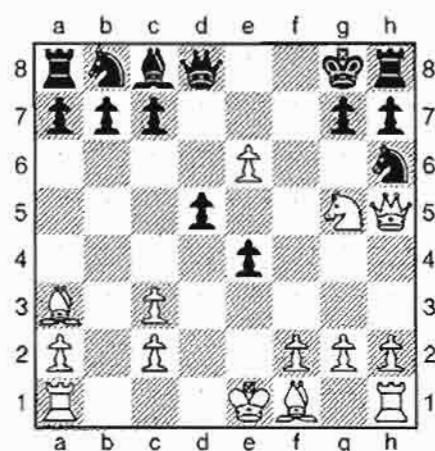


3. White to move



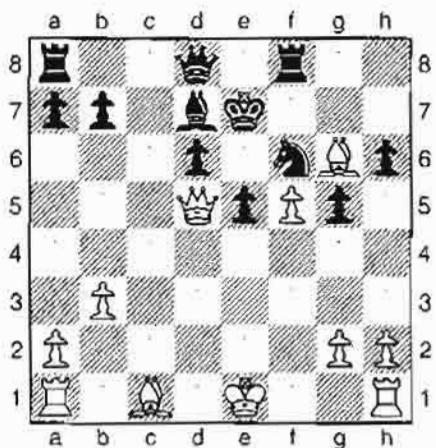
4. White to move



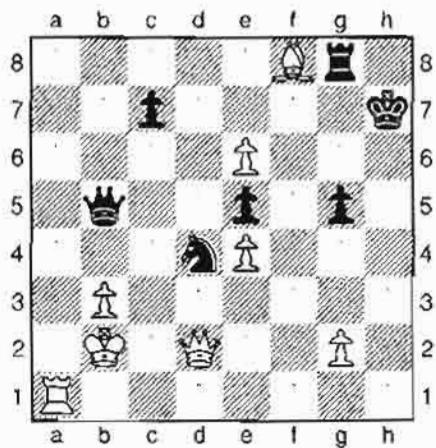
**5. White to move****6. White to move****7. White to move**

Mixed Checkmates in Two Moves

8. White to move



9. White to move



10. White to move



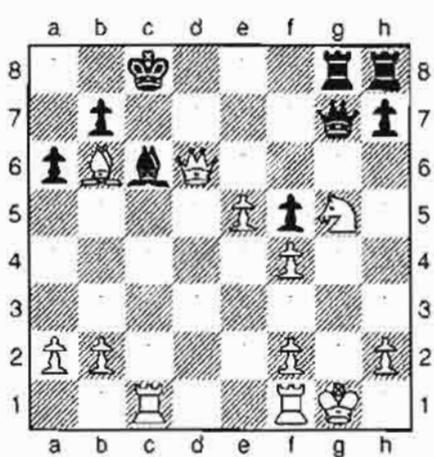
11. Black to move



12. White to move



13. Black to move

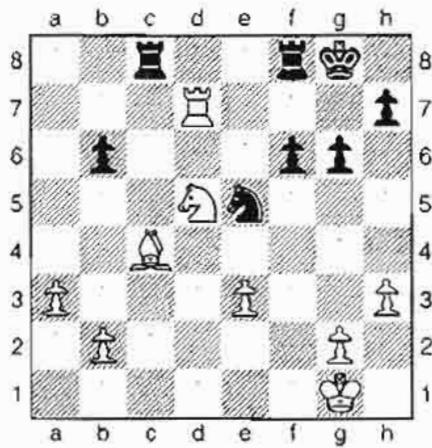


Mixed Checkmates in Two Moves

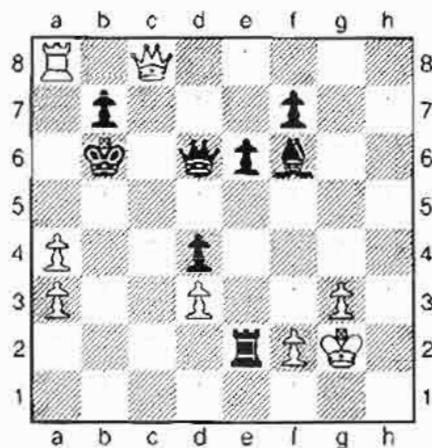
14. White to move



15. White to move

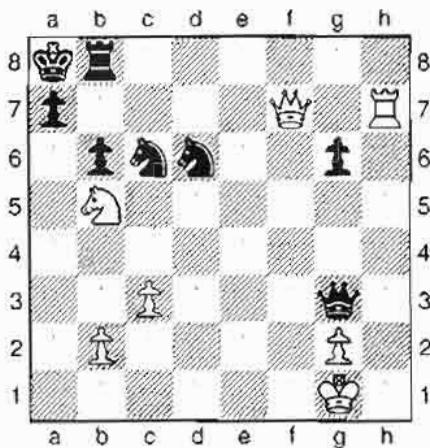


16. White to move

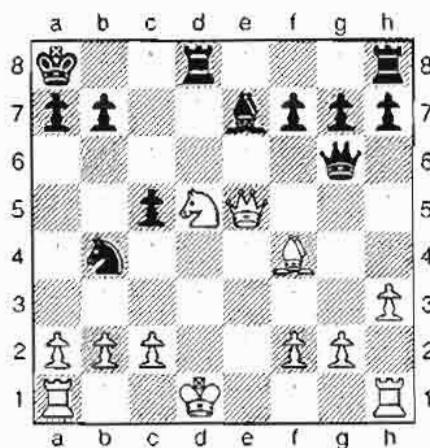




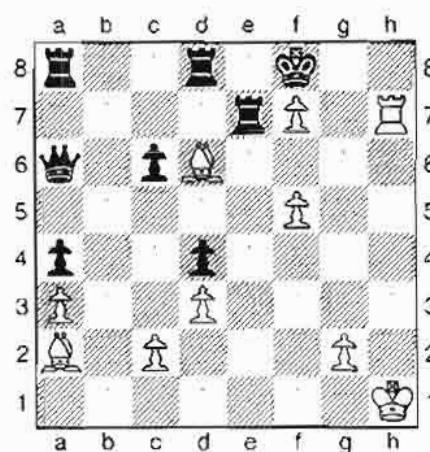
17. White to move



18. White to move

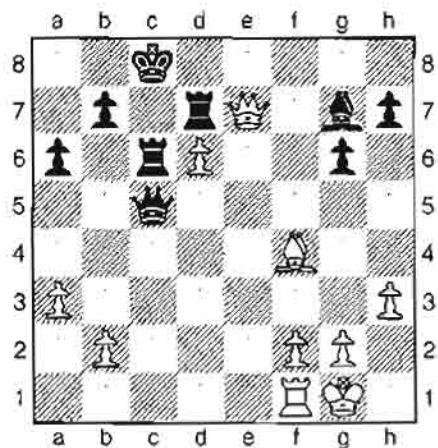


19. White to move

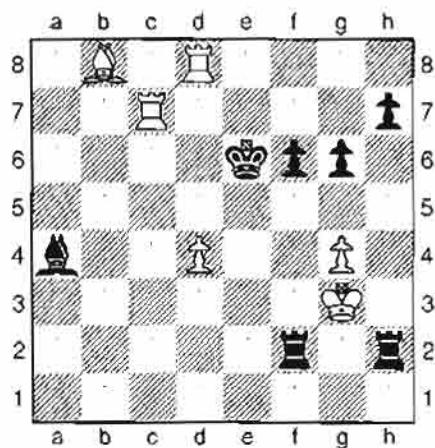


Mixed Checkmates in Two Moves

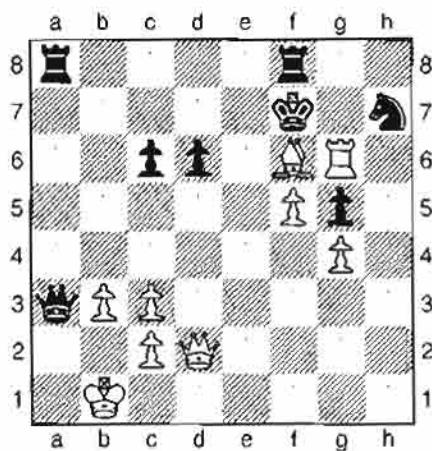
20. White to move

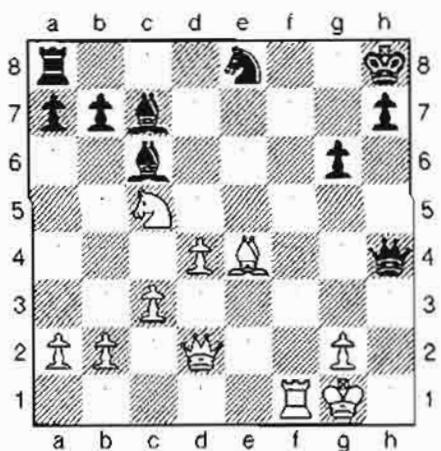
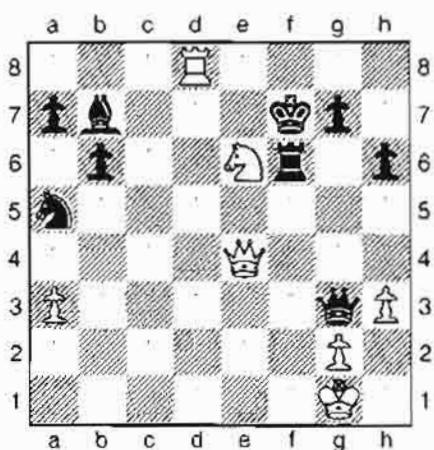
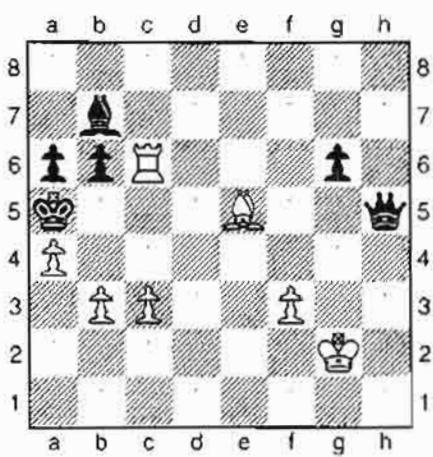


21. White to move



22. White to move



23. White to move**24. White to move****25. White to move**

Solutions

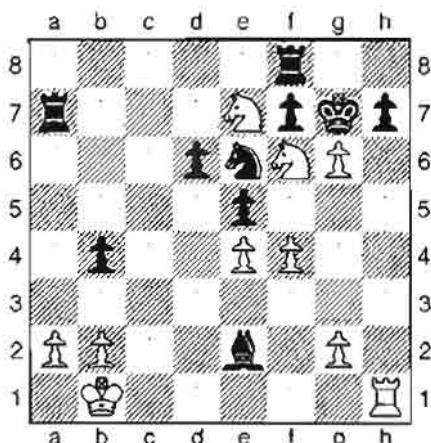
1. 1. Qxh6+! gxh6 2. Nf7#.
2. 1. Bb6+! axb6 2. Re8#.
3. 1. Nb5+! cxb5 2. Nb7#.
4. 1. Qxh7+! Kxh7 2. Rh5#.
5. 1. Nh6+ Kh8 2. g7#.
6. 1. Qg8+! Nxg8 2. Rf8#.
7. 1. Qf7+! Nxf7 2. exf7#.
8. 1. Qxe5+! dxe5 2. Ba3#.
9. 1. Rh1+ Kg6 2. Rh6#.
10. 1. Qxb8+! Rxb8 (or 1. ... Kd7)
2. Bb5#.
11. 1. ... Qf2+! 2. Rxf2 Rxf2#.
12. 1. Qc7+! Nxc7 2. Bxd4#.
13. 1. ... Qxg5+! 2. fxg5 Rxg5#.
14. 1. Ng6+! hxg6 2. hxg5#.
15. 1. Nxf6+ Kh8 2. Rxh7#.
16. 1. a5+ Kb5 2. Qc4#.
17. 1. Qxa7+! Nxa7 2. Rxa7#.
18. 1. Qb8+! Rxb8 2. Nc7#.
19. 1. f6 Rxd6 2. Rh8#.
20. 1. Qe8+ Rd8 2. d7#.
21. 1. d5+ Ke5 2. Rc4#.
22. 1. Rg7+ Kxf6 (1. ... Ke8 2.
Qe3#) 2. Qd4#.
23. 1. Rf8+ Kg7 2. Ne6#.
24. 1. Ng5+! Qxg5 2. Qe8#.
25. 1. Rc5+! bxc5 2. Bc7#.

15

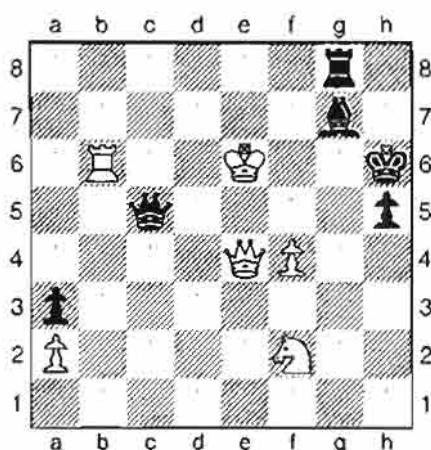
MIXED CHECKMATES IN THREE MOVES

As in the previous chapter, here the goal is to find the fastest way to checkmate, which in these puzzles will be three moves or fewer.

1. White to move

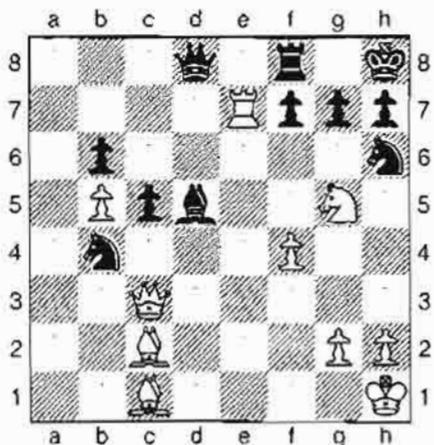


2. White to move

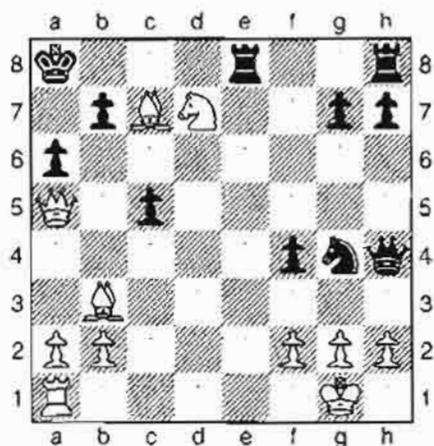


Mixed Checkmates in Three Moves

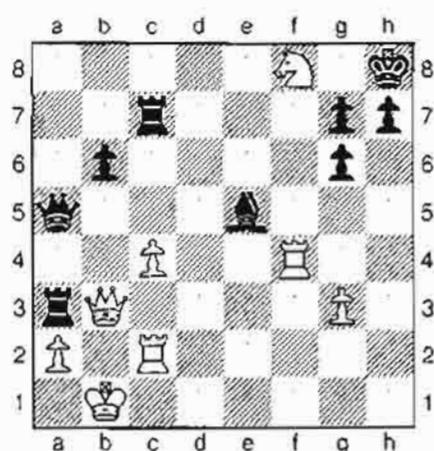
3. White to move

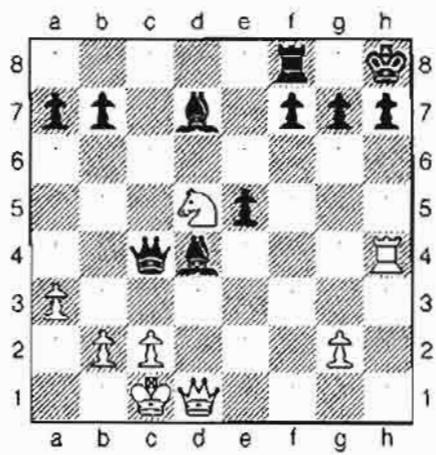
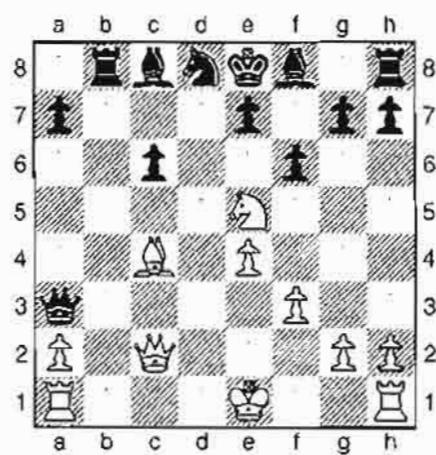


4. White to move



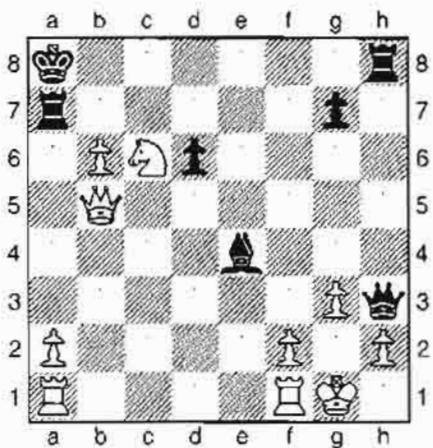
5. White to move



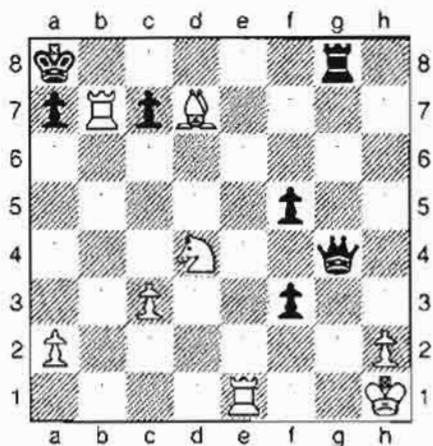
6. White to move**7. White to move****8. White to move**

Mixed Checkmates in Three Moves

9. White to move



10. White to move

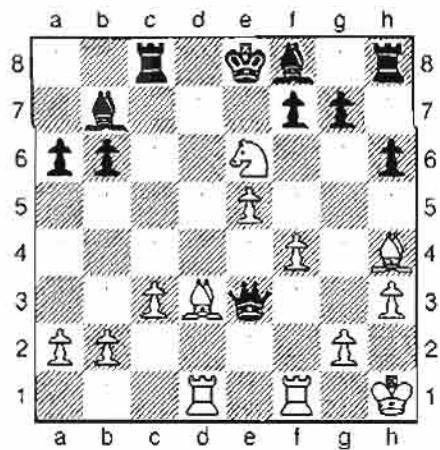


11. White to move

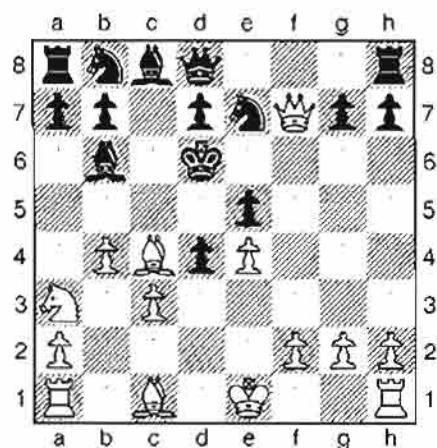




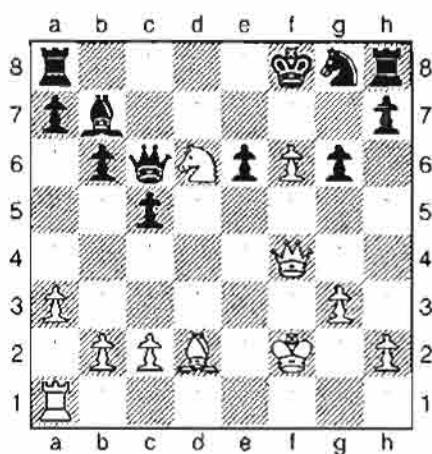
12. White to move



13. White to move

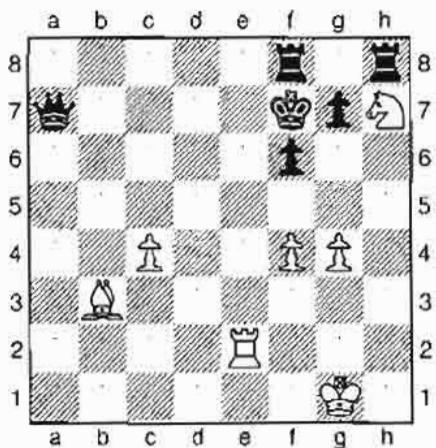


14. White to move

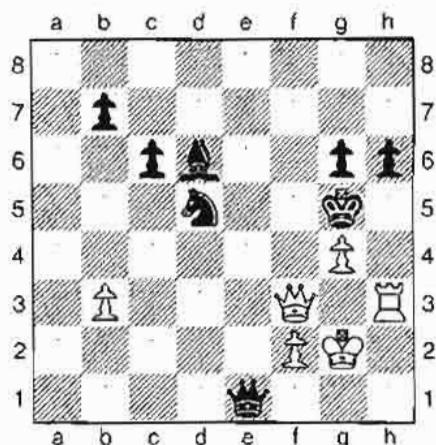


Mixed Checkmates in Three Moves

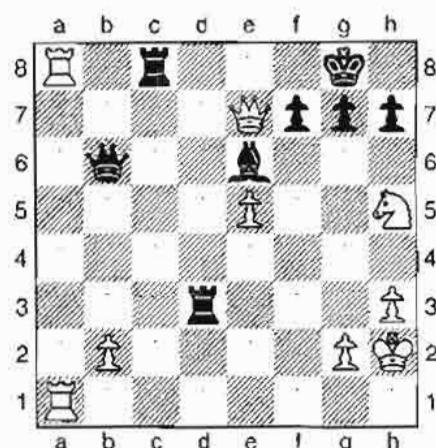
15. White to move

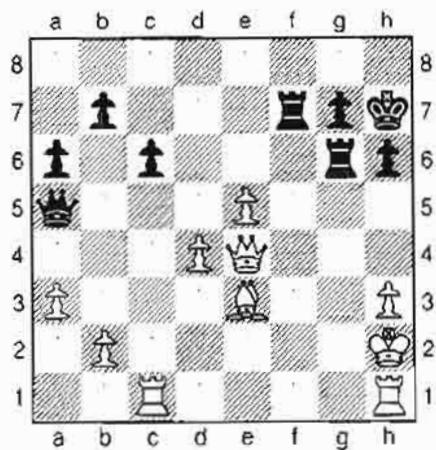
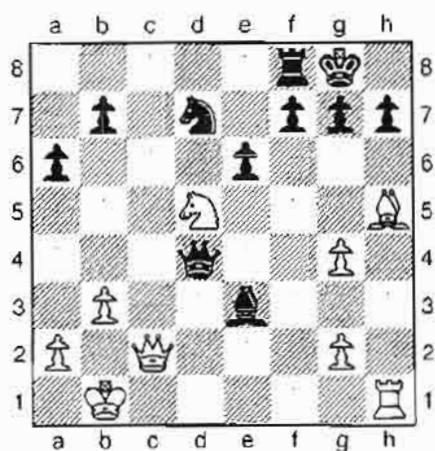


16. White to move



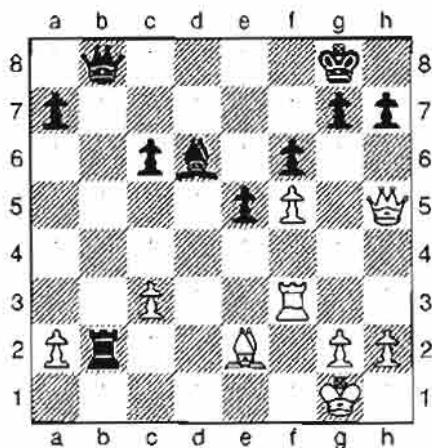
17. Black to move



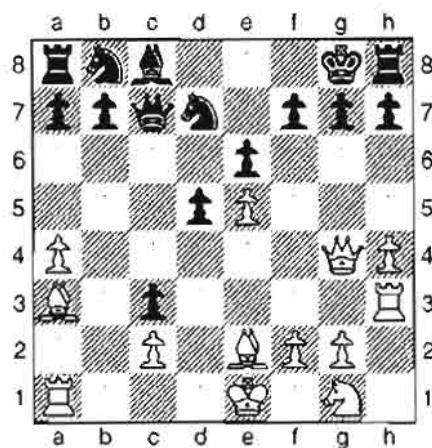
**18. White to move****19. White to move****20. White to move**

Mixed Checkmates in Three Moves

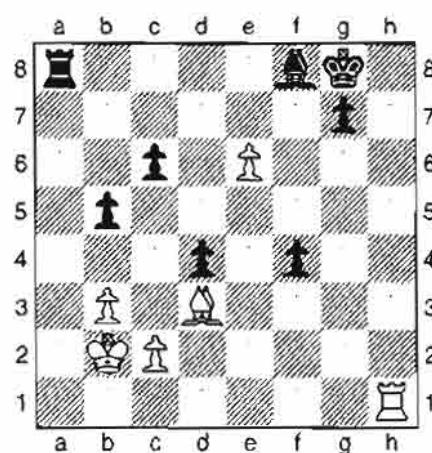
21. White to move



22. White to move

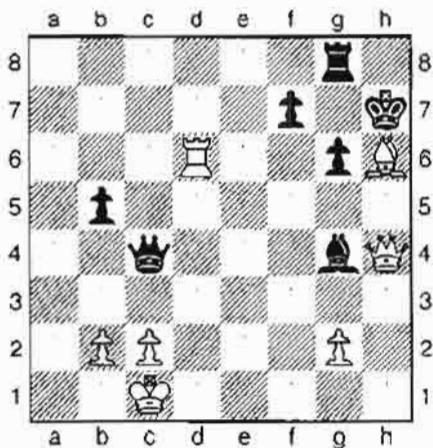


23. White to move

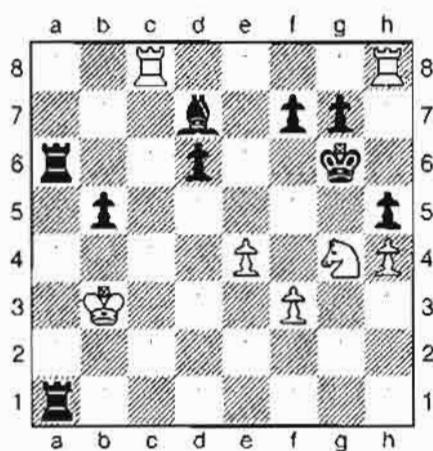




24. White to move



25. White to move



Solutions

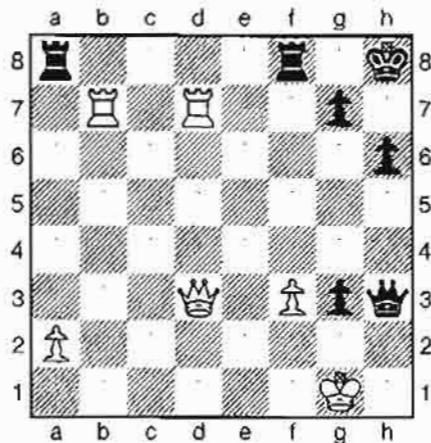
1. 1. Ne8+! Rxe8 2. Rxh7+ Kf8 (or 2. ... Kf6) 3. Rxf7#.
2. 1. Kf7+! Qxb6 2. Ng4+! hxg4 3. Qh1#.
3. 1. Qxg7+! Kxg7 2. Bb2+ Kg8 3. Bxh7#.
4. 1. Qxa6+! bxa6 2. Bd5+ Ka7 3. Bb6#.
5. 1. Nxg6+! hxg6 2. Rf8+ Kh7 3. Rh2#.
6. 1. Rxh7+! Kxh7 (or 1. ... Kg8 2. Ne7+ Kxh7 3. Qh5#) 2. Qh5+ Kg8 3. Ne7#.
7. 1. Qxd2+! Bxd2 2. Rd4+! exd4 3. e4#.
8. 1. Bf7+! Nxf7 2. Qxc6+ Kd8 3. Nxf7#.
9. 1. b7+ Rxb7 2. Qa6+ Ra7 3. Qxa7#.
10. 1. Rb8+! Kxb8 2. Rb1+ Ka8 3. Bc6# or 1. ... Rxb8 2. Be6+ Rb7 3. Re8#.
11. 1. Nb5+! Rxb5 2. Rc4+! Kxc4 3. Re4#.
12. 1. Bb5+! axb5 2. Nc7+! Rxc7 3. Rd8#.
13. 1. Nb5+ Kc6 2. Qd5+! Nxd5 3. exd5#.
14. 1. Qh6+! Nxh6 2. Bxh6+ Kg8 3. f7#.
15. 1. c5+ Kg6 2. f5+ Kxh7 3. Rh2#.
16. 1. Rh5+! gxh5 2. Qf5+ Kh4 3. Qxh5#.
17. 1. ... Rxh5+! 2. gxh5 Qf2+ 3. Kh1 Bd5#.
18. 1. ... Qd2+! 2. Bxd2 Rf2+ 3. Qg2 Rfxg2#.
19. 1. Ne7+ Kh8 2. Qxh7+! Kxh7 3. Bg6#.
20. 1. Bg6+ Kg7 2. Qh7+ Kf8 3. Qxf7#.
21. 1. Bc4+ Kh8 (or 1. ... Kf8 2. Qf7#) 2. Qxh7+! Kxh7 3. Rh3#.
22. 1. Qxg7+! Kxg7 2. Rg3+ Kh6 3. Bc1#.
23. 1. Bh7+ Kh8 2. Bg6+ Kg8 3. Bf7#.
24. 1. Bf8+ Bh5 2. Qxh5+! gxh5 3. Rh6#.
25. 1. Rh6+! gxh6 2. Rg8+ Kh7 3. Nf6#.

16

MIXED CHECKMATES IN FOUR MOVES

In this chapter you have the opportunity to practice a slightly more difficult task. Try to see four moves ahead to figure out checkmates. Twenty-five problems appear below for your solving pleasure.

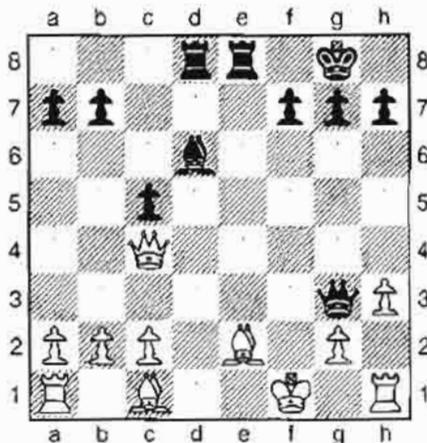
1. White to move



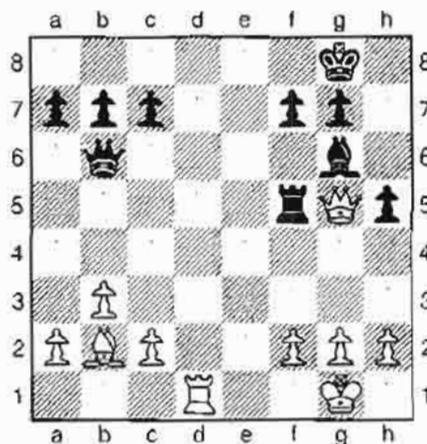
Mixed Checkmates in Four Moves



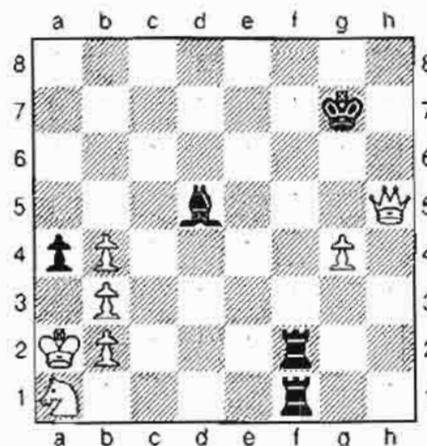
2. Black to move

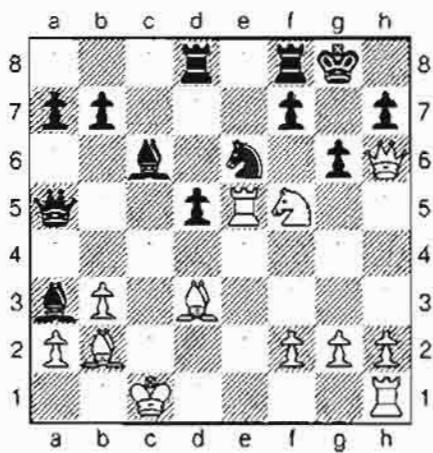
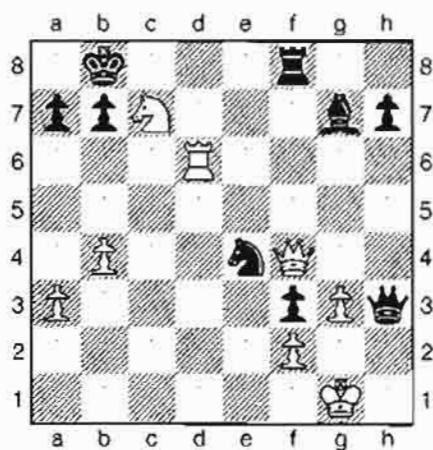
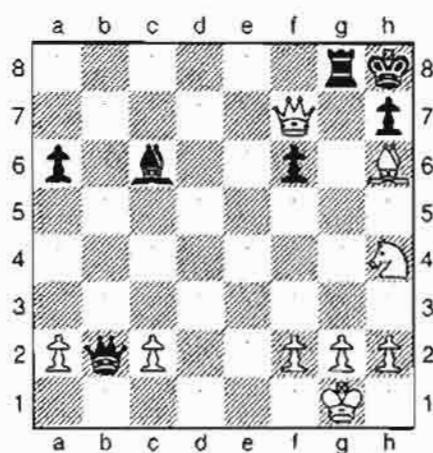


3. White to move



4. Black to move



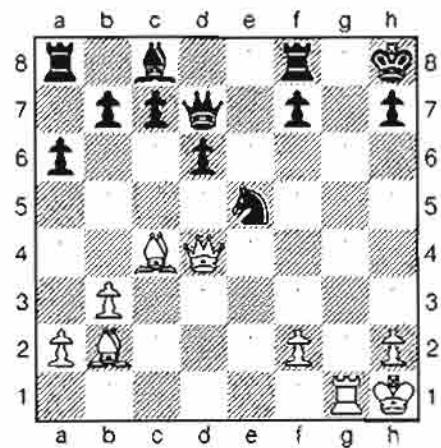
5. White to move**6. White to move****7. White to move**

Mixed Checkmates in Four Moves

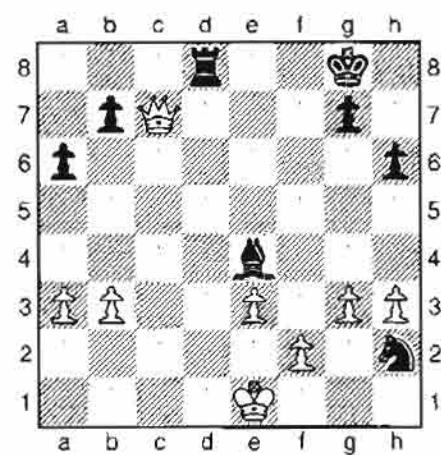
8. White to move

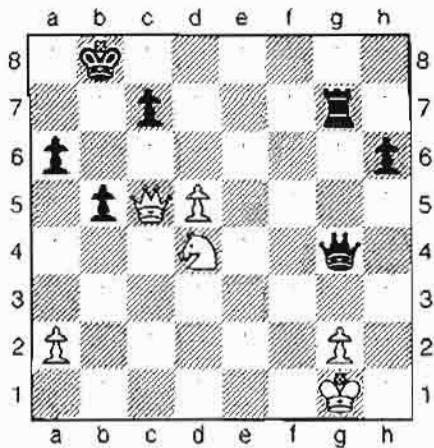
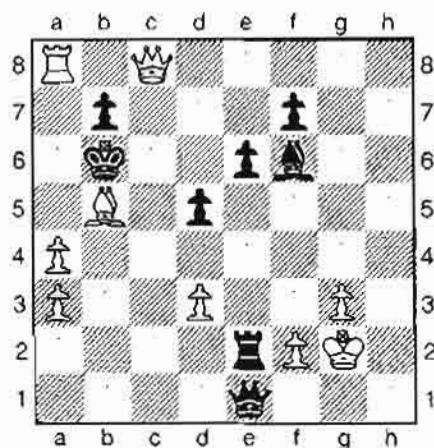
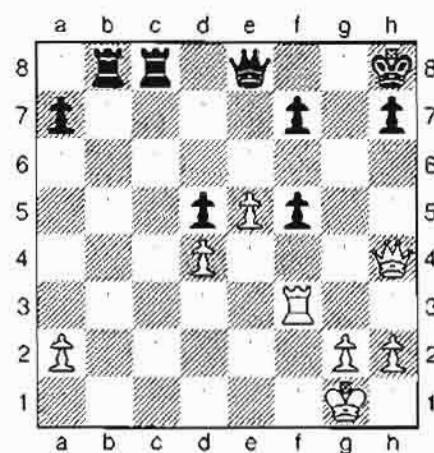


9. White to move



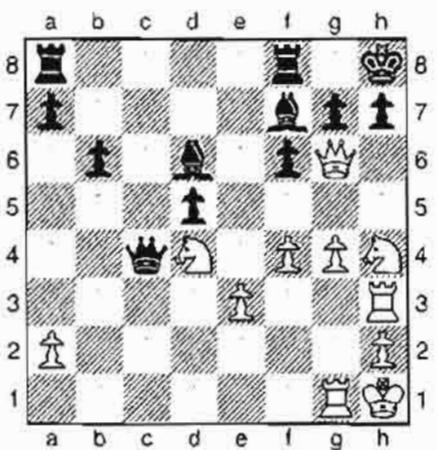
10. Black to move



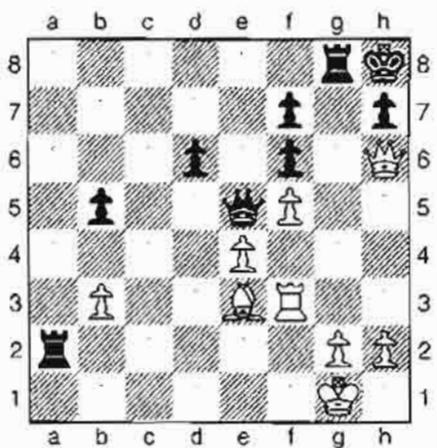
**11. White to move****12. White to move****13. White to move**

Mixed Checkmates in Four Moves

14. White to move

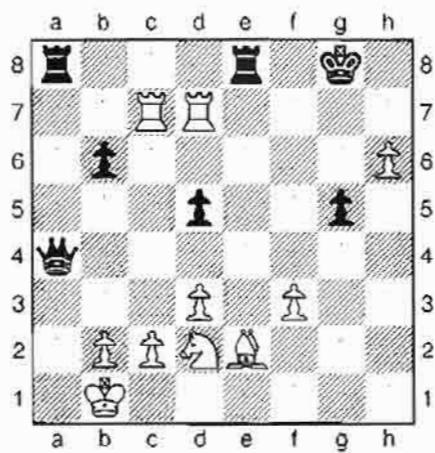
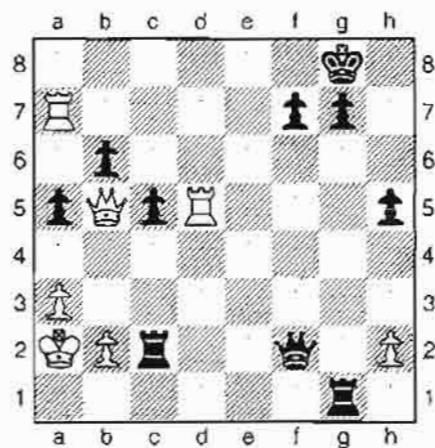
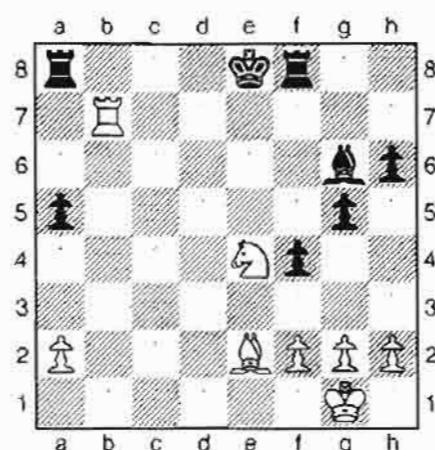


15. White to move



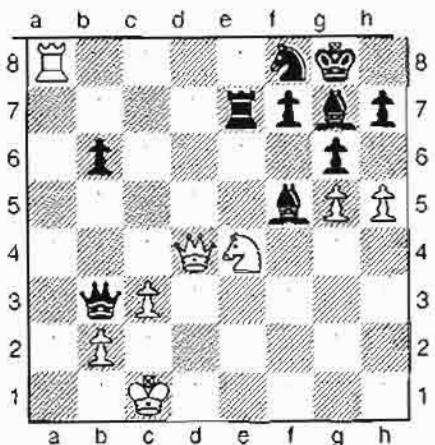
16. White to move



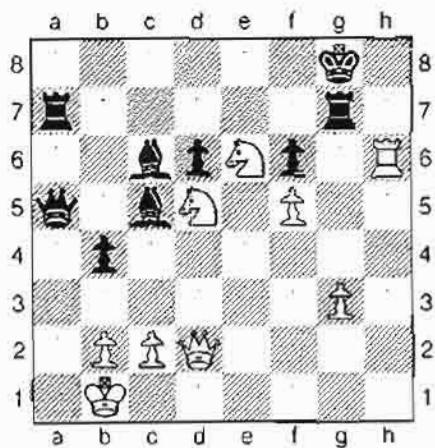
17. White to move**18. White to move****19. White to move**

Mixed Checkmates in Four Moves

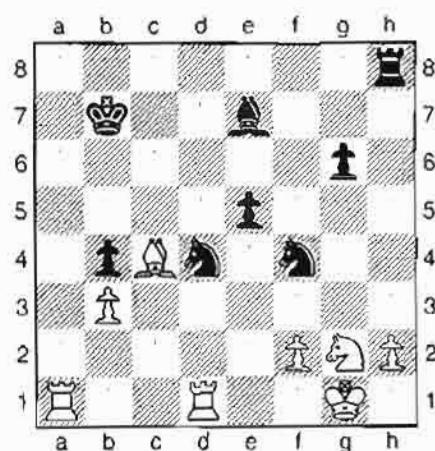
20. White to move

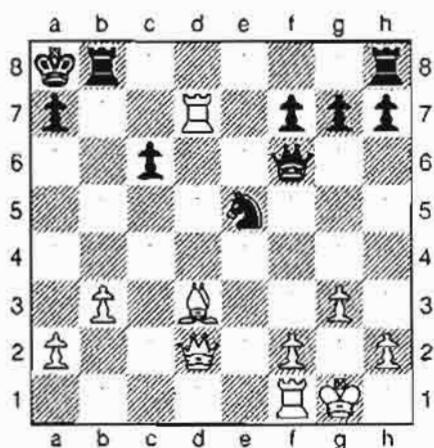
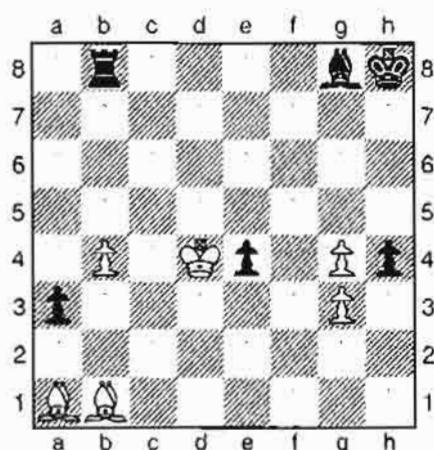


21. White to move



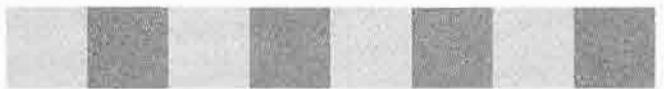
22. Black to move



23. White to move**24. White to move****25. White to move**

Solutions

1. 1. Qh7+! Kxh7 2. Rxg7+ Kh8 3. Rh7+ Kg8 4. Rbg7#.
2. 1. ... Qe1+ 2. Kxe1 Bg3+ 3. Kf1 Rd1+! 4. Bxd1 Re1#.
3. 1. Rd8+ Kh7 2. Rh8+! Kxh8 3. Qh6+ Bh7 4. Qxg7#.
4. 1. ... Rxa1+! 2. Kxa1 Rf1+ 3. Ka2 axb3+ (or 3. ... Bxb3+) 4. Ka3 Ra1#.
5. 1. Ne7+! Bxe7 2. Qxh7+! Kxh7 3. Rh5+ Kg8 4. Rh8#.
6. 1. Rd8+! Rxd8 (or 1. ... Qc8 2. Na6+ Ka8 3. Qb8+! Qxb8 4. Nc7#) 2. Na6+ Ka8 3. Qb8+! Rxb8 4. Nc7#.
7. 1. Bg7+! Rxg7 2. Qf8+ Rg8 3. Ng6+ hxg6 4. Qh6#.
8. 1. Ne7+ Kh8 2. Qg8+! Rxg8 3. Nxg6+ hxg6 4. Rh4#.
9. 1. Qxe5+! dxe5 2. Bxe5+ f6 3. Bxf6+! Rxf6 4. Rg8#.
10. 1. ... Nf3+ 2. Ke2 Rd2+ 3. Kf1 Rd1+ 4. Kg2 Rg1#. If 4. Ke2 Re1#.
11. 1. Nc6+ Kb7 (or 1. ... Kc8 2. Qf8+ Kd7 3. Ne5#) 2. Qa7+ Kc8 3. Qb8+ Kd7 4. Qd8#.
12. 1. Ra6+! bxa6 2. Qc6+ Ka7 3. Qc7+ Ka8 4. Bc6#.
13. 1. Qf6+ Kg8 2. Rg3+ Kf8 3. Qh6+ Ke7 4. Qd6#.
14. 1. Qxh7+! Kxh7 2. Ng6+! Kxg6 (2. ... Kg8 3. Rh8#) 3. f5+ Kg5 4. Nf3#.
15. 1. Qxh7+! Kxh7 2. Rh3+ Kg7 3. Bh6+ Kh7 4. Bf8#.
16. 1. Ba7+ Ka8 2. Bb6+ Kb8 3. Qa7+ Kc8 4. Qxc7#.
17. 1. Rg7+ Kh8 2. Rh7+ Kg8 3. Rcg7+ Kf8 4. Rh8#.
18. 1. Qe8+ Kh7 2. Qh8+! Kxh8 (or 2. ... Kg6 3. Qxh5+ Kf6 4. Rd6#) 3. Rxh5+ Kg8 4. Ra8#.
19. 1. Bb5+ Kd8 2. Rd7+ Kc8 (or 2. ... Ke8 Nd6#) 3. Nd6 Kb8 4. Rb7#.
20. 1. Qxg7+! Kxg7 2. h6+ Kg8 3. Nf6+ Kh8 4. Rxf8#.
21. 1. Rh8+! Kxh8 2. Qh6+ Kg8 3. Nxf6+ Kf7 4. Qxg7#.
22. 1. ... Nf3+ 2. Kf1 Nxh2+ 3. Ke1 Nf3+ 4. Kf1 Rh1#.
23. 1. Qxg7+! Rxg7 2. Rxg7+ Nxg7 3. Nf6+ Kh8 4. Nxf7#.
24. 1. Rxa7+! Kxa7 2. Qa5+ Kb7 3. Ba6+ Ka7 4. Bc8#.
25. 1. Kxe4+ Kh7 2. Kf4+ Kh6 3. g5+ Kh5 4. g4#.



TACTICS TO SAVE THE GAME

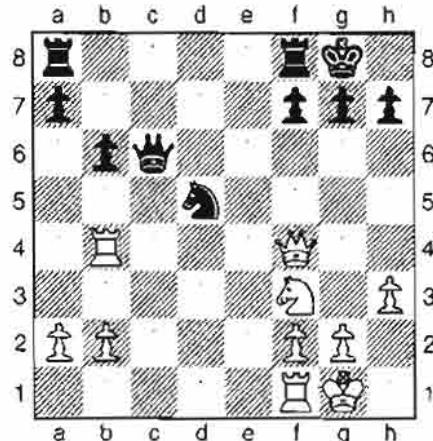
17

GAME-SAVING COMBINATIONS

Ideally, we always want to avoid difficult positions. But sometimes things don't work out as we plan them. In this chapter, we'll see examples in which one side seems to be at a disadvantage. But in each case there is a surprise saving move or combination.

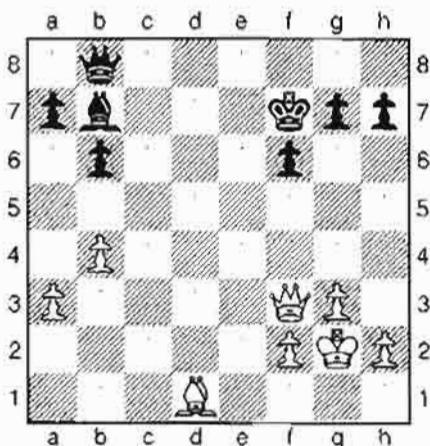
Here are five examples:

Black's last move was a knight fork. How can White recover?



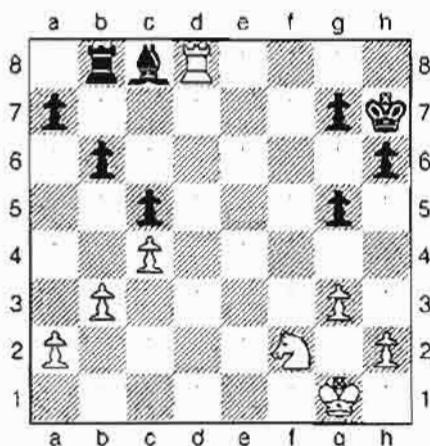
The only way to avoid losing material is **1. Rc4** ($1. \dots Nxf4 2. Rxc6$).

In the next example, the White queen has just been pinned. Is there a way for White to save the queen?



Yes, thanks to the intermediate check 1. Bb3+ followed by 1. ... Ke7
2. Bd5.

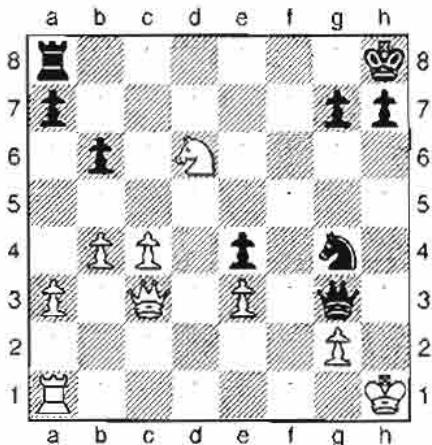
Here the Black bishop is in an unpleasant pin. How can it get out of the pin?



Black needs to put the rook on a light square where the bishop will be able to protect it: 1. ... Ra8. Another idea, bringing the king closer with 1. ... Kg6, is too slow, as after 2. Ne4 followed by 3. Nd6 the Black bishop is lost. Now after 2. Ne4 Bb7 Black is safe.

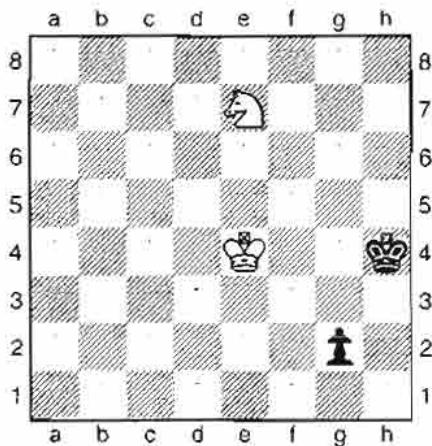
In this position, Black threatens mate on h2 while also threatening to take the knight on d6.

Game-Saving Combinations



White solves all difficulties with a “petite” combination. 1. Qxg7+! Kxg7 2. Nf5+ Kf6 3. Nxg3.

Here White seems to be in trouble. How can the g2-pawn be prevented from promoting?



After 1. Ng6+ the Black king has only bad squares to move to, which allow White to catch the pawn. 1. ... Kg3 2. Nf4 g1Q 3. Ne2+. Other choices on the first move lead to similar ends, such as 1. ... Kh3 2. Nf4+; 1. ... Kg4 2. Ne5+ Kg3 3. Nf3; or 1. ... Kg5 2. Nf4 g1Q 3. Nh3+.

Susan's Corner

Sznapik—Susan Polgar
Budapest, 1993



White has just played $Rc2-c7$, entering the seventh rank and attacking my queen. Moving the queen would allow White to take the pawn on e6. Black is already a pawn up, so all I need is to keep it and to avoid getting my king in trouble.

28. ... Rac8!

With the help of White's back-rank problem, this move forces the trade of White's most active piece (the rook on c7).

29. Rxc8 Rxc8 30. Rxc8+ Qxc8

The point is that now after 31. $Qxe6+$ $Qxe6$ 32. $Nxe6$, Black wins the pawn back with 32. ... $Bxb2$.

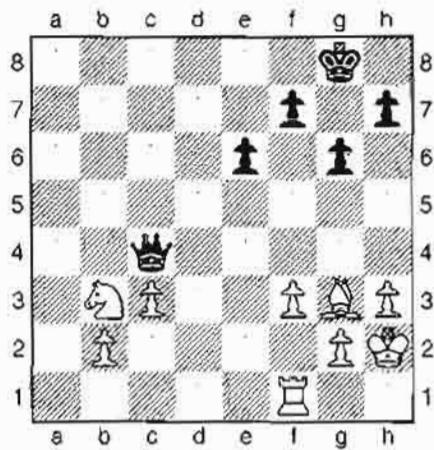
I won shortly after 31. $Ne2$ $Bxb2$.

Here are 20 examples to practice getting out of difficult situations.

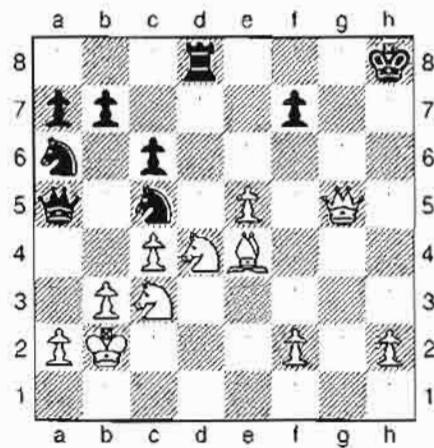


Game-Saving Combinations

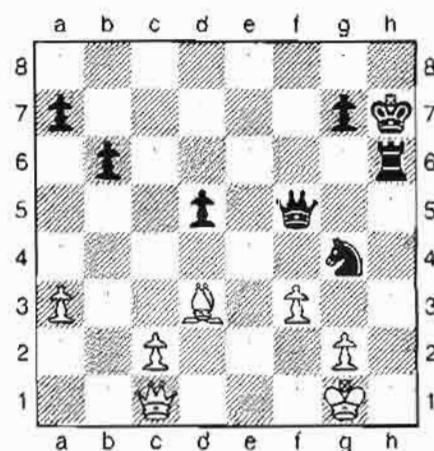
1. White to move



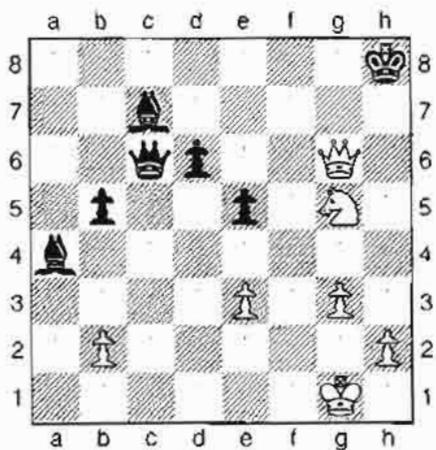
2. Black to move



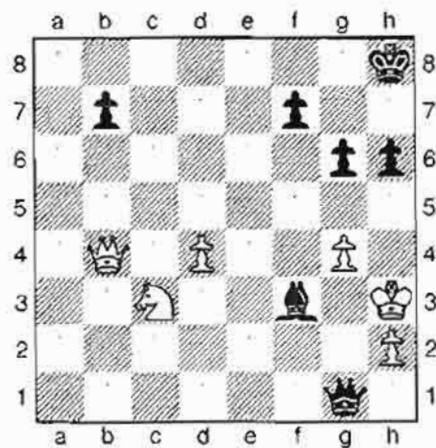
3. Black to move



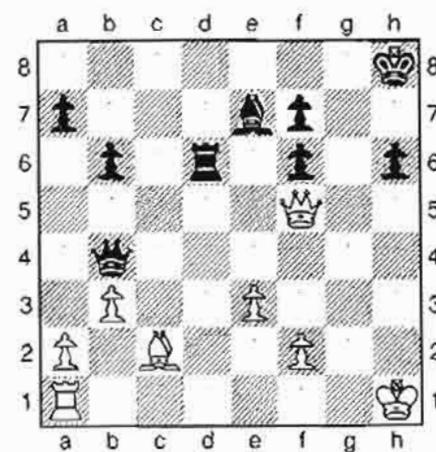
4. Black to move



5. White to move



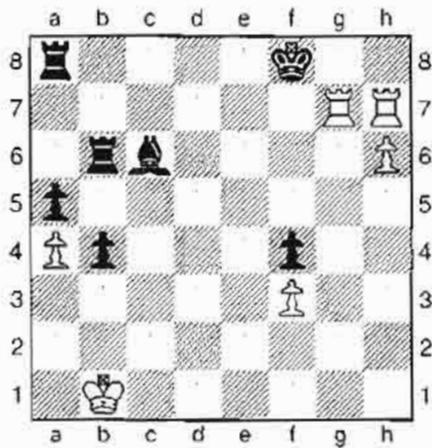
6. Black to move



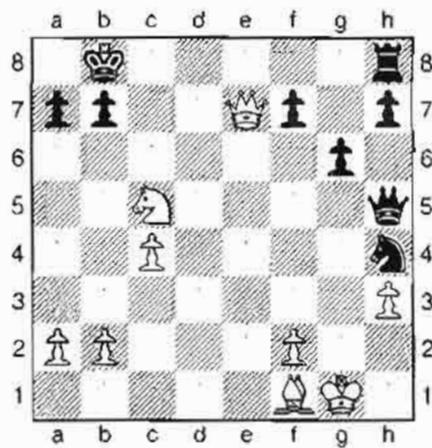
Game-Saving Combinations



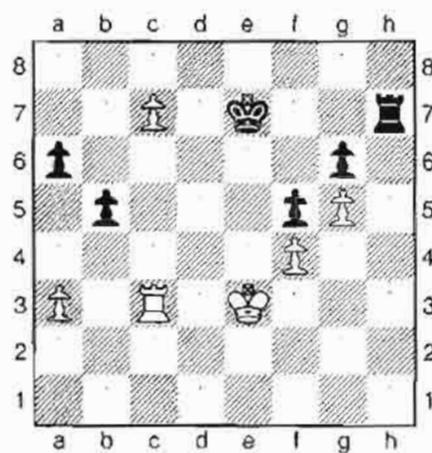
7. Black to move

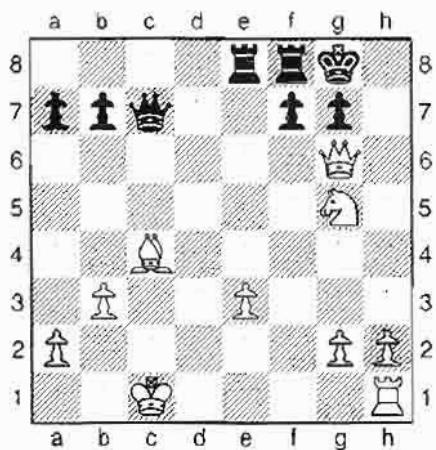
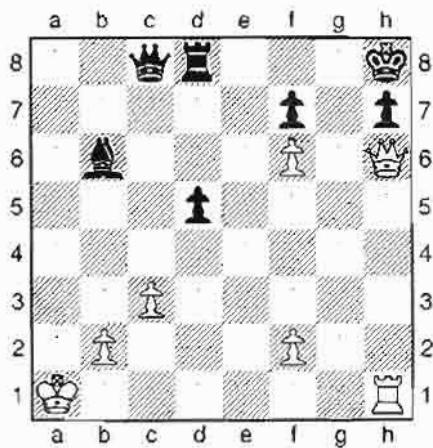
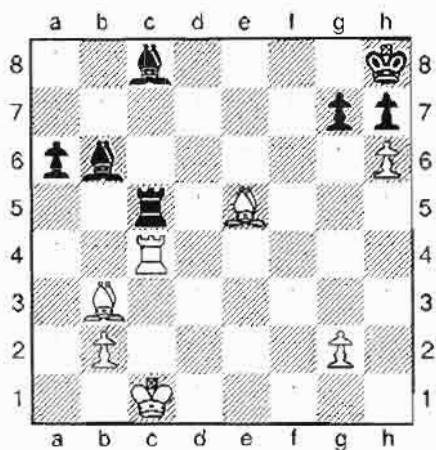


8. Black to move



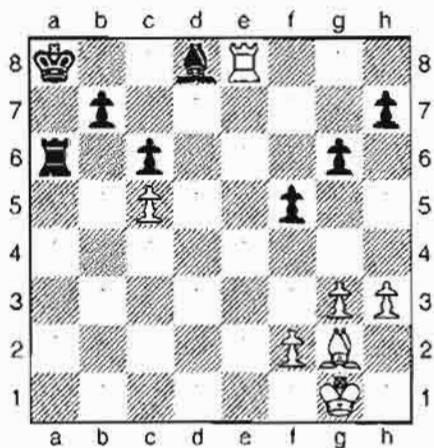
9. Black to move



**10. Black to move****11. Black to move****12. Black to move**

Game-Saving Combinations

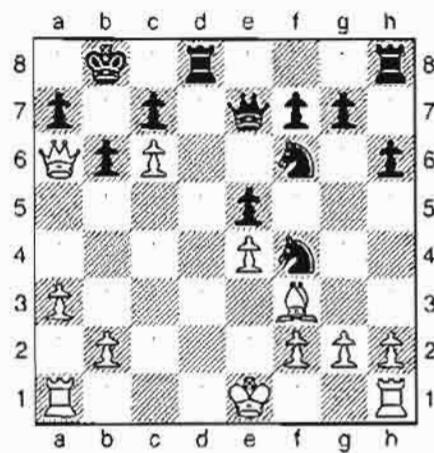
13. Black to move

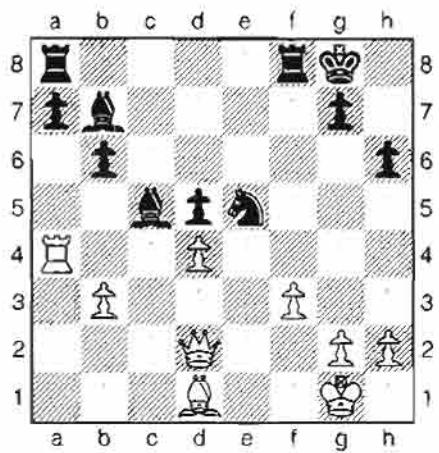
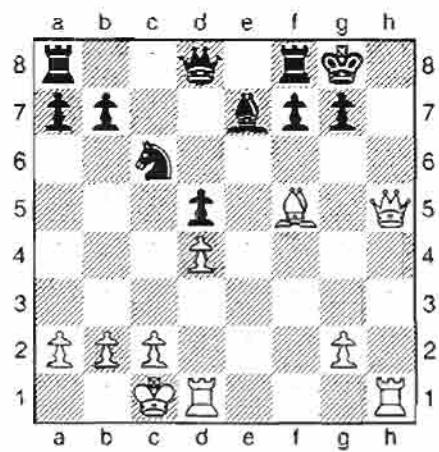
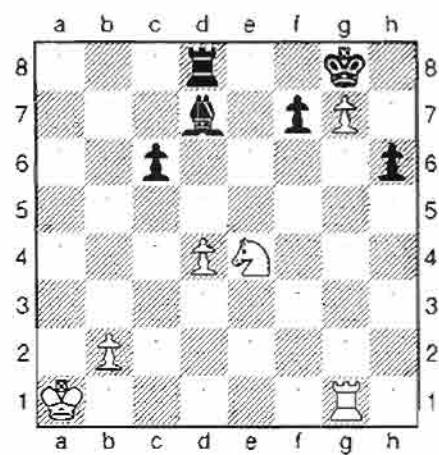


14. Black to move



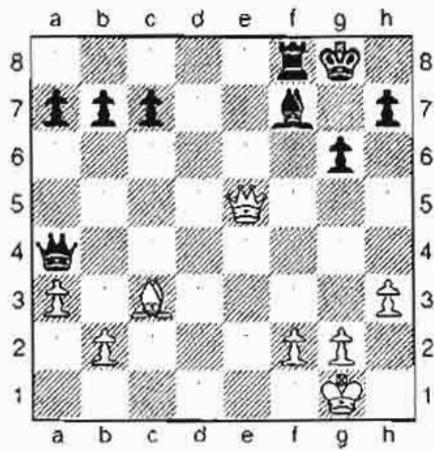
15. Black to move



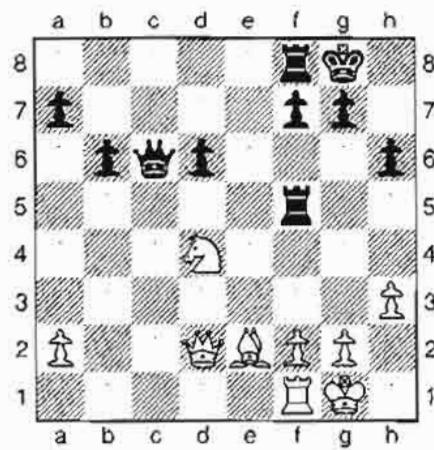
**16. Black to move****17. Black to move****18. Black to move**

Game-Saving Combinations

19. Black to move



20. Black to move



Solutions

1. Both the White rook and knight are under attack. White saves both pieces by moving the knight away to protect the rook: 1. Nd2.
2. Black's king lacks defenders. White is threatening mate in five with 1. Qh6+ Kg8 2. Bh7+ Kh8 3. Bg6+ Kg8 4. Qh7+ Kf8 5. Qxf7#. Also Nd4-f5 is a major threat. But Black has a way to turn things around, thanks to a fork: 1. ... Qxc3+! 2. Kxc3 Nxe4+. Black also has an advantage after 2. Kb1 Qe1+ 3. Kb2 Qxf2+ followed by 4. ... Nxe4.
3. Black's knight on f5 is pinned. By using another pin along the d-file Black avoids losing material: 1. ... Ng3+! 2. Bxg3 Qxe4.
4. Black has a material advantage, but White has two different mate-in-one threats. This is a typical example of how the defensive side is able to trade queens, thus ending the attack. 1. ... Qc1+. With this check Black forces the White king to the second rank: 2. Kg2 and then 2. ... Qc2+ 3. Qxc2 Bxc2.
5. White's king seems to be under serious attack. But after 1. Qf8+ Kh7 2. Qxf7+ (fork) 2. ... Kh8 3. Qxf3 White is completely safe.
6. White threatens 1. Qh7#. The king cannot run away with 1. ... Kg8 because of 2. Qh7+ Kf8 3. Qh8#. But Black can force a trade of queens with 1. ... Qh4+ 2. Kg2 Qg5+ to rescue the game.
7. Here Black has a significant material advantage but faces the threat of 1. Rh8#. With the following combination Black avoids the mate and still stays a pawn ahead. 1. ... Be4+! 2. fxe4 Rxh6! 3. Rxh6 Kxg7. White's best choice is to give perpetual check, starting with 3. Rf7+.
8. White threatens 1. Qxb7#. It seems the only way to defend against that threat is 1. ... Qf3, but that leaves the knight on h4 hanging. Thanks to a fork, Black has a cute simplification combination: 1. ... Qg5+! 2. Qxg5 Nf3+ 3. Kg2 Nxg5 and Black maintains a material advantage.
9. White has a far-advanced c-pawn, which is almost unstoppable. But after the following series of forced moves, Black's king catches the passed pawn just in time: 1. ... Rh3+ 2. Kd4 Rxc3 3. Kxc3 Kd7.
10. White's threat is 1. Qh7#. Because of the pin on the f7 pawn, White's queen on g6 is taboo. But with a smart queen sacrifice Black not only avoids

getting checkmated but also wins a piece: 1. ... Qxc4+! 2. bxc4 fxg6.

11. White has two threats: 1. Qg7# and 1. Qxh7#. Black stops both after 1. ... Qa6+ 2. Kb1 Qd3+ 3. Kc1 Qg6.
12. The pin on the g7 pawn looks devastating. But Black is saved after 1. ... Rxc4+ 2. Bxc4 Be3+ 3. Kc2 Bxh6.
13. Black's bishop on d8 is pinned; it cannot move away, nor can it be protected in one move. After the intermediate check 1. ... Ra1+ 2. Kh2 Black has 2. ... Rd1 to save the bishop.
14. Here the Black queen is pinned. Again, after an intermediate check, 1. ... Be3+ 2. Kht, Black can interpose with 2. ... Bd4 to avoid any loss of material.
15. White threatens 1. Qb7#. None of the Black pieces can defend the b7 square in one move. The solution to the problem is 1. ... Nd3+ 2. Ke2 and now 2. ... Nc5 comes just in time.
16. Black's bishop and knight are forked. If Black could maintain the pin on the d4 pawn, the knight on e5 would be safe. Black therefore attacks the rook on a4 with 1. ... b5 and after the rook moves away by 2. Ra5 or 2. Ra1, Black plays 2. ... Bb6

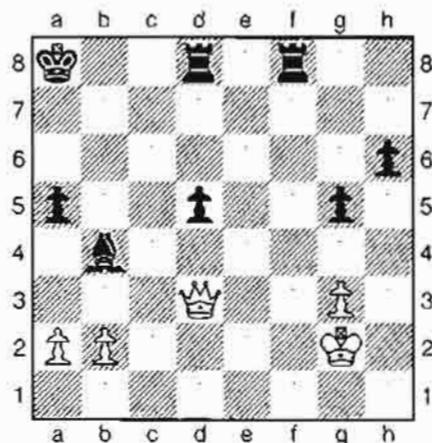
without losing either minor piece.

17. White's attack along the h-file looks scary. There are checkmates threatened with both 1. Qh7# and 1. Qh8#. 1. ... f6 does not help, as mate follows after 2. Be6+. Black needs to block the h-file by 1. ... Bg5+ 2. Kb1 and 2. ... Bh6.
18. White threatens 1. Nf6#. Also, the g7 pawn is very dangerous as it is about to be promoted; for example after 1. ... f5 2. Nf6+. But Black can do better than that, with: 1. ... Ra8+ 2. Kb1 and now Black pins White's knight by 2. ... Bf5. White loses the knight, since after 3. Re1 Black can put more pressure on the pin with 3. ... Re8.
19. White has a very powerful battery set up along the a1-h8 diagonal, already threatening 1. Qg7# or 1. Qh8#. But Black saves the game by forcing the trade of queens with 1. ... Qd1+ 2. Kh2 and now the pin 2. ... Qd6.
20. Black's queen and rook are forked. Black can try to pin White's knight with 1. ... Rd5, but that would allow another devastating pin, 2. Bf3. On the other hand, 1. ... Qd5 does the job as after 2. Bc4 Qa5 3. Qxa5 Rxa5 Black saves both pieces.

18

PERPETUAL CHECK

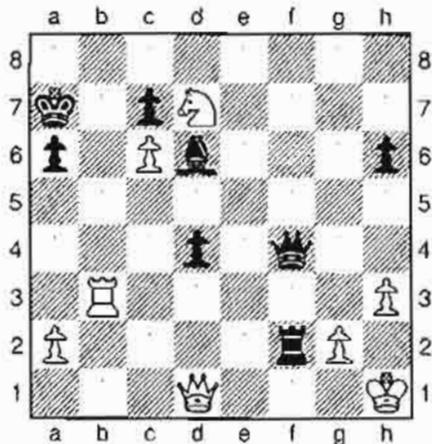
Another common method of saving a hopeless-looking position is to force a threefold repetition of the same position by means of perpetual check. If in a game the very same position arises for the third time one can claim a draw. For example:



In this position, Black has an extra bishop. White, however, can give eternal checks with 1. Qa6+ Kb8 2. Qb6+ Kc8 3. Qc6+ Kb8 4. Qb6+, and the Black king cannot escape.

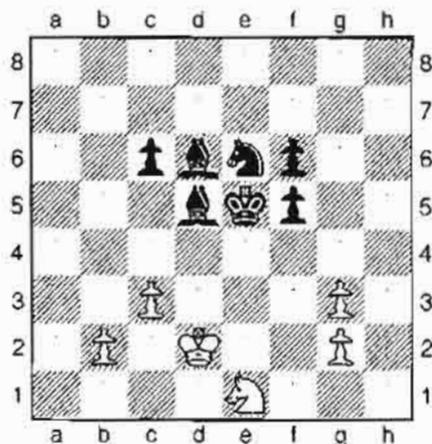
In the next position, Black has a scary-looking attack, threatening mate in one.

Perpetual Check



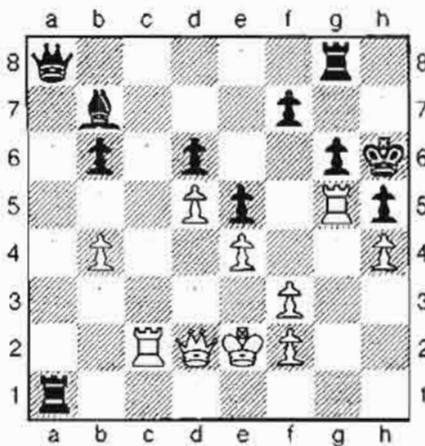
But White can save the game by checking along the b-file: 1. Rb7+ Ka8 2. Rb8+ Ka7 3. Rb7+.

In the following endgame, Black has two extra bishops and things look bleak for White. But with the help of perpetual checks, White saves the game.



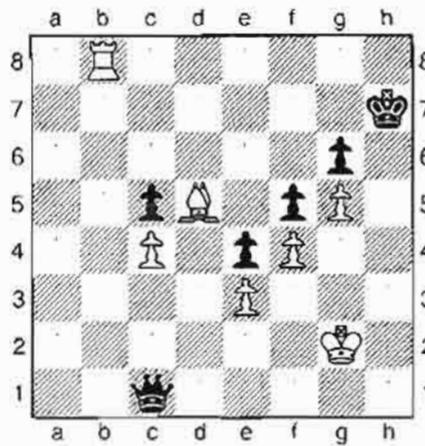
The solution is: 1. Nd3+ Ke4 2. Nf2+ Ke5 3. Nd3+.

Here Black has an extra bishop so White should be happy to draw the game.



The saving combination starts with the double check 1. Rxh5+. Black cannot accept the sacrifice because if 1. ... Kxh5 2. Qg5#. After 1. ... Kg7, White gives perpetual check with 2. Qh6+ Kf6 3. Qg5+ Kg7 4. Qh6+.

In the next endgame, Black has a material advantage but White has a way to create unavoidable perpetual check.

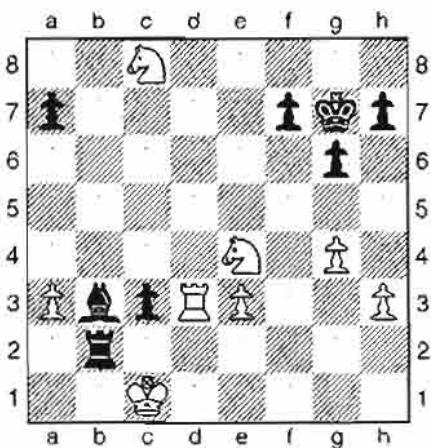


1. Rf8! Black can now capture the pawn right away or delay it by giving a few checks first, but in either case White gives endless checks on the f-file with the rook. 1. ... Qxe3 2. Rf7+ Kg8 3. Rf6+ Kg7 4. Rf7+ Kh8 5. Rf8+. White only needs to be careful after, for example, 1. Rf8 Qd2+, to move to a square (f1 or h1) where the e3 pawn will not be captured with check.

Perpetual Check

Susan's Corner

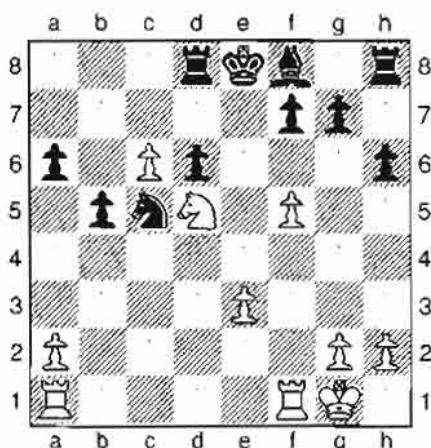
Brenninkmeijer—Susan Polgar
Amsterdam, 1990



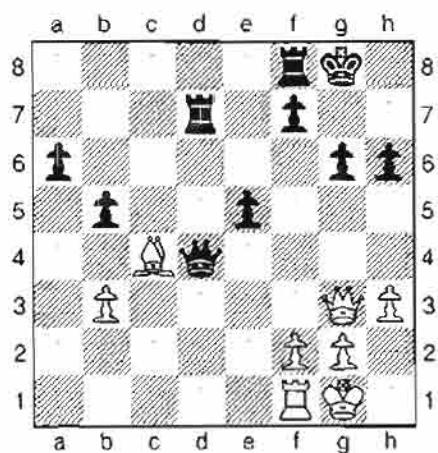
White has an extra knight with only a pawn as compensation for Black. However, I found a way to force a draw by perpetual check with 35. ... Rc2+ 36. Kb1 Rb2+ 37. Kc1 Rc2+ 38. Kb1 Rb2+ and a draw was agreed.

Here are 25 practice puzzles with the theme of perpetual check.

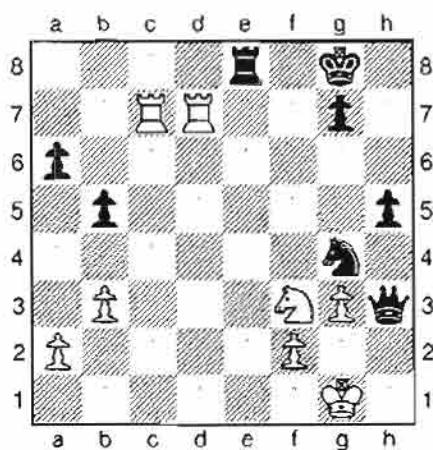
1. White to move



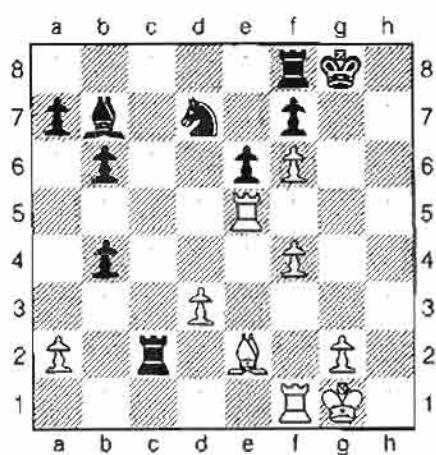
2. White to move



3. White to move



4. White to move



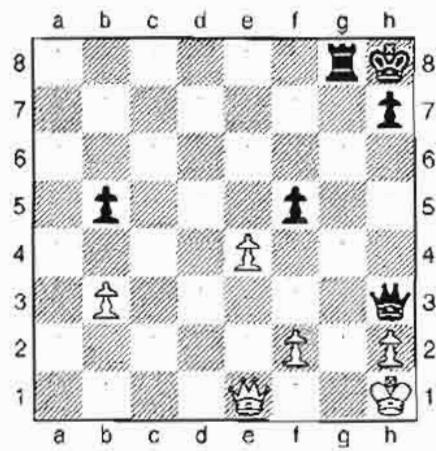


Perpetual Check

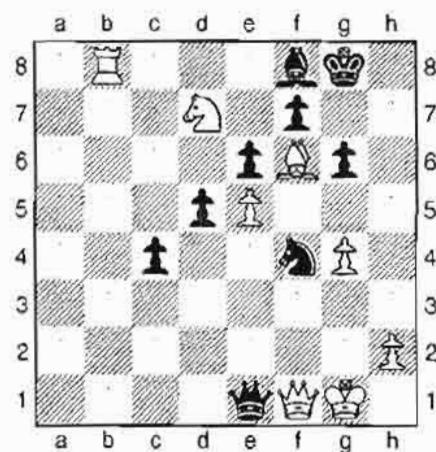
5. White to move



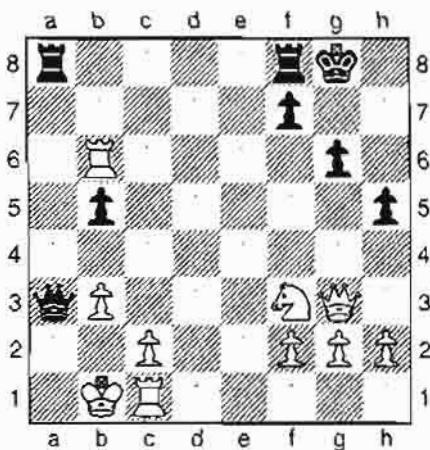
6. White to move



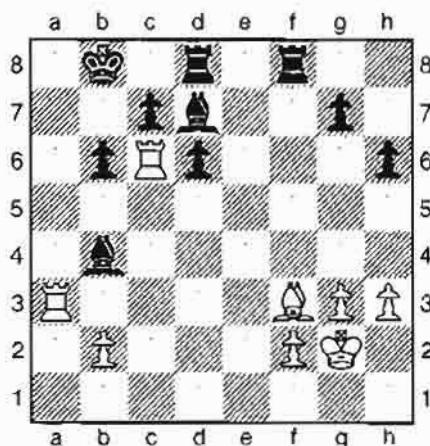
7. Black to move



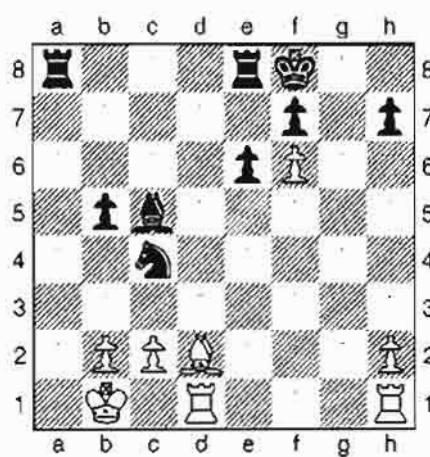
8. White to move



9. White to move

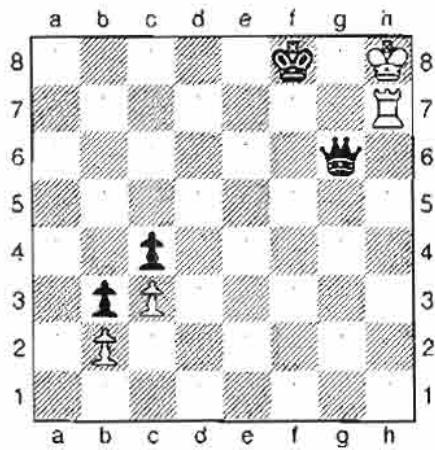


10. White to move

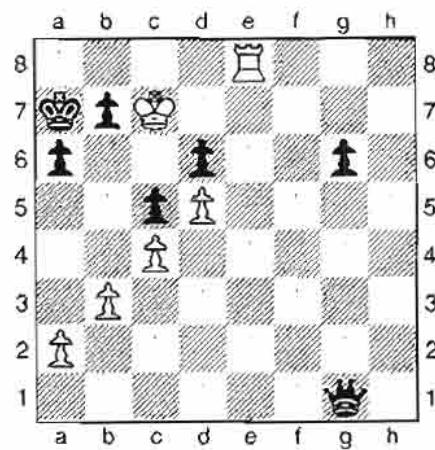


Perpetual Check

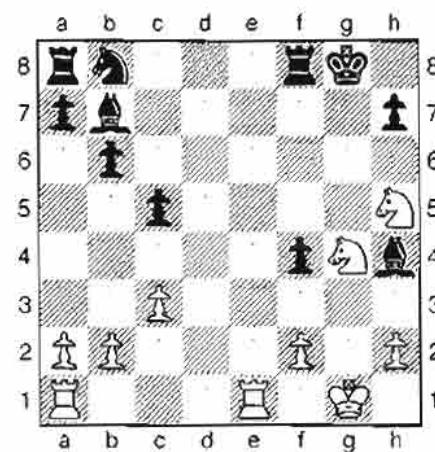
11. White to move



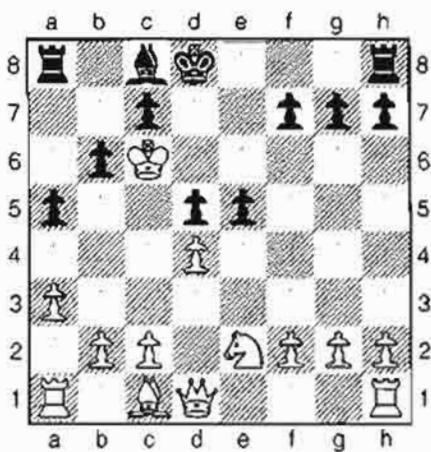
12. White to move



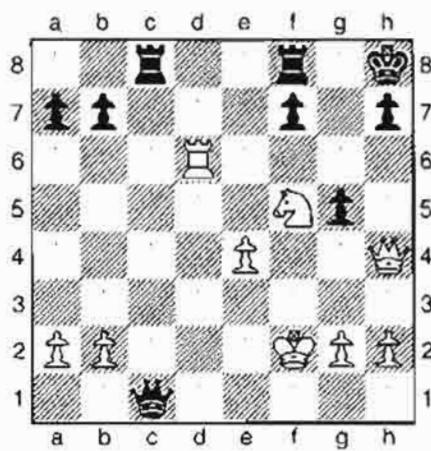
13. White to move



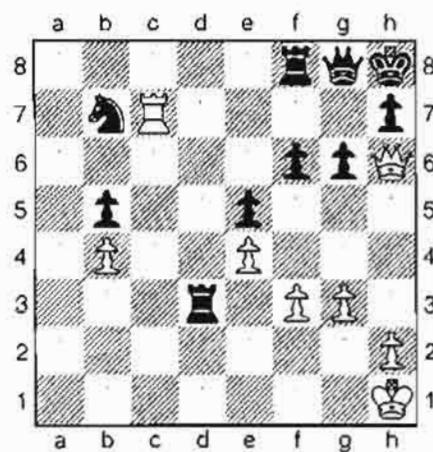
14. White to move



15. White to move

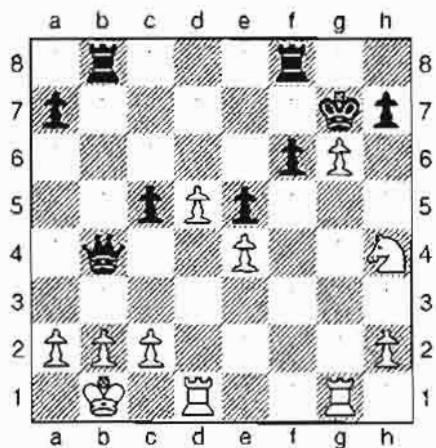


16. White to move

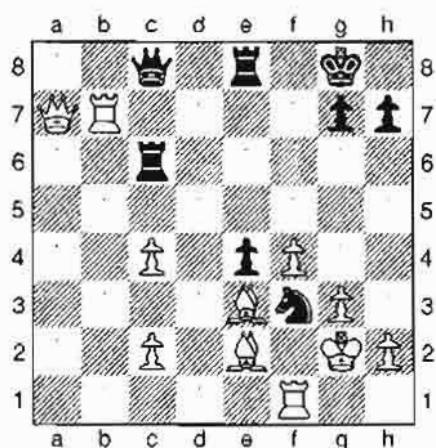


Perpetual Check

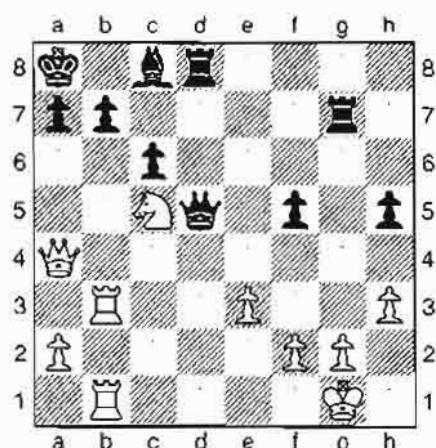
17. White to move



18. Black to move

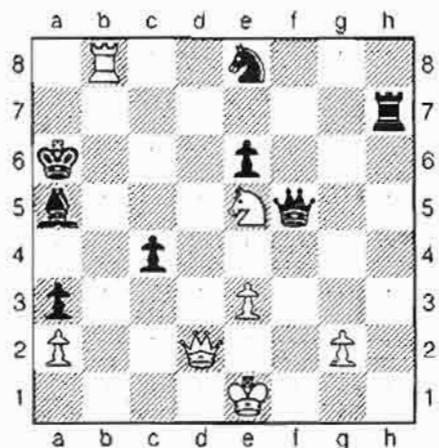


19. White to move

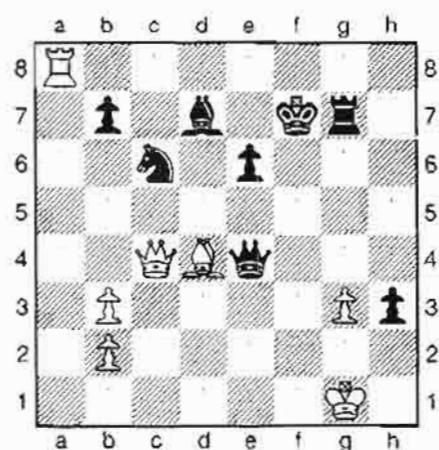




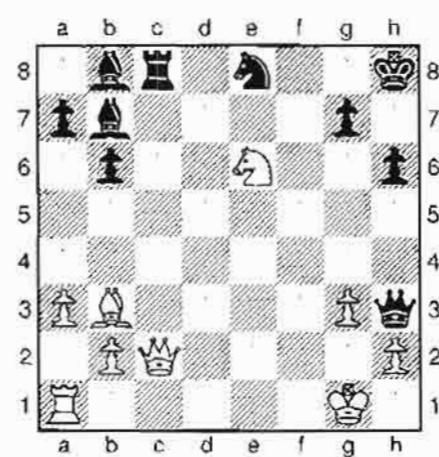
20. White to move



21. White to move

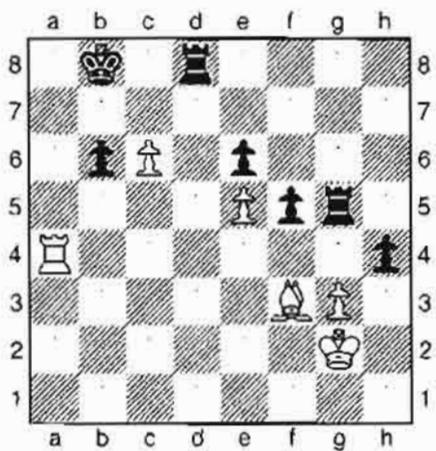


22. White to move

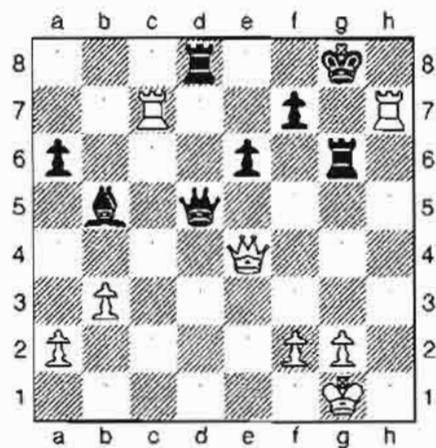


Perpetual Check

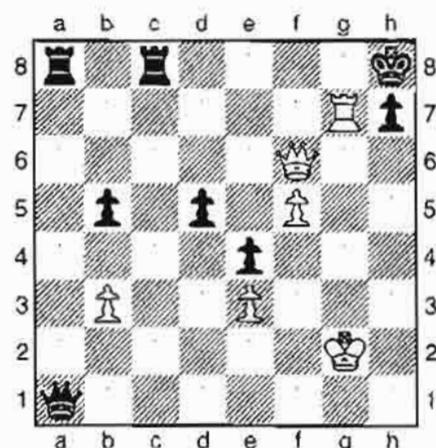
23. White to move



24. White to move



25. White to move



Solutions

1. Black has an extra bishop, but White can force a draw by perpetual check: 1. Nc7+ Ke7 2. Nd5+ Ke8 3. Nc7+ .
2. Black, having a significant material advantage, made a careless last move, b7-b5, allowing White to escape with: 1. Qxg6+ Kh8 2. Qxh6+ Kg8 3. Qg6+ .
3. Two rooks on the seventh rank work together wonderfully as this example shows: 1. Rxg7+ Kh8 2. Rh7+ Kg8 3. Rhg7+ Kh8 (it would be tragic for Black to go the other way, as after 3. ... Kf8 4. Rcf7\# Black even loses) 4. Rh7+ and there is no escape from the checks.
4. Black has a material advantage, but this is a tricky position for both sides. After 1. Rg5+ Kh7? White even wins with 2. Kf2! , clearing the first rank for White's rook to checkmate on h1. After 1. ... Kh8 White must settle for a draw by perpetual checks with 2. Rh5+ Kg8 3. Rg5+ Kh8 4. Rh5+ . After 1. ... Kh8 , the attempt 2. Kf2 would backfire, as now Black can capture 2. ... Nxf6 and after 3. Rh1+ blocks with 3. ... Nh7 .
5. This idea is similar to that in number 3, when two rooks work together on the seventh rank. Here, however, they do the same thing but vertically: 1. R2g7+ Kh6 2. Rg6+ Kh7 3. R6g7+ and Black's king cannot escape the checks.
6. White's position would look pretty grim (down a rook) were it not for perpetual checks: 1. Qa1+ . Now the only thing Black can do is interpose the rook with 1. ... Rg7 , but the checks keep coming: 2. Qa8+ Rg8 3. Qa1+ .
7. White's attack looks overwhelming, but there's no escape from the checks after 1. ... Qe3+ 2. Kh1 Qe4+ 3. Kg1 Qe3+ 4. Kh1 Qe4+ or 2. Qf2 Qc1+ 3. Qf1 Qe3+ .
8. Black has some deadly threats along the a-file. Yet with a nice rook sacrifice White can save the game: 1. Rxg6+! fxg6 2. Qxg6+ Kh8 3. Qh6+ Kg8 4. Qg6+ Kh8 5. Qh6+ . After 1. ... Kh7 White sacrifices the rook again with 2. Rh6+! in order to achieve a draw: 2. ... Kxh6 3. Qg5+ Kh7 4. Qxh5+ Kg7 5. Qg5+ .
9. Both White rooks are attacked by the Black bishops. With a pretty rook sacrifice White can create a perpetual check patterns 1. Rxb6+! cxb6 2. Ra8+ Kc7 3. Ra7+ Kh8 4. Ra8+ and the king has no escape.
10. White, down a knight, is happy to save the game with 1. Bh6+ Kg8 2. Rdg1+! Bxg1 3. Rxg1+

Perpetual Check

- Kh8 and then 4. Bg7+ Kg8 5. Bh6+ Kh8 6. Bg7+.
11. Here White uses a stalemate idea, and if Black refuses to capture White's last mobile piece, then the game ends in perpetual check: 1. Rf7+ Ke8 (1. ... Kxf7 results in immediate stalemate) 2. Re7+ Kd8 3. Rd7+ Kc8 4. Rc7+ Kb8 5. Rb7+ Ka8 6. Ra7+.
12. Black is clearly ahead in material, but White, starting with a quiet move, can force a draw with: 1. Rb8 b5 2. Rb7+ Ka8 3. Rb8+ Ka7 4. Rb7+.
13. After 1. Nh6+ Kh8, White uses the idea of a back-rank mate to force a draw by perpetual check: 2. Nf7+ Kg8 (of course not 2. ... Rxf7? 3. Re8+ Rf8 4. Rxf8#) 3. Nh6+ Kh8 4. Nf7+ and Black had better settle for a draw.
14. An amazing position! White has an extra queen and knight, but White's king is not exactly home safe! Black sacrifices another piece from the few that remain! 1. ... Bb7+! (White must not accept the offer, as after 2. Kxb7 Kd7! White cannot stop 3. ... Rhb8#) 2. Kb5 Ba6+. Now White is better off repeating moves with 3. Kc6 Bb7+, because after 3. Ka4 Bc4, White can only delay but not prevent the checkmate with b6-b5.
15. With a beautiful queen sacrifice, White saves a seemingly lost game: 1. Qxh7+! Kxh7 2. Rh6+ Kg8 3. Ne7+ Kg7 4. Nf5+ Kg8 5. Ne7+.
16. Black has an extra rook and knight, but White, giving up another rook, can force perpetual checks: 1. Rxh7+! Qxh7 2. Qxf8+ Qg8 3. Qh6+.
17. After 1. Nf5+ Black has to play 1. ... Kg8 because after 1. ... Kh8 White mates in two with 2. g7+ Kg8 3. Nh6#. After the correct 1. ... Kg8 White can rescue the game with 2. Ne7+ Kg7 3. Nf5+.
18. White has a big material advantage and an attack. But Black can get out of trouble with a miraculous combination: 1. ... Qh3+! 2. Kxh3 Rh6+ 3. Kg4 Rg6+ 4. Kf5 Rf6+ 5. Kg4 Rg6+ 6. Kh3 Rh6+. Of course, it would be tragic if White were to avoid the draw with 3. Kg2, as then Black plays 3. ... Rxh2#.
19. Black's last move was Qf7-d5, threatening Qxg2# and attacking White's knight on c5. But White has an amazing resource: 1. Qxa7+! Kxa7 2. Ra3+ Kb8 3. Na6+ (using the pin along the b-file) 3. ... Ka7 4. Nc5+ (4. Nc7+ also works) 4. ... Kb8 5. Na6+.
20. This example shows nice cooperation between a rook and knight. 1. Qxa5+! Kxa5 2. Nc6+ Ka6 3. Nb4+ Ka7 4. Nc6+. Black even loses after 2. ... Ka4 3. Rb4#.

21. A pretty example of the perpetual idea: 1. Rf8+! Kg6 (if 1. ... Kxf8? White wins Black's queen after the discovery 2. Bxg7+ Kxg7 3. Qxe4) 2. Rf6+ Kh7 3. Rh6+! (the same idea from the other side!) 3. ... Kg8 (if 3. ... Kxh6? 4. Bxg7+) 4. Rh8+! Kf7 5. Rf8+ and going around the circle starts all over again!
22. Black is up a bishop yet White can save the game: 1. Qh7+! Kxh7 2. Nf8+ Kh8 3. Ng6+ Kh7 4. Nf8+ and the Black king cannot escape the perpetual checks.
23. Here White is able to force a draw thanks to a discovered check. 1. Ra8+! Kc7 (if 1. ... Kxa8 2. c7+ and White wins) 2. Ra7+ Kc8 3. Ra8+ Kc7 4. Ra7+ with a draw.
24. Here again we see the strength of the two rooks on the seventh rank: 1. Qxg6+! fxg6 2. Rhg7+ Kh8 3. Rh7+ Kg8 4. Rhg7+ Kf8 5. Rgf7+ Kg8 6. Rg7+ draw.
25. Black has just offered to trade queens by playing Qxa1. After a nice rook sacrifice, 1. Rxh7+! Kxh7, and a series of accurate checks, White forces a draw. 2. Qg6+ Kh8 3. Qh6+ Kg8 4. Qe6+ (but not 4. Qg6+, which allows 4. ... Qg7 to block the checks) 4. ... Kf8 5. Qd6+ Ke8 6. Qe6+ Kf8 7. Qd6+ Kf7 8. Qe6+ Kg7 9. Qg6+ Kh8 10. Qh6+ Kg8 11. Qe6+.

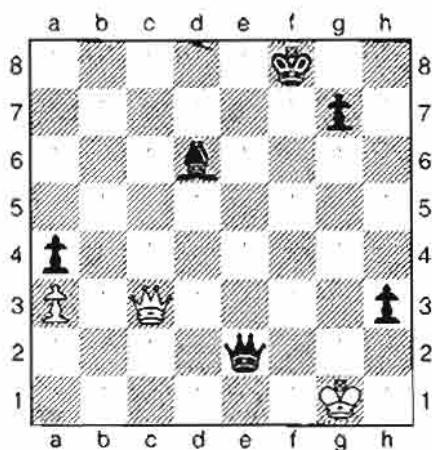
19

STALEMATE

In chess there are three possible results. Obviously, we prefer to win all our games! But unfortunately, we can't expect to do that in real life. At times we face bad positions, and those are the times when our best hope is to save the game with a draw. One of the methods of achieving a draw is to create a stalemate.

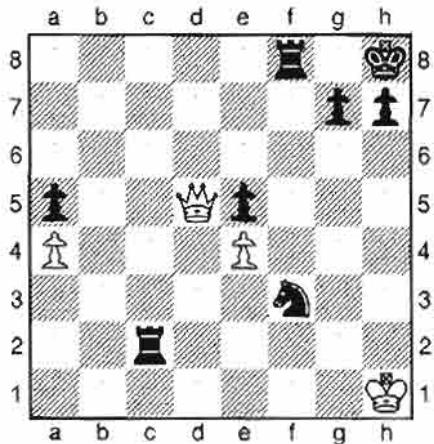
In this chapter, we'll see how this is done.

In the first position, Black has an overwhelming material advantage. But it's White's move, and White can use a decoy to force stalemate.



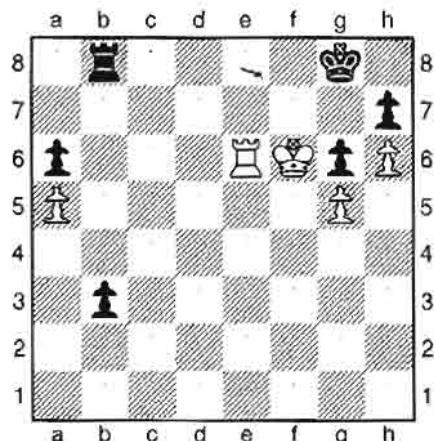
The solution is 1. Qf3+, sacrificing White's last mobile piece and forcing the Black queen to a bad square. After 1. ... Qxf3 White has no legal move, and so the game is a draw by stalemate.

In the next example, Black also has a lot of extra material. Avoiding a loss would be a great accomplishment for White!



The White king can't move so all White needs to do is to get rid of the queen with 1. Qg8+!, and no matter which Black piece captures the queen, White is stalemated.

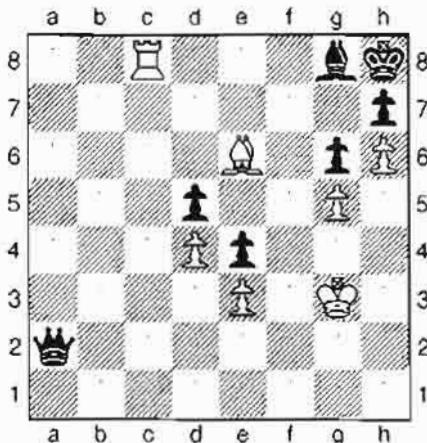
Here, Black is up by only one pawn but it is far advanced, giving Black a serious advantage.



It's hard to imagine that in one move the game will end in a draw. The White king has several free squares to move to and the White rook is also active. Yet after 1. Re8+! Black is forced to accept the "gift," and after 1. ... Rxe8 White is stalemated.

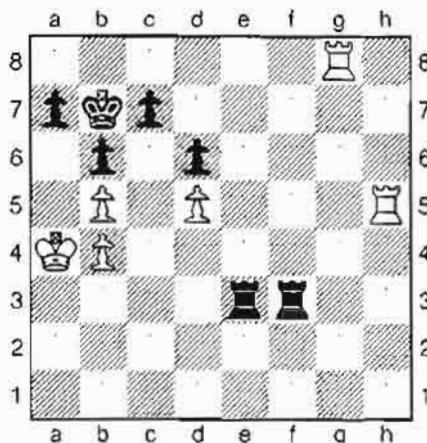
Here again Black has a material advantage. However, White's rook is pinning Black's bishop and White threatens mate on the next move. It's Black's move.

Stalemate



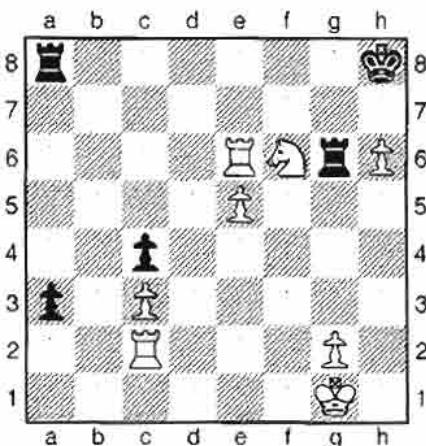
Black can escape by forcing a stalemate with 1. ... Qh2+ 2. Kg4. Accepting the sacrifice with 2. Kxh2 is immediate stalemate. 2. ... Qg3+. Also, 2. ... Qh3+ 3. Kxh3 does the job. 3. Kxg3, stalemate.

In this rook endgame, Black has only one extra pawn but it seems that White cannot avoid the coming checkmate on a3.



Notice that neither White's king nor pawns has any legal moves. So all White needs to do to get rid of his rooks! 1. Rxb8+! Kxb8 2. Rh8+ Kb7 3. Rb8+! Kxb8 stalemate.

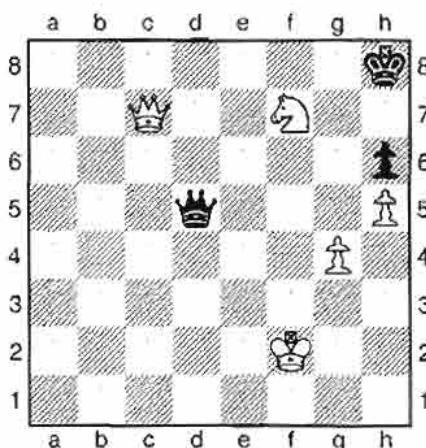
Susan's Corner

**Susan Polgar–Hort
Prague, 1995**

White is up a knight and two pawns. My opponent played 43. ... Rxh6, which I didn't worry about, and Black resigned after 44. Ra2 Ra7 45. Rc6, 1–0.

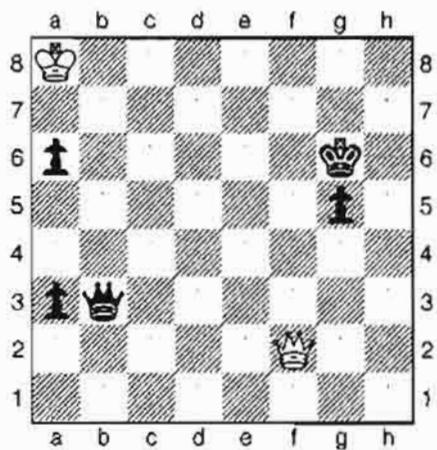
He missed a rare opportunity to try to play for stalemate. 43. ... a2 44. Rxa2 Rxg2+ (but not 44. ... Rxa2? 45. Re8+) 45. Rxg2 Ra1+. It's true that I can escape the checks, but I would have to find some accurate moves to release the Black king from the stalemate position. 46. Kf2 Rf1+ (or 46. ... Ra2+ 47. Ke3 Re2+ 48. Kd4 Rd2+ 49. Kc5) 47. Ke3 Rf3+ (47. ... Re1+ 48. Kd4 Rd1+ 49. Kc5) 48. Kd4 Rf4+ 49. Ne4.

And now, 25 practice examples.

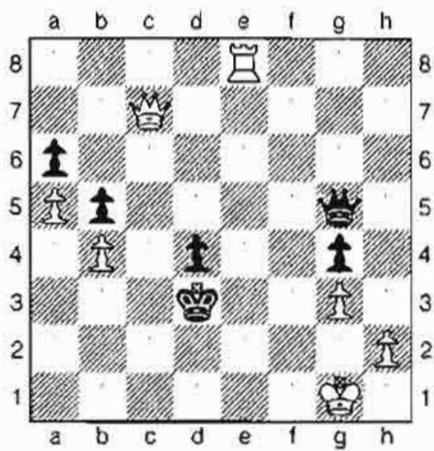
1. Black to move

Stalemate

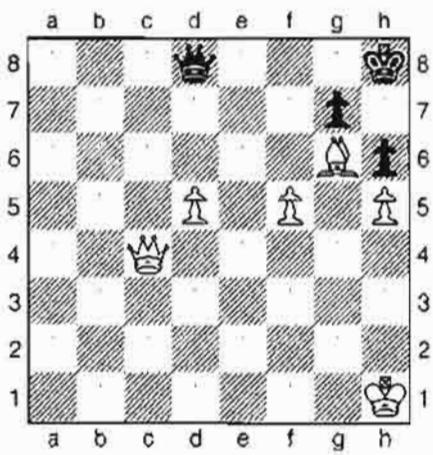
2. White to move



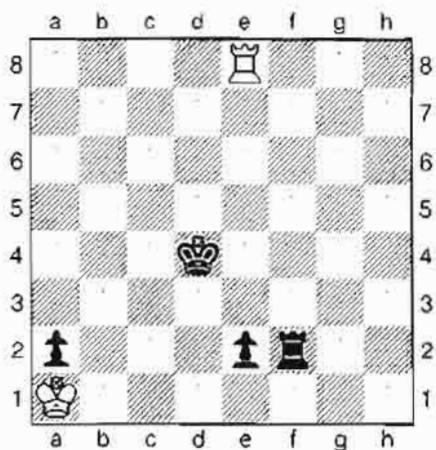
3. Black to move



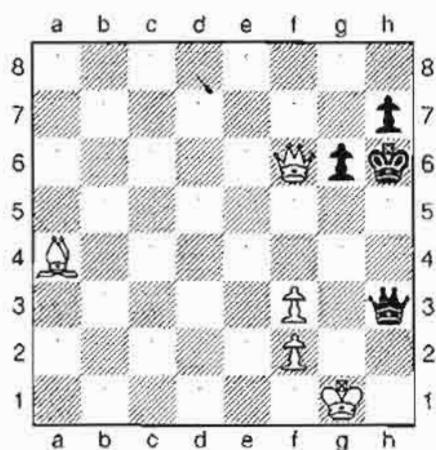
4. Black to move



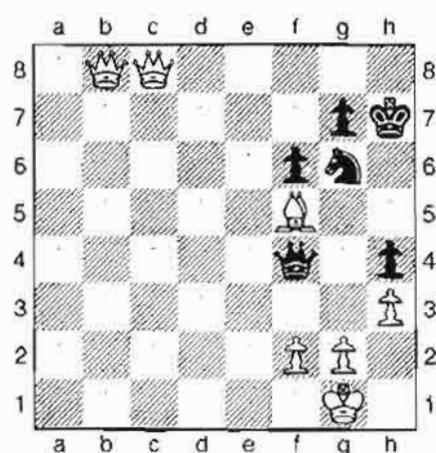
5. White to move



6. Black to move

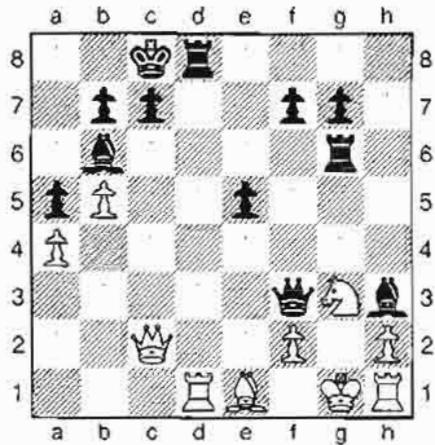


7. Black to move

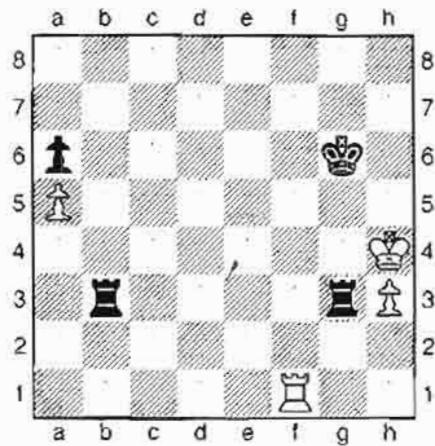


Stalemate

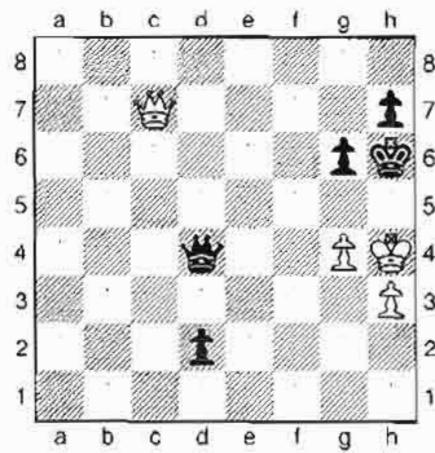
8. White to move



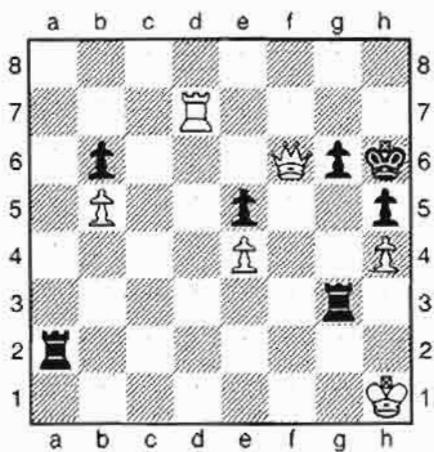
9. White to move



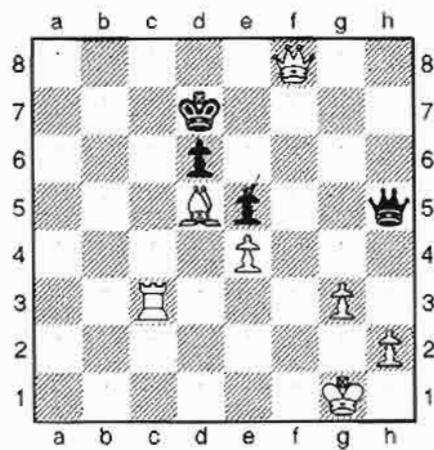
10. White to move



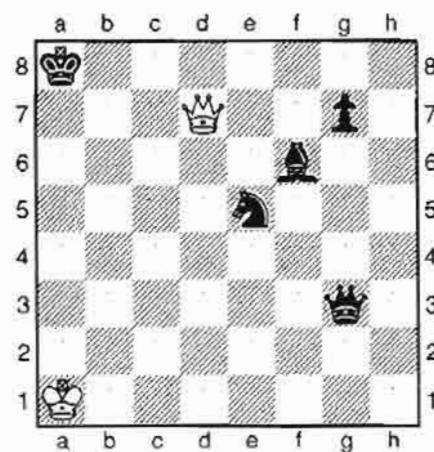
11. Black to move



12. Black to move

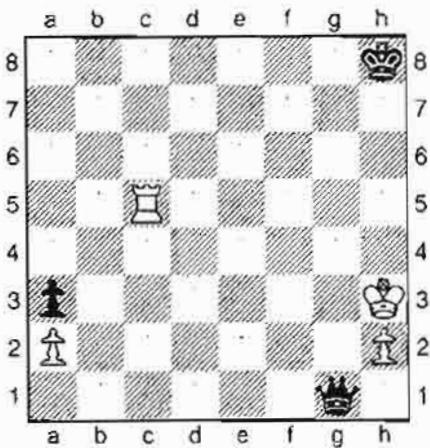


13. White to move

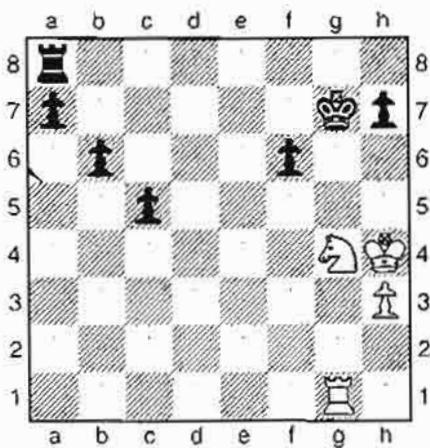


Stalemate

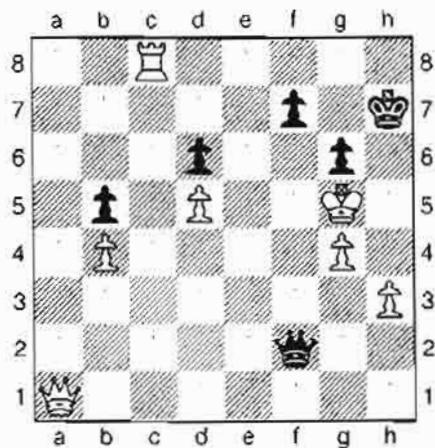
14. White to move



15. White to move



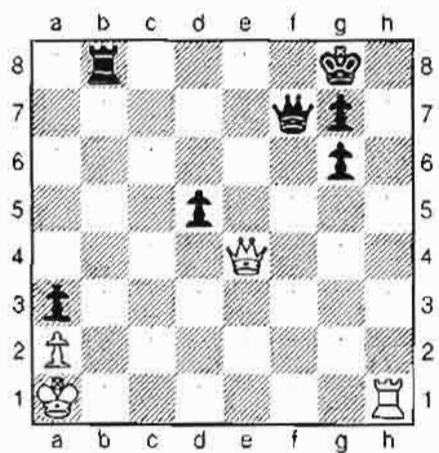
16. Black to move



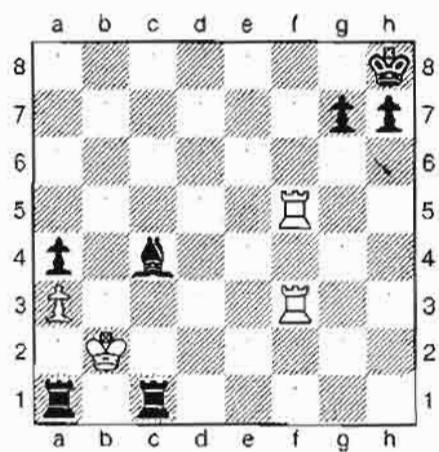
CHESS TACTICS FOR CHAMPIONS



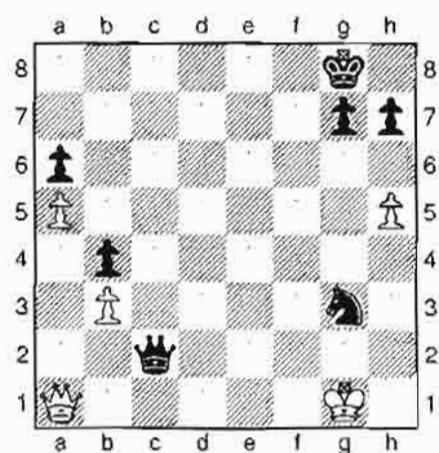
17. White to move



18. White to move



19. White to move

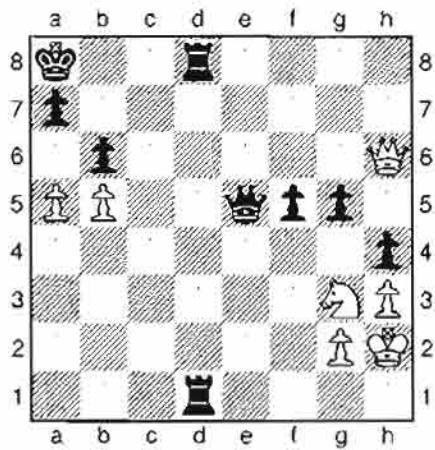




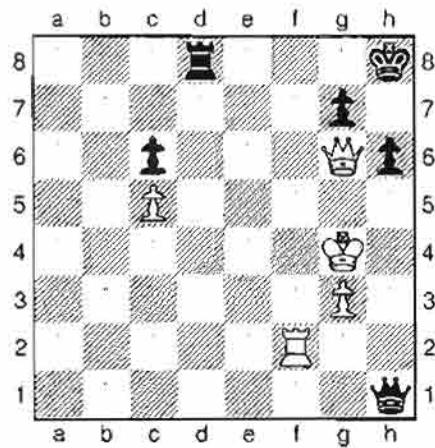
Stalemate



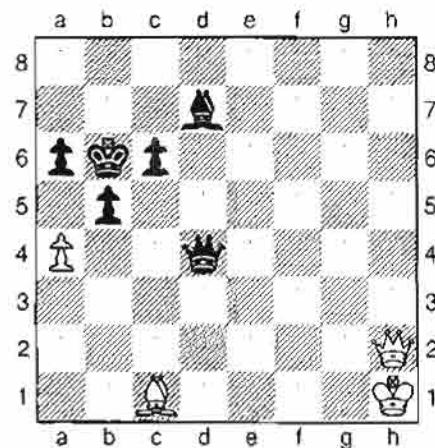
20. White to move



21. White to move



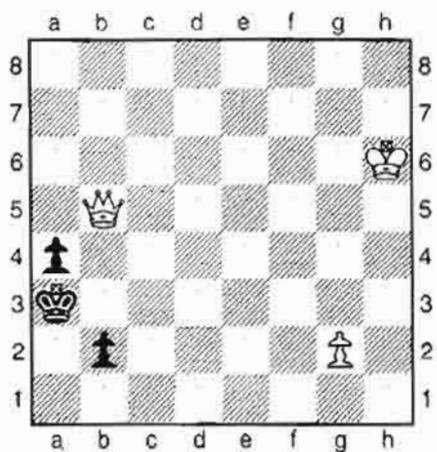
22. White to move



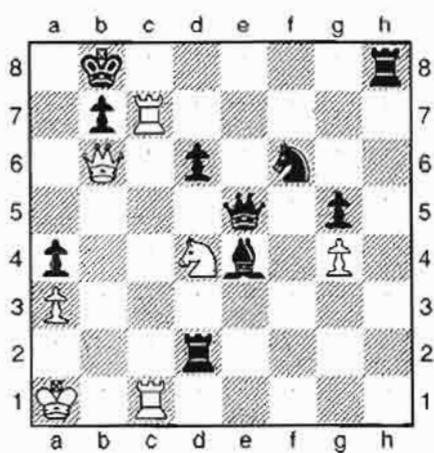
CHESS TACTICS FOR CHAMPIONS



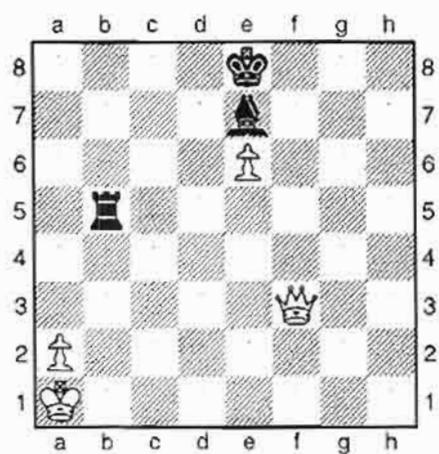
23. Black to move



24. White to move



25. Black to move



Solutions

1. White has an extra knight and pawn, and Black is in check. Yet after 1. ... Qxf7+! 2. Qxf7 the game ends in a draw by stalemate.
2. In this queen endgame, Black has three extra pawns. White can escape only by sacrificing the queen with 1. Qb6+! Qxb6 stalemate.
3. Black, down a full rook, is very lucky to be able to save the game with 1. ... Qc1+! 2. Qxc1 stalemate.
4. Right now, Black's king can move to g8. But after a smart queen sacrifice, 1. ... Qxd5+! 2. Qxd5, none of the Black pieces can move and the game ends in a draw.
5. Black's e-pawn is very close to the promotion square. In fact, Black would have an easy win if the a2 pawn were not on the board. Now White has a nice saving combination. 1. Rxe2! Rxe2 stalemate.
6. White has an extra bishop, which normally would be a winning advantage. But Black has a surprising move to save the game: 1. ... Qg4+! 2. fxg4 stalemate. If the White king moves out of check instead, Black just takes White's bishop on a4.
7. White has two queens and Black only one. Black can force a draw either by repetition of moves or by stalemate as follows: 1. ... Qc1+! 2. Kh2 (or 2. Qxc1 stalemate) 2. ... Qf4+! 3. Qxf4 stalemate.
8. This is a very rare stalemate with many pieces on the board. Normally stalemate only occurs in the endgame. 1. Rxd8+ Kxd8 2. Qd1+! Qxd1, and due to all the pins, none of White's pieces can move.
9. This is a perfect example, demonstrating that even in a seemingly totally winning endgame, caution is needed! Black's last move allowed White a nice escaping combination: 1. Rg1! Rxg1 stalemate.
10. Black's d-pawn is awfully close to promotion. 1. g5 would be checkmate if the g-pawn was not pinned. But it is. On the other hand, Black's d-pawn is awfully close to promotion. So it's best to save the game! 1. Qf4+! Qxf4 stalemate.
11. Black's only hope is to get rid of both rooks to draw by stalemate. The question is which rook to sacrifice first. The correct order is: 1. ... Rh2+! 2. Kxh2 Rg2+! 3. Kh1 Rg1+! 4. Kh2 Rg2+! 5. Kxg2 stalemate. The other way doesn't work: after 1. ... Rh3+ 2. Kg1 Rh1+ 3. Kxh1 Rh2+ 4. Kg1 Rg2+ 5. Kf1 Rg1+ 6. Ke2 the king runs away to the queenside: 6. ... Re1+ 7. Kd3

- Rd1+ 8. Kc4 Rc1+ 9. Kd5 Rd1+ 10. Ke6.
12. The only mobile Black piece is the queen. So all Black needs to do is to give it up, making sure the bind around the Black king remains. 1. ... Qxh2+! 2. Kf1 Qe2+! 3. Kg1 Qg2+! 4. Kxg2 stalemate.
13. Black has a huge material advantage. White's only hope is stalemate. But for now the king has plenty of places to go. But after 1. Qa4+ Kb7 White can give up the queen in a way that achieves stalemate! 2. Qb3+! Qxb3.
14. This is a two-move stalemate combination. On the first move White plays a decoy, forcing Black's king to the g-file. 1. Rh5+ Kg8 2. Rg5+! Qxg5 stalemate.
15. Black is better, with four pawns for a knight. White has a very surprising way to force stalemate: 1. Nh6+! Kxh6 (1. ... Kh8? would lose at once, as 2. Nf7 mates, and after 1. ... Kf8? White skewers with 2. Rg8+ winning Black's rook) 2. Rg8! A brilliant move, "trapping" Black's rook! 2. ... Rxg8 stalemate.
16. White is up a rook and also threatens mate in one. Black, with three smart moves in a row, creates an unexpected stalemate! 1. ... f6+! 2. Qxf6 Qh4+! 3. Kxh4 g5+! 4. Kxg5 draw.
17. Here White's king is already in a stalemate position; the only thing left to do is to get rid of White's queen and rook. 1. Rh8+! Kxh8 2. Qh1+ Kg8 3. Qh8+! Kxh8 stalemate.
18. White's king and pawn have no moves, so the task is to give up the two rooks. 1. Rf8+ Bg8 2. Rxg8+! Kxg8 3. Rf8+! Kxf8 stalemate.
19. After a pretty queen sacrifice, White needs to get rid of the last movable pawn: 1. Qxg7+! Kxg7 2. h6+! Kxh6 stalemate.
20. As in the previous position, White sacrifices the queen and then with a pawn check creates a stalemate: 1. Qc6+ Kb8 2. Qb7+! Kxb7 3. a6+ Kb8 stalemate.
21. White's king is out in the open and faces many dangers, but there is a saving combination: 1. Rf8+! Rxf8 2. Qxg7+! Kxg7 stalemate.
22. White gets rid of one piece at a time: 1. Be3! Qxe3 2. Qf2! Qxf2 (now the stalemate pattern is created) 3. a5+! Kxa5 stalemate.
23. Despite being a queen down, Black can save the game with: 1 ... b1Q! 2. Qxb1 stalemate.
24. White's king cannot move, nor can the knight or either pawn. Here is how White sacrifices the remaining pieces: 1. Rc8+! Rxc8 2. Rxc8+ Kxc8 3. Qc7+! Kxc7 stalemate.
25. 1. ... Bf6+! forces White to capture with 2. Qxf6 and now that a stalemate pattern is created, all Black needs to do is 2. ... Rb1+! 3. Kxb1 to achieve the goal.



OTHER IDEAS

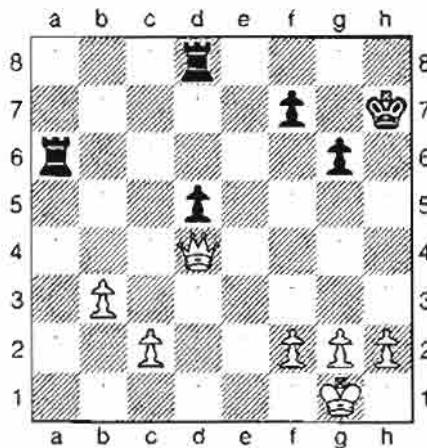
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TRAPS AND COUNTER-TRAPS

One of the areas in which stronger players outsmart their less experienced opponents is in calculation. Often one side sees a good-looking move or combination but stops the calculation prematurely and thereby misjudges the evaluation of the whole situation.

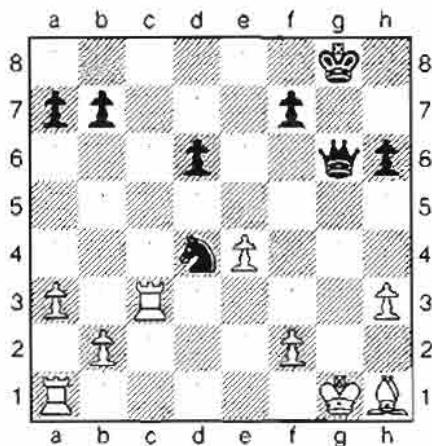
The following examples will show you what I mean.

In this position, White has a fork at his disposal. Can you see the move?



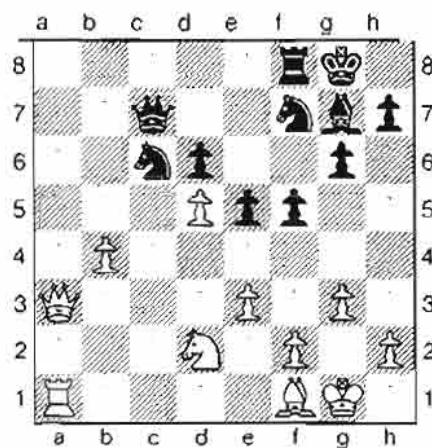
White's fork is 1. Qh4+ Kg7 2. Qxd8?. But the plan backfires, as Black has a "counter-trap" to checkmate with 2. ... Ra1#.

In the next position, White is in check. What should White do?



It would be a serious mistake to pin with 1. Rg3? because Black can fork with 1. ... Ne2+. Much better is the safer 1. Kf1.

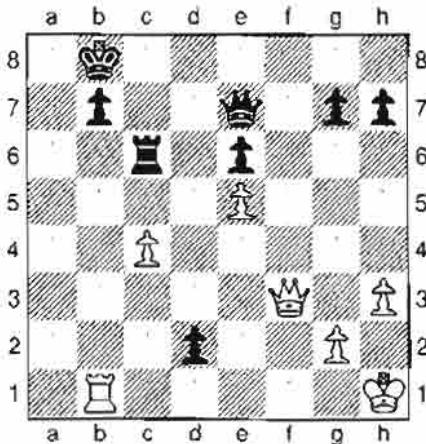
In the following position, White can take the Black knight right away with 1. dxc6 or can play 1. Qc1 (the best move). But there's another move that looks good ...



White can try to be fancy and pin the knight with 1. Rc1?, but Black then has an unexpected escape from the pin with 1. ... Qa7! 2. Qxa7 Nxa7.

In the next position, White spots an opportunity to win a rook by using a pin.

Traps and Counter-Traps

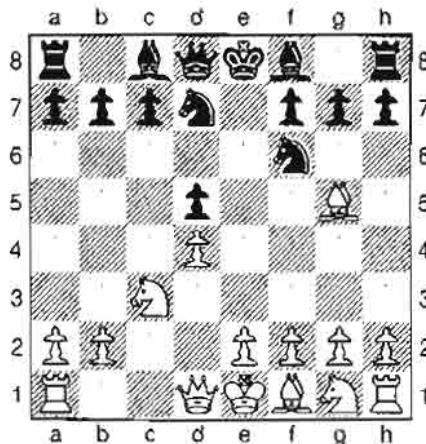


What happens if White plays 1. Qxc6? An unpleasant surprise follows: 1. ... d1Q+, deflecting the rook from the b-file. After 2. Rxd1 the pin is released so Black can capture 2. ... bxc6, winning material.

Next comes a famous miniature.

Queen's Gambit Declined

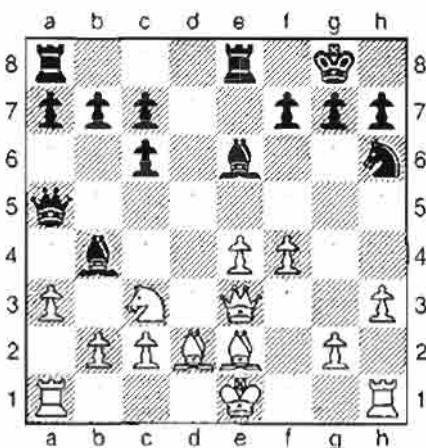
1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 Nbd7 5. cxd5 exd5



It seems that White can exploit the pin on the knight on f6 and play 6. Nxd5, but an unpleasant surprise would follow: 6. ... Nxd5!, sacrificing the queen temporarily. 7. Bxd8 Bb4+ 8. Qd2 Bxd2+ 9. Kxd2 Kxd8 and Black wins material.

Susan's Corner

Susan Polgar—Jun Xie
Jaen, 1996



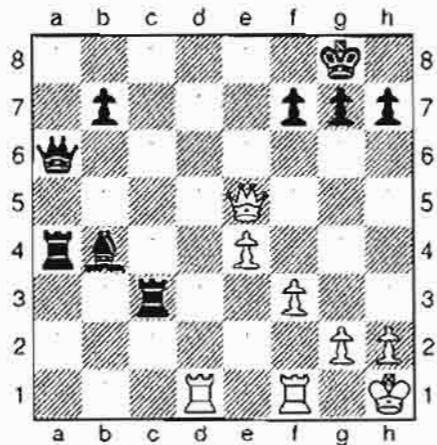
This was the seventh match game of my world championship match versus the Chinese world champion. Here she noticed an interesting combination and decided to surprise me with 15. ... Nf5?. At first, I thought I might be in trouble after 16. exf5 Bc4. But then I noticed the winning way. 17. Qd4. I would have a slightly worse endgame after 17. Ne4 Bxd2+ 18. Qxd2 Qxd2+ 19. Kxd2 Rxe4. 17. ... Bxc3. After 17. ... Bxe2, I intended to play 18. Qxb4, when Black has only one discovered check and nothing more. 18. Bxc3 Rxe2+. I believe my opponent stopped her calculations at this point when she played 15. ... Nf5, assuming that if 19. Kd1 then 19. ... Qd5 defends against all three threats (the queen and the bishop en prise and 20. Qg7#). Or if I play 19. Kf1 then the rook moves somewhere with discovered check....

But after 19. Kf1! Black is the one getting in trouble. None of the discovered checks achieve anything. 19. ... Qxc3. After the natural-looking 19. ... Re4+ 20. Qxc4! Qxf5 (20. ... Rxc4 21. Bxa5 Rxc2 22. Bc3) 21. Qd3 Rxf4+ 22. Kg1, White is safe. 20. bxc3 Re4+ 21. Kf2 Rxd4 22. cxd4. As a result of the complications, White has won the exchange. We played on for a while, but eventually I converted my material advantage to a victory on move 44.

Here are 25 practice puzzles:

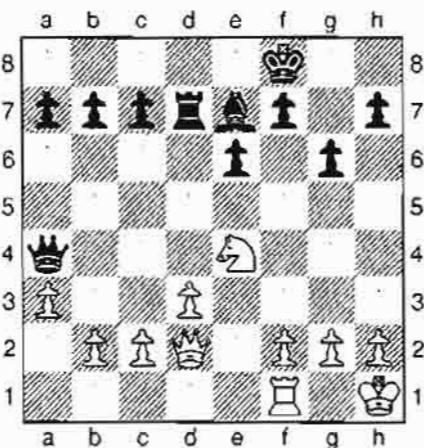
Traps and Counter-Traps

1



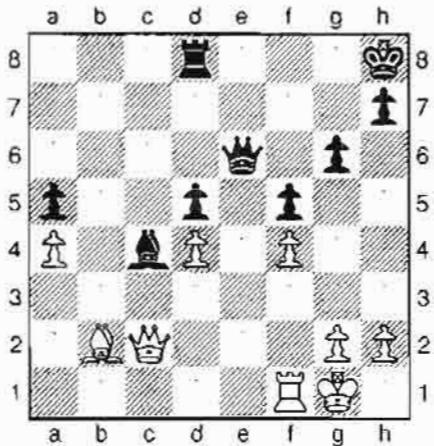
White's best choice here is 1. Rd8+ Bf8 2. Rfd1, with threats such as 3. Rxf8+ Kxf8 4. Rd8#. But what is wrong with 1. Qxc3?

2



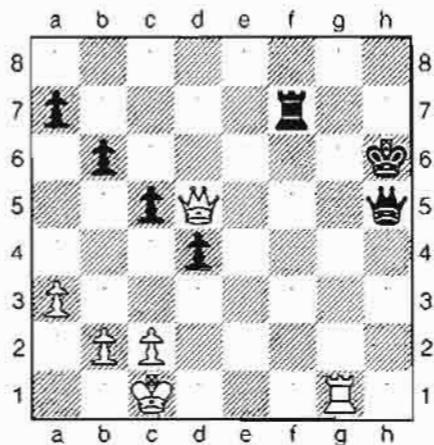
Can Black use the pin on the d-file and win a piece with 1. ... Qxe4?

3



Can White win a bishop using a discovery with 1. Qxc4 dxc4 2. d5+?

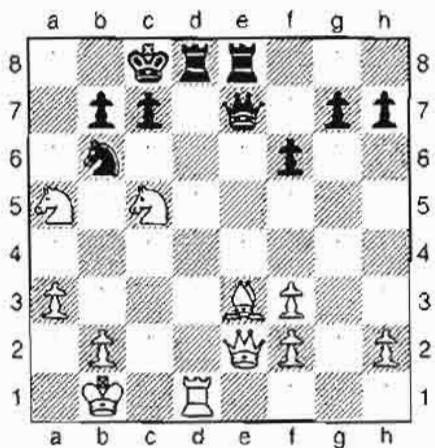
4



Should White be happy noticing 1. Rh1?

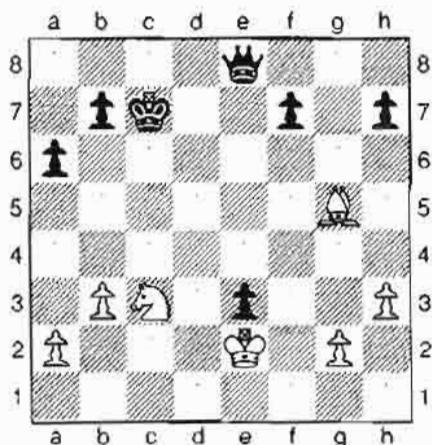
Traps and Counter-Traps

5



Is 1. ... Qxc5 a good idea?

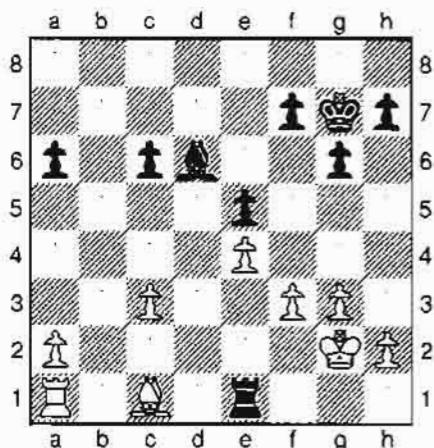
6



Black can fork White's bishop and knight with 1. ... Qe5. Is that a good idea?

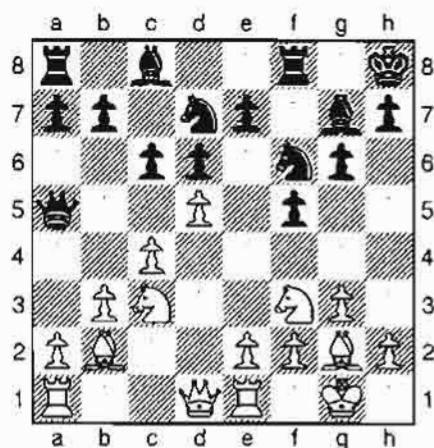


7



Black has a pin on the first rank. Can it be exploited immediately by playing 1. ... Ba3?

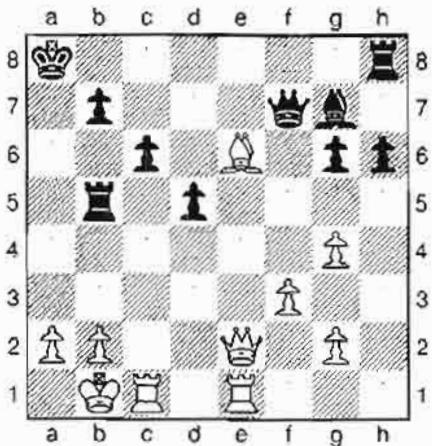
8



Can Black win a pawn with 1. ... Nxd5 2. cxd5 Bxc3?

Traps and Counter-Traps

9



What is Black's best choice: 1. ... Rxb2+, 1. ... Qxe6, or 1. ... Qf6?

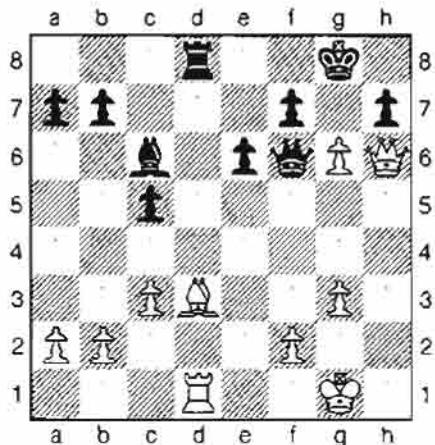
10



Can Black win a piece with 1. ... Qxb3?

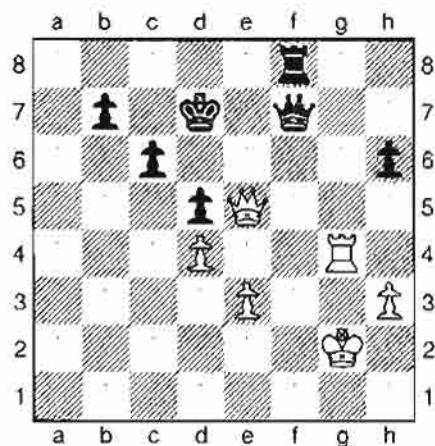


11



Should Black play 1. ... Qxg6 with the idea 2. Bxg6 Rxd1+ 3. Kh2 Rh1#?

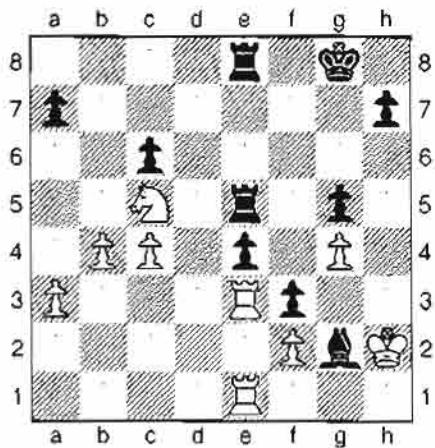
12



Is 1. Rg7 a winning move?

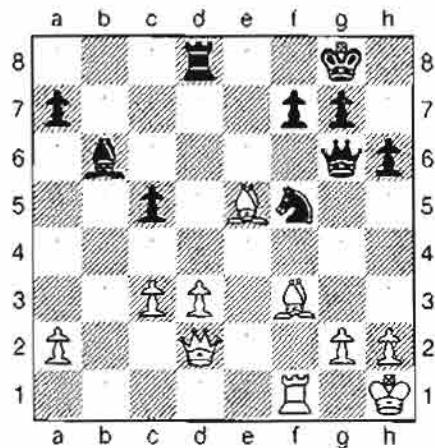
Traps and Counter-Traps

13



Black's correct plan is to get a rook to h6 with checkmate to follow. Which is the best way to do it: 1. ... Rxc5 2. bxc5 Re6, or 1. ... R8e6?

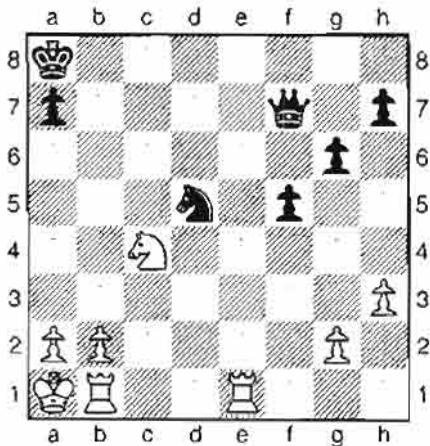
14



Is White winning a piece by the pin 1. Be4?

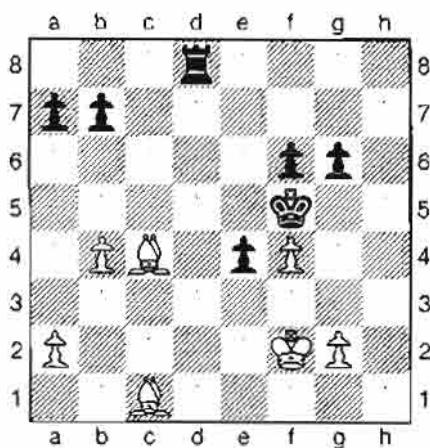


15



Does White win or lose after 1. Nd6?

16

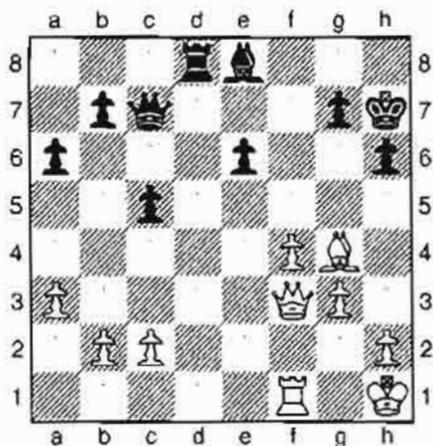


Is Black winning a bishop after the skewer 1. ... Rc8?



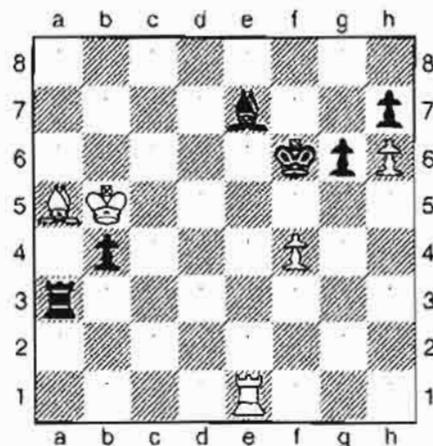
Traps and Counter-Traps

17



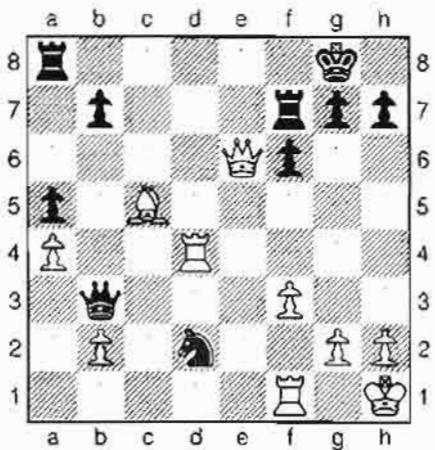
Is it safe for White to take the pawn with 1. Bxe6?

18



Does the combination 1. Rxe7 Kxe7 2. Bxb4+ work?

19



Can White sacrifice a rook with 1. Qd6, based on Black's back-rank weakness?

20

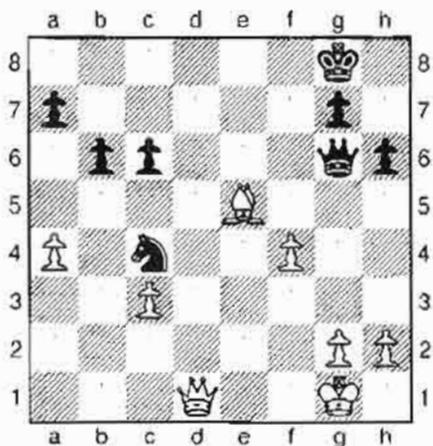


Can White save the game after 1. ... Bf6?



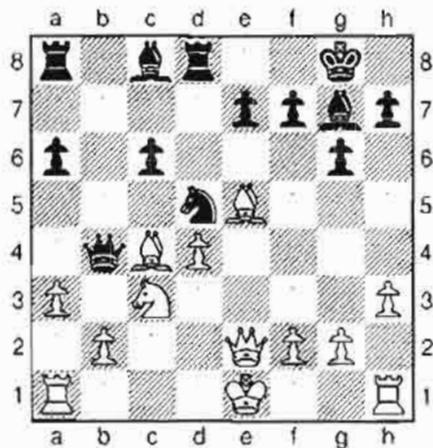
Traps and Counter-Traps

21



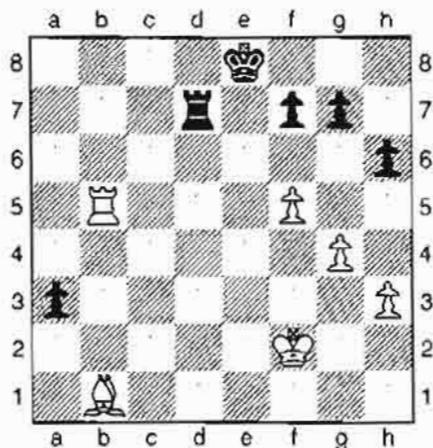
Black found the cute trick 1. ... Qxg2+ 2. Kxg2 Ne3+ 3. Kf3 Nxd1, winning a pawn. Would you go for that?

22



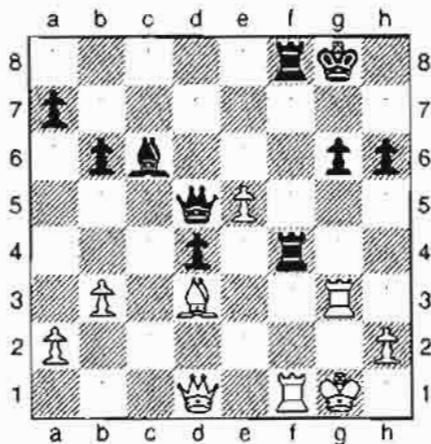
Can Black delay moving his queen away by playing 1. ... Nxc3?

23



Black can win White's bishop. What is the correct order of moves
1. ... a2 or 1. ... Rd2+.

24

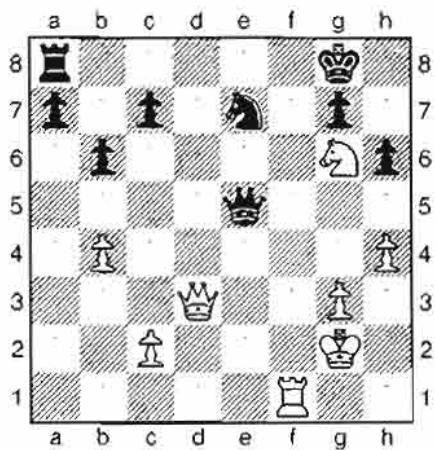


Is 1. Bc4 a good choice?



Traps and Counter-Traps

25



Black is a pawn ahead. Is trading queens with 1. ... Qd5+ the right continuation?

Solutions

1. 1. Qxc3? would work after 1. ... Bxc3?, due to Black's back-rank weakness, as White mates with 2. Rd8#. But after 1. ... Qxf1+! 2. Rxf1 Bxc3 Black comes out ahead.
2. No, because after 1. ... Qxe4? White can get out of the pin by an intermediate check with 2. Qh6+ and then capture Black's queen.
3. No, because the Black queen can evade the d4-d5 discovery threat after 1. Qxc4? with 1. ... Qe3+ and then White's queen goes.
4. No, because after 1. Rh1? Black wins material after 1. ... Rf1+.
5. No, after 1. ... Qxc5? White simply trades with 2. Rxd8+. Now after 2. ... Rxd8 the Black rook no longer pins the bishop on e3 and therefore White can capture with 3. Bxc5. If Black recaptures with 2. ... Kxd8 White wins with the 3. Nxb7+ fork.
6. No. After 1. ... Qe5? White has a tricky combination with 2. Bf4! Qxf4, creating a fork with 3. Nd5+, and resulting in material gain.
7. This is a typical situation in which a pin backfires, resulting in a discovery. 1. ... Ba3? 2. Bh6+! Kxh6 3. Rxe1 and White wins the exchange.
8. No. After 1. ... Nxd5? 2. cxd5 Bxc3 White comes out ahead after the cross-pin 3. Qd2!.
9. The best move is 1. ... Qf6. Here is what's wrong with the other two choices: 1. ... Rxb2+ 2. Qxb2 Bxb2 3. Bxf7 Bxc1 4. Kxc1 and 1. ... Qxe6 2. Qxb5! Qxe1 3. Qa4+.
10. No. After 1. ... Qxb3? 2. Qe8+ Kb7 White gets rid of the pinning piece with 3. Qxc6+! Kxc6 4. cxb3.
11. Nice idea, but it does not work. 1. ... Qxg6? (1. ... hxg6 is better) 2. Qxh7+! Kxh7 3. Bxg6+ Kxg6 4. Rxd8 or 2. ... Kf8 3. Qh8+ Qg8 (3. ... Ke7 4. Qxd8+ Kxd8 5. Bxg6+) 4. Qxg8+ Kxg8 5. Bh7+! and White wins the exchange in all variations.
12. Yes! After the cross-pin 1. Rg7! Rg8, White has a winning check: 2. Qf5+.
13. The right answer is 1. ... R8e6 2. Nxe6 Rxe6. On the other hand 1. ... Rxc5 fails to 2. Rxe4! Rxe4 3. Rxe4 and the rook on c5 is trapped!
14. No. After 1. Be4 Black escapes trouble with 1. ... Ng3+! 2. Bxg3 Qxe4! thanks to the pin along the d file. A better move is 1. Qf4 and if 1. ... Rxd3? then 2. Be4.
15. 1. Nd6? loses after 1. ... Nb4! and 2. Nxf7 Nc2# or 2. Re8+



Traps and Counter-Traps



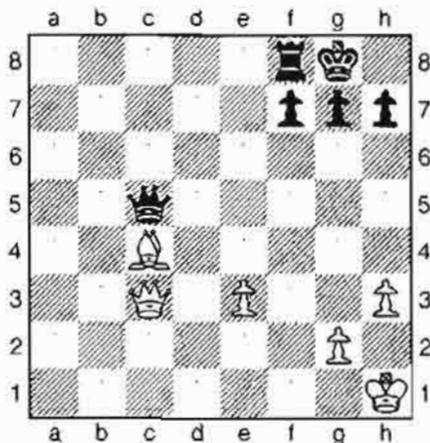
- Qxe8 3. Nxe8 Nc2#. Much better is 1. Rbd1.
16. No. In fact, 1. ... Rc8? loses after 2. g4+! Kxg4 and the fork 3. Be6+.
17. Yes, it is. After 1. Bxe6! Bc6 White can block the pin with 2. Bf5+ Kg8 3. Be4.
18. No, because after 1. Rxе7? Rxе5+ 2. Kxa5 Kxe7 Black has a winning pawn endgame. For example: 3. Kxb4 Kf6 4. Kc4 Kf5 5. Kd4 Kxf4.
19. No. After 1. Qd6? Nxе1 2. Qd8+ Black will play 2. ... Rf8! (but not 2. ... Rxd8? 3. Rxd8+ Rf8 4. Rxf8#). A better choice is 1. Re1.
20. Amazingly yes! 1. ... Bf6? 2. Qh4! Bxh4 3. Nxg6+ Kf6 4. Nxh4.
21. You should not. 1. ... Qxg2+? 2. Kxg2 Ne3+ 3. Kf3 Nxd1 would be a mistake, since the Black knight is trapped after 4. c4 g6 5. Ke2.
22. It is not recommended. Black loses the queen after 1. ... Nxc3? 2. Bxf7+! Kxf7 3. Qf3+ Kg8 4. axb4 or 2. ... Kf8 3. Bxg7+ Kxg7 4. Qe5+ Kxf7 5. axb4.
23. 1. ... a2? is a mistake due to 2. Re5+! (but not 2. Bxa2? Rd2+ forking) 2. ... Kf8 (or 2. ... Re7 3. Rxе7+ Kxe7 4. Bxa2) 3. Bxa2 Rd2+ and 4. Re2. The correct move order is 1. ... Rd2+ 2. Ke3 a2.
24. No. After 1. Bc4? Rxе1+ 2. Qxf1 Rxе1+ 3. Kxf1 Bb5 cross-pins and Black wins. The correct continuation is 1. Rxg6+ Kh8 2. Rxh6+ Kg7 3. Rg6+ Kh8 4. Qh5#.
25. No. In fact it's a serious mistake. 1. ... Qd5? 2. Rf3! and now Black cannot avoid losing a piece. For example, 2. ... Qxd3 3. Nxе7+ or 2. ... Qe6 3. Nxе7+ Qxe7 4. Qd5+, forking the king and rook.

21

SIBLING POSITIONS

Sibling positions are those that appear identical but have minor differences. In this chapter we'll see a few examples in which a small difference produces big changes in the evaluation of the position.

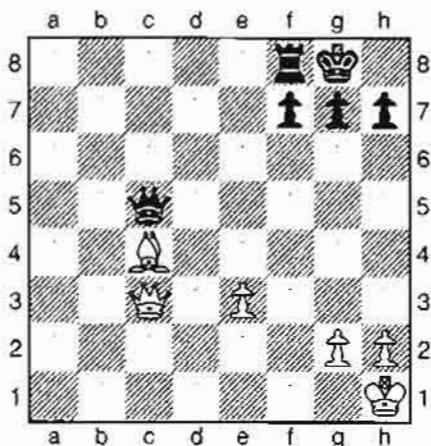
Position 1a



In this position White has a simple way to win Black's queen using a discovery: 1. Bxf7+ Rxf7 2. Qxc5.

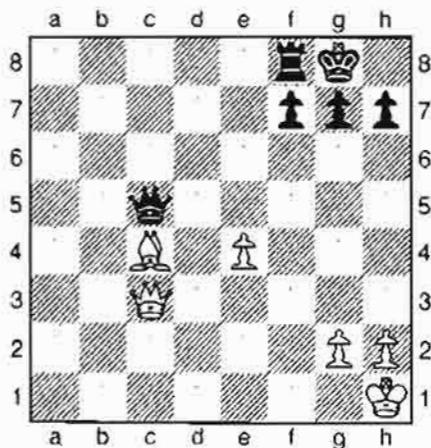
Sibling Positions

Position 1b

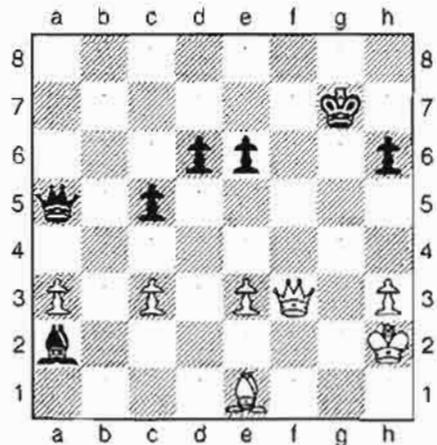


Here we have changed the position only slightly by putting White's pawn on h2 instead of h3. This tiny change makes a huge difference! Now, after the same combination, 1. Bxf7+ Rxf7 2. Qxc5, Black mates with 2. ... Rf1#.

Position 1c



Compared to position 1b, here the White e-pawn is on e4 instead of e3. How does this matter? Now after 1. Bxf7+ Rxf7 2. Qxc5 Rf1+, White can block the check with 3. Qg1 and reach a winning pawn endgame after 3. ... Rxg1+ 4. Kxg1.

Position 2a

In this position, White can win the Black bishop by a simple fork with 1. Qg2+.

Now let's move the Black bishop one square up to b3. Now 1. Qg2+ does nothing.

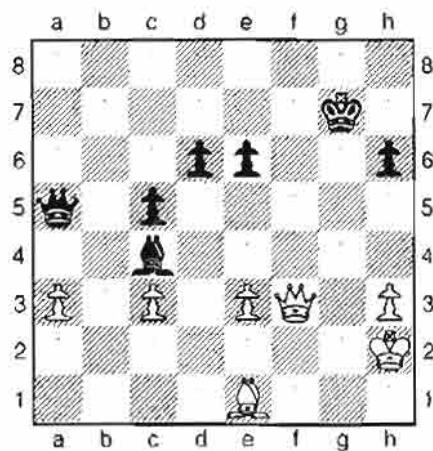
Position 2b

But, there's another fork: 1. Qb7+.

Now we move the bishop to c4.

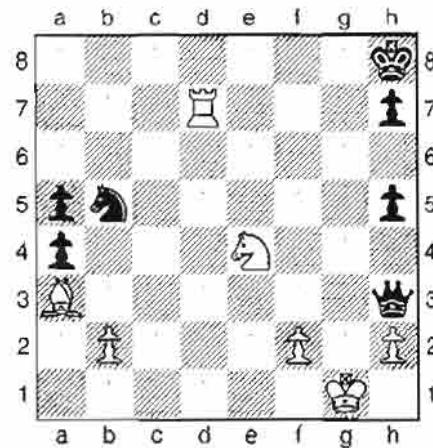
Sibling Positions

Position 2c



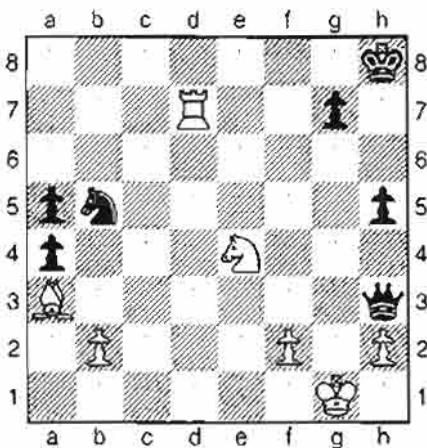
This time the fork comes from another square: 1. Qg4+. In the next endgame, Black has a material advantage.

Position 3a



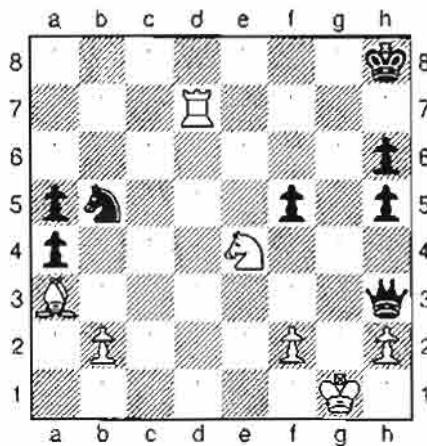
But White can reverse that using a small forking combination with 1. Rxh7+ Kxh7. Even worse would be 1. ... Kg8 allowing 2. Nf6 mate. 2. Ng5+ Kg6 3. Nxh3.

Now let's move the Black pawn from h7 to g7.

Position 3b

Here White has a different trick available: 1. **Rd8+**, forcing the Black king to an unfortunate place: 1. ... **Kh7** and now another fork, this time with: 2. **Ng5+**.

In the next position, we relocate the Black pawn from g7 to f5 and add an extra pawn on h6.

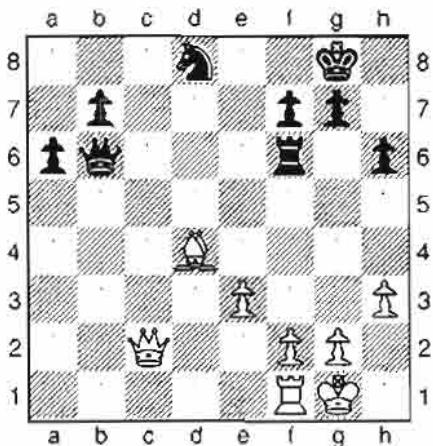
Position 3c

None of the fork tricks work here, but White can weave a mating net around the Black king with 1. **Nf6**.

In this example, Black's queen and rook are forked. The question is, can Black get out of it without losing material?

Sibling Positions

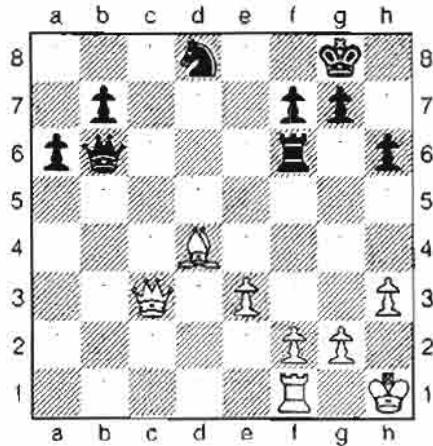
Position 4a



Black has two tries, 1. ... Rc6 and 1. ... Qc6. After 1. ... Rc6 Black loses a piece: 2. Bxb6 Rxc2 3. Bxd8. But 1. ... **Qc6** (2. Qxc6 Rxc6) saves the day.

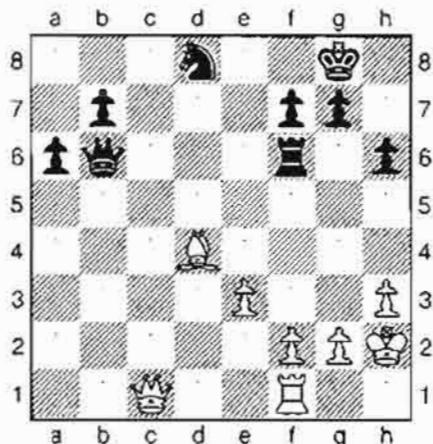
Let's make a tiny modification in the position by moving the White king from g1 to h1 and the White queen from c2 to c3.

Position 4b



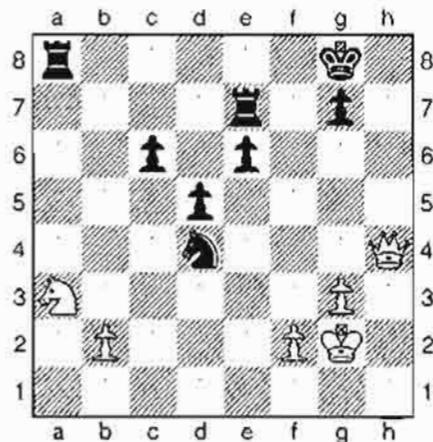
The method used in position 4a doesn't work here because after 1. ... Qc6 2. Bxf6 the White queen is on a protected square. However, because of the difference in the White king's position, Black has another way to get out of trouble, 1. ... Qb5.

Now let's put the White king on h2 and the White queen on c1.

Position 4c

Neither of the saving techniques used above works, but the intermediate check 1. ... Qd6+ does.

In the next example, the Black rook and knight are forked. How can Black save both?

Position 5a

The solution is 1 ... Nf5.

But if we put the Black pawn on f5 instead of e6, Black has to look for a different way to save the two attacked pieces.

Sibling Positions

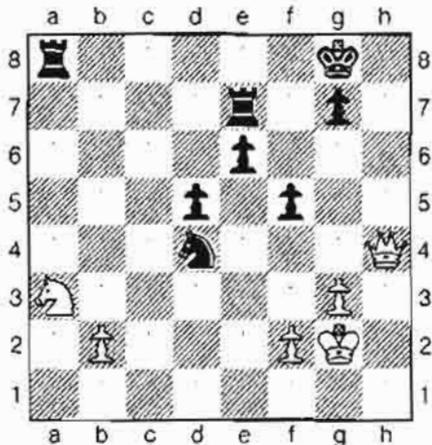
Position 5b



The correct answer now is 1. ... Re4.

Compare the following to position 5b with the pawn moved from c6 to e6.

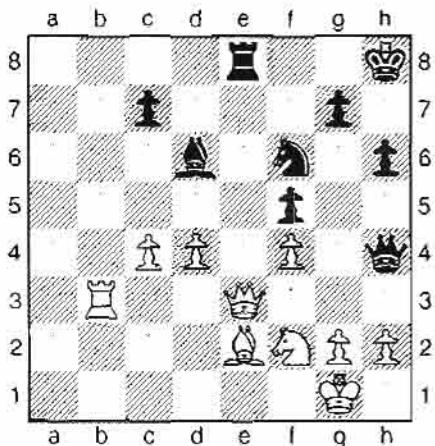
Position 5c



Here Black has a new way to save both pieces: 1. ... Nc6.

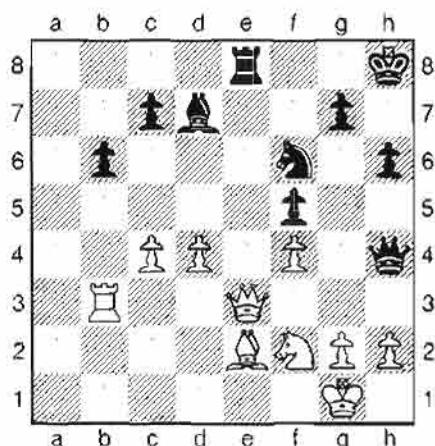
In position 6a, Black has just attacked the White queen. The question is, can White trap the Black queen?

Position 6a



1. Qxe8+? is wrong because after 1. ... Nxe8 2. g3 the Black queen can retreat along the newly opened diagonal d8-h4. How about 1. g3 Rxe3 2. Rxe3? Did Black just lose a rook? The rescue attempt 2. ... Nd5? fails to the intermediate check 3. Re8+ . But after 1. g3 Rxe3 2. Rxe3 , 2. ... Bxf4 solves all of Black's problems. Therefore, White's best choice is 1. Qd3 , giving up the f4 pawn.

Position 6b

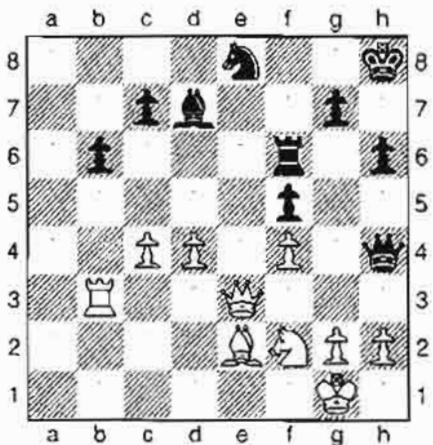


There are two small changes from position 6a. Black has an additional pawn on b6 and Black's bishop is on d7 instead of d6. This second difference means that Black can't save the game by taking the f-pawn with the bishop.

Now let's see how Black can get out of trouble after 1. g3 Rxe3 2. Rxe3 . Because the e8 square is guarded by the bishop, the knight is free to jump. 2. ... Nd5 (2. ... Ng4 works too) 3. gxh4 Nxe3 .

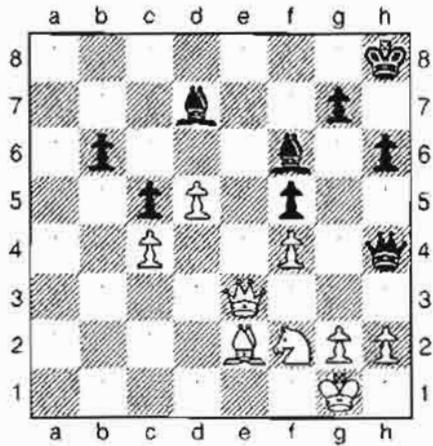
Sibling Positions

Position 6c



In position 6c the pieces are all in the same places as in position 6b, except that the Black rook and knight have been switched. Now after the obvious attempt to trap Black's queen with 1. g3, Black saves the game with the pin 1. ... Rg6. However, after 1. Qe7! Black is in trouble. The bishop on d7 is under attack and if it moves, 1. ... Bc6, then 2. g3. The 2. ... Rg6 pin doesn't work anymore because the rook itself is pinned.

Position 6d

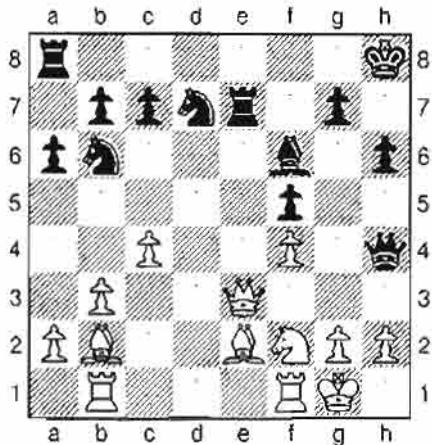


We made some more changes here, though most pieces are still in familiar positions. The question remains: Will the Black queen be trapped or not?

After 1. g3 Black can try a counterattack with 1. ... Bd4, but White wins a piece after 2. Qxd4 cxd4 3. gxh4.



Position 6e

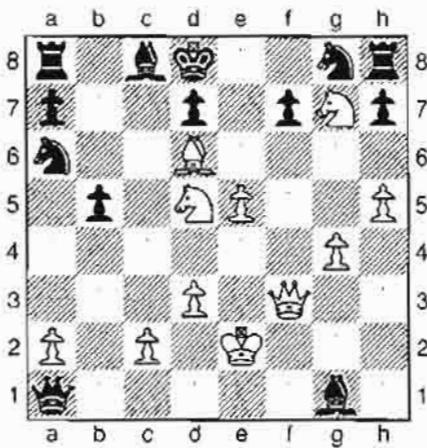


And here's our final examination of the siblings based on position 6a. Now 1. g3 is out of the question, since the White queen itself is on an unprotected square. However, 1. Qxe7! Bxe7 2. g3 traps the Black queen, and after 2. ... Qf6 3. Bxf6 White will be up the exchange. On the other hand, 1. Qxb6? is wrong, as after 1. ... Nxb6 2. g3 Black wins material with 2. ... Rxe2 3. gxh4 Bxb2.

22

TWENTY-FIVE FAMOUS COMBINATIONS

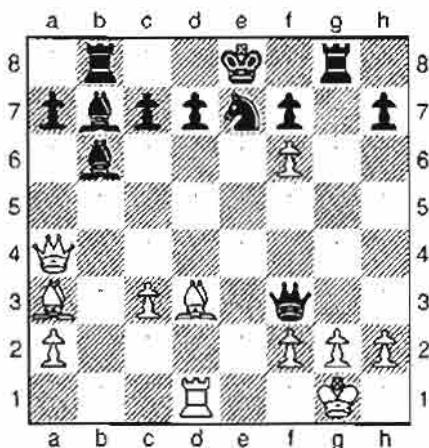
1. Anderssen—Kieseritzky London, 1851



This game is commonly known as the “Immortal Game.” White sacrificed both rooks to reach this finale. Actually, Black resigned a few moves before this point, not wanting to see the pretty finish: 22. Qf6+! Nxf6 23. Be7#. In those days, it was customary to announce a checkmate in three, four, or more moves, and unless it had a refutation, the opponent simply resigned.

2. Anderssen—Dufresne

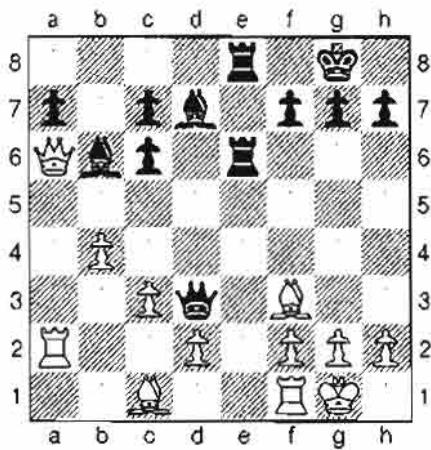
Berlin, 1852



This game is called the “Evergreen.” It offers another brilliant combination by the great 19th-century German master. 21. Qxd7+! With this combination White forces mate in four moves. 21. ... Kxd7 22. Bf5+ Ke8 (or 22. ... Kc6 23. Bd7#) 23. Bd7+ Kf8 24. Bxe7#. It is an interesting coincidence that these two most famous old combinations both end with a bishop mate on e7!

3. Paulsen—Morphy

New York, 1857



This masterpiece was played by the legendary American chess genius Paul Morphy. 17. ... Qxf3!. Black sacrifices the queen for only a bishop, and of course the move opens the g-file in front of the White king.

18. gxf3 Rg6+ 19. Kh1 Bh3 20. Rd1

Twenty-five Famous Combinations

The game would come to a quick end after 20. Rg1 Rxg1+ 21. Kxg1 Re1+.

A more stubborn defense is 20. Qd3, with the idea 20. ... Bg2+ 21. Kg1 Bxf3+ 22. Qxg6. Black is also better after 20. ... f5! 21. Rd1 (or 21. Qc4+ Kf8, but not 21. ... Kh8 22. Qf7) 21. ... Bg2+ 22. Kg1 Bxf3+ 23. Kf1 Bxd1 and Black equalizes the material balance while maintaining a very strong attack against the White king.

20. ... Bg2+ 21. Kg1 Bxf3+ 22. Kf1 Bg2+

Even faster is 22. ... Rg2 23. Qd3 Rxf2+ 24. Kg1 Rg2+ 25. Kf1 Rg1#.

23. Kg1 Bh3+

Again, more precise is 23. ... Be4+ 24. Kf1 Bf5.

24. Kh1 Bxf2

Black threatens mate with Bg2, so White is forced to give up the queen.

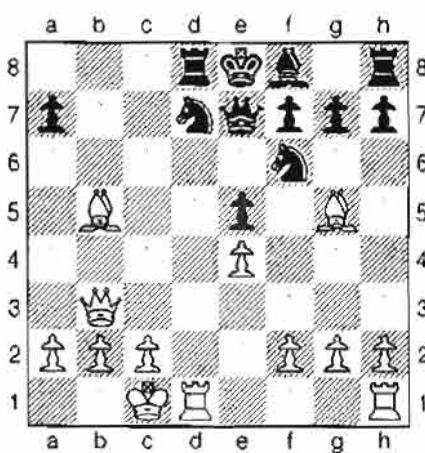
25. Qf1 Bxf1 26. Rxf1 Re2

Black is two pawns up and still has a strong attack.

27. Ra1 Rh6 28. d4 Be3, White resigned.

4. Morphy—Duke of Brunswick and Count Isouard

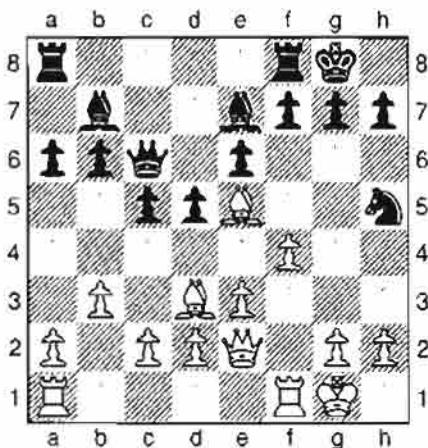
Paris, 1858



This is another gem by the American legend. 13. Rxd7! Rxd7 14. Rd1. Black is pinned from all sides. 14. ... Qe6 15. Bxd7+ Nxd7 and now a pretty finish with 16. Qb8+! Nxb8 17. Rd8#.

5. Em. Lasker—Bauer

Amsterdam, 1889



Emanuel Lasker was the second official world champion. He reigned for 27 years! In the game against Bauer, Lasker introduces this type of double bishop sacrifice. Today we refer to it as the “Lasker Combination.”

15. Bxh7+!

Instead, if 15. Qxh5 f5, White does not achieve anything.

15. ... Kxh7 16. Qxh5+ Kg8 17. Bxg7!!

This is the whole point of the first sacrifice.

17. ... Kxg7 18. Qg4+ Kh7 19. Rf3

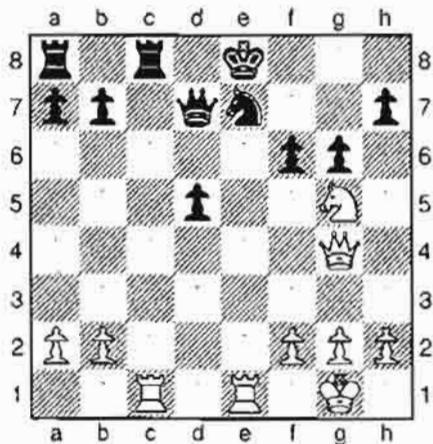
White brings an additional piece to the attack and Black can only postpone resignation by giving up the queen.

19. ... e5 20. Rh3+ Qh6 21. Rxh6+ Kxh6

Black has narrowly escaped mate, but 22. Qd7! wins one of the two Black bishops and the game. Black played on for another 16 moves and lost.

6. Steinitz-von Bardeleben

Hastings, 1895



This is the most famous combination by the first official world champion.

22. Rxe7+!

The start of a brilliant combination that ends in checkmate after 14 moves in the main variation.

22. ... Kf8

If 22. ... Qxe7 23. Rxc8+ Rxc8 24. Qxc8+. After 22. ... Kxe7 23. Re1+ (23. Qb4+ also leads to a win) 23. ... Kd6 24. Qb4+ Rc5 (24. ... Kc6 25. Rc1# or 24. ... Kc7 25. Ne6+ Kb8 26. Qf4+ Rc7 27. Nxc7 Qxc7 28. Re8#) 25. Re6+.

23. Rf7+!

But not 23. Qxd7?? Rxc1+ and Black mates.

23. ... Kg8!

After 23. ... Qxf7 White wins by 24. Rxc8+ Rxc8 25. Qxc8+ Qe8 26. Nxh7+.

24. Rg7+!

Continuing the chase!

24. ... Kh8!

If the king runs the other way with 24. ... Kf8, then 25. Nxh7+ Kxg7 26. Qxd7+.

25. Rxh7+!

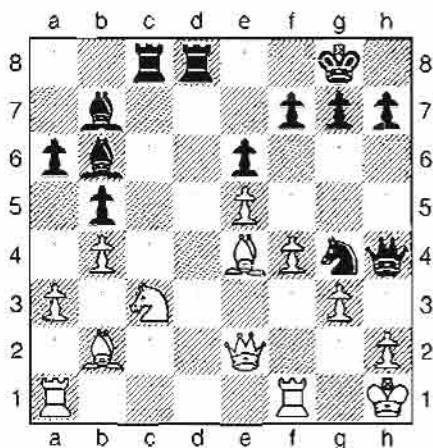
At this point, von Bardeleben disappeared from the tournament hall without resigning (later he notified his opponent by means of a note), presumably foreseeing the following line: 25. ... Kg8 26. Rg7+ Kh8



27. Qh4+ Kxg7 28. Qh7+ Kf8 29. Qh8+ Ke7 30. Qg7+ Ke8 31. Qg8+ Ke7 32. Qf7+ Kd8 33. Qf8+ Qe8 34. Nf7+ Kd7 35. Qd6#.

7. Rotlewi—Rubinstein

Lodz, 1907

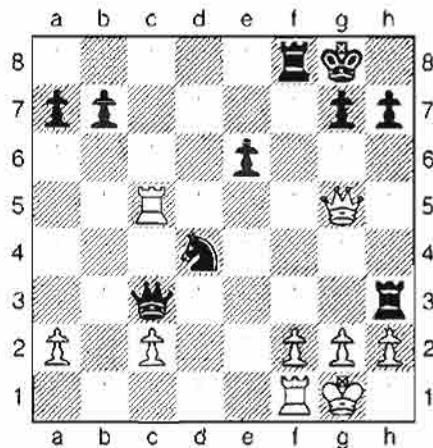


In this position it is clear that Black is better developed, with both rooks occupying open files. Also, White's king is not quite safe. The question is how does Black transform these advantages to a win?

1. ... Rxc3!! Sacrificing the queen. 2. gxh4 Rd2!! Another beautiful move, this time to deflect the White queen from the e4 square. 3. Qxd2 Bxe4+ 4. Qg2 Rh3! This move is possible because of the pin along the a8-h1 diagonal. 5. Bd4 Bxd4, and Black won.

8. Levitzky—Marshall

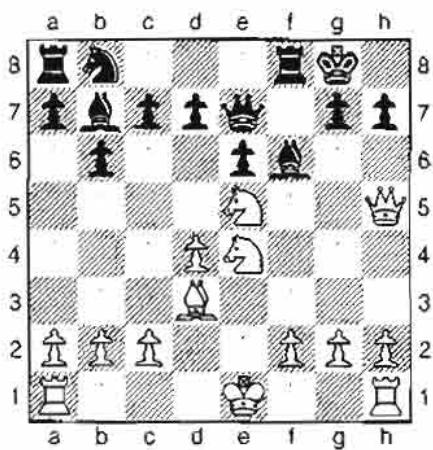
Breslau, 1912



Twenty-five Famous Combinations

Here Black has more than one way to win, but he chooses the most brilliant one. 1. ... Qg3!! and White resigned. After 2. Qxg3 Ne2+ 3. Kh1 Nxg3+ 4. Kg1 Ne2+ 5. Kh1 Rc3, Black has a winning endgame; White has no compensation for Black's extra knight. Even worse is 2. hxg3 Ne2# or 2. fxe3 Ne2+ 3. Kh1 Rxf1#.

9. Ed. Lasker—George Thomas London, 1912



11. Qxh7+!! After 11. Nxf6+ gxf6! the Black queen protects h7. This spectacular combination kicks off a king-hunt...

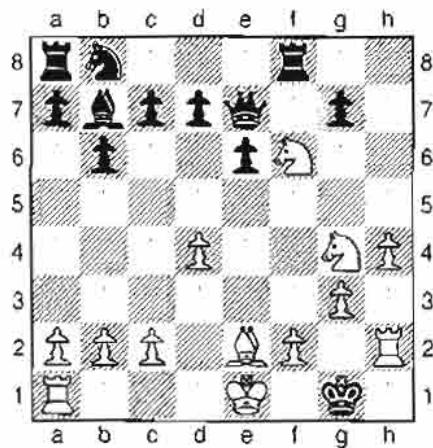
11. ... Kxh7 12. Nxf6+ Kh6

The only escape. If 12. ... Kh8 13. Ng6#.

13. Neg4+ Kg5 14. h4+ Kf4 15. g3+ Kf3 16. Be2+

Less impressive but one move faster is 16. 0–0 followed by 17. Nh2#.

16. ... Kg2 17. Rh2+ Kg1





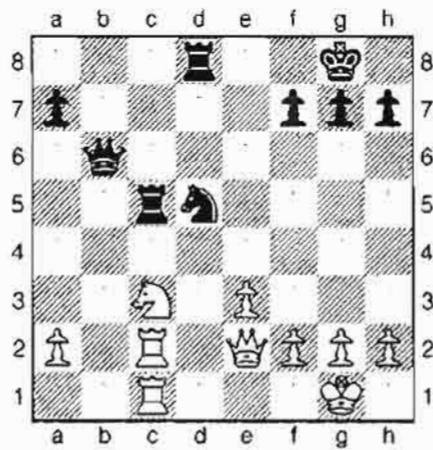
18. Kd2# Castling queenside (18. 0-0-0) would have done it too! What an amazing combination!

10. Rodzinski–Alekhine Paris, 1913



Black, in elegant style, has already sacrificed the rook on a8. Now White's king gets in trouble. 13. ... Qxd3! 14. cxd4, and now Black offers the other rook. 14. ... Be7! 15. Qxh8 Bh4#.

11. Bernstein–Capablanca Moscow, 1914

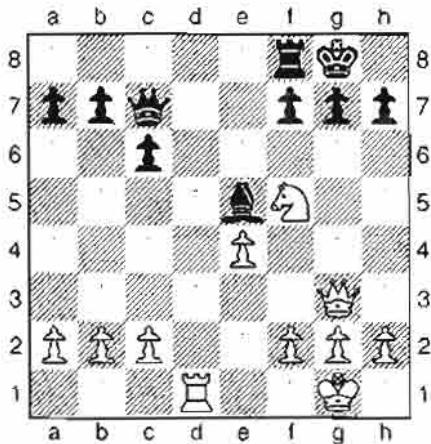


White is a pawn up and everything seems safe after 27. ... Nxc3 28. Rxc3 Rxc3 29. Rxc3 After 29. ... Qb1+ 30. Qf1 Rd1? Black's back rank remains weak and White mates with 31. Rc8+. But Black had the much better move 29. ... Qb2!, exploiting White's back-rank problem. White resigned because he could not avoid losing at least a rook.

Twenty-five Famous Combinations

12. Capablanca—Fonaroff

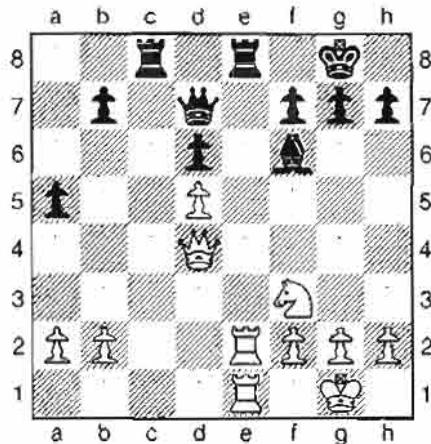
New York, 1918



As in the last position, here the Cuban world champion uses the weakness of the opponent's back rank with a brilliant combination. 20. Nh6+ Kh8 21. Qxe5! Qxe5 22. Nxf7+!. White won.

13. Adams—Torre

New Orleans, 1920



This is probably one of the best-known combinations in the world. White starts a "dance" to deflect the Black queen from the protection of the back rank.

18. Qg4! Qb5.

The queen sacrifice cannot be accepted because of 18. ... Qxg4? 19. Rxe8+ Rxe8 20. Rxe8#.

19. Qc4!!



Amazingly, White can put the queen under double attack and yet be safe!

19. ... Qd7

Another incredible queen move follows.

20. Qc7!! Qb5

If 20. ... Qa4 21. Re4.

21. a4!

This is an important move to gain a tempo for the next rook move. But 21. Qxb7? is a mistake because White also has a back-rank problem: 21. ... Qxe2! 22. Rxe2 Rc1+.

21. ... Qxa4 22. Re4! Qb5

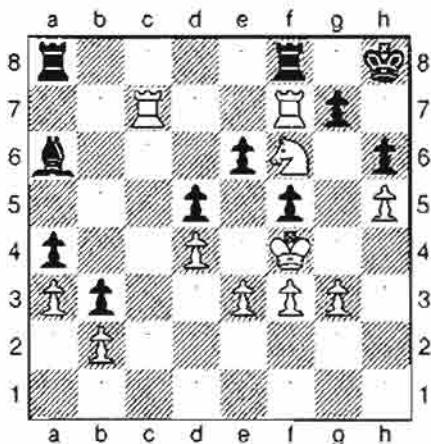
On a quiet move like 22. ... h6, White wins a rook with 23. Qxc8! Rxc8 24. Rxa4.

23. Qxb7!!

Finally, the Black queen has no escape. **1–0**.

14. Alekhine–Yates

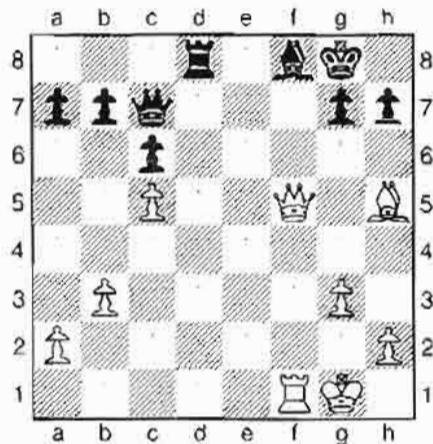
London, 1922



This masterpiece is a great example of the king being used as part of the attacking force. 37. Rxg7 White sacrifices the knight. 37. ... Rxf6 38. Ke5!. Now the Black rook is trapped, as after 38. ... Raf8 or 38. ... Rff8 White mates in two moves along the seventh rank. **1–0**.

15. Reti—Bogolyubov

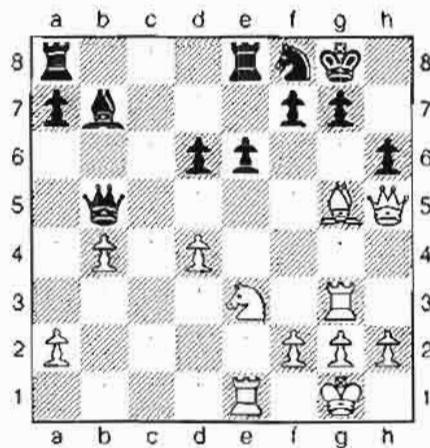
New York, 1924



This combination is based on Black's back-rank problem. At first glance, the game is approximately even with opposite-colored bishops. But despite the absence of most pieces on the board, White finds a way to win: 24. Bf7+ Kh8 25. Be8!, 1-0.

16. Torre—Em. Lasker

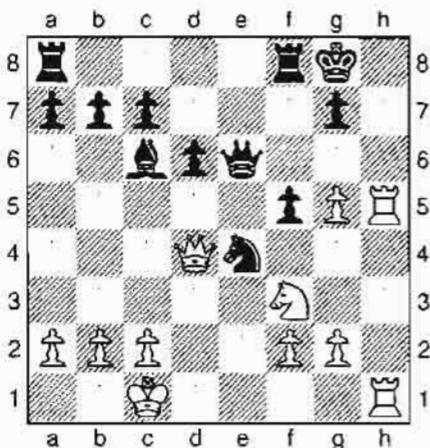
Moscow, 1925



This is a wonderful example of the "mill." 25. Bf6! A queen sacrifice! 25. ... Qxh5 26. Rxg7+ Kh8 And now the "back and forth" starts to pick up the Black pieces. 27. Rxf7+ Kg8 28. Rg7+ Kh8 29. Rxb7+ Kg8 30. Rg7+ Kh8 31. Rxa7+ Kg8 32. Rg7+ Kh8 33. Rg5+ Finally picking up the queen. 33. ... Kh7 34. Rxh5 Kg6 35. Rh3 Kxf6 36. Rxh6+ and Black resigned, as White has too many extra pawns.

17. Alekhine—Mindeno

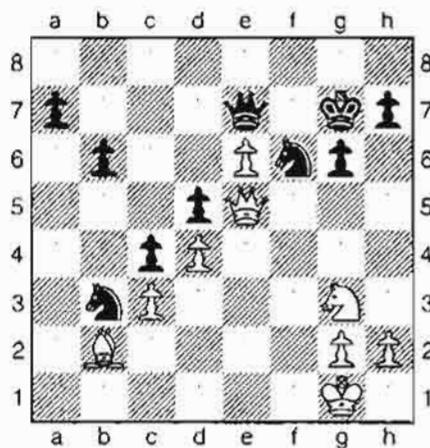
Holland, 1933



White sacrificed a piece earlier to open the h-file for the attack. The difficulty is that the Black king is about to escape via f7. But Alekhine finds a brilliant way to prevent that just in time. 16. Ne5!! Threatening mate along the h-file. 16. ... dxe5 (after 16. ... Qxe5 17. Qxe5 dxe5 18. g6, Black can't stop the mate threat) 17. g6! Again blocking the king's escape on f7. 17. ... Qxg6 18. Qc4+! Now after either the rook or queen blocks on f7, 19. Rh8# ends the game. 1–0.

18. Botvinnik—Capablanca

Holland, 1938



Black is one pawn ahead but White has a far advanced passed pawn on e6 and better coordination of his pieces, with which he can develop an attack against the Black king.

Twenty-five Famous Combinations

30. Ba3!!

Deflecting the Black queen from the defense of the kingside.

30. ... Qxa3 31. Nh5+! gxh5 32. Qg5+ Kf8 33. Qxf6+ Kg8 34. e7

Another good way to end the game was 34. Qf7+ Kh8 35. g3! and the White king finds escape on h3.

34. ... Qc1+

Now the only task left is to hide from the checks.

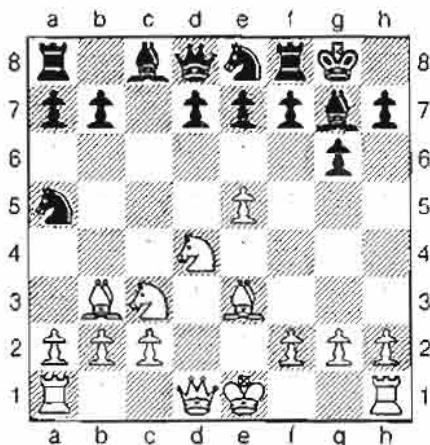
35. Kf2 Qc2+ 36. Kg3 Qd3+ 37. Kh4 Qe4+ 38. Kxh5 Qe2+

Trading queens with 38. ... Qg6+ doesn't help because after 39. Qxg6+ hxg6+ 40. Kxg6 the pawn promotes with checkmate.

39. Kh4 Qe4+ 40. g4 Qe1+ 41. Kh5 and finally Black ran out of checks. 1–0.

19. Fischer—Reshevsky

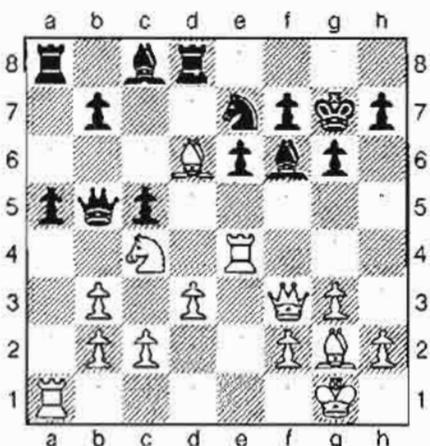
New York, 1958



The 15-year-old Bobby Fischer caught the American chess icon Samuel Reshevsky after only nine moves: 10. Bxf7+! Kxf7 After 10. ... Rxf7 11. Ne6 Black's queen is trapped. 11. Ne6! Here Black gave up the queen with 11. ... dxe6 and after 12. Qxd8 got a hopeless position and later lost the game. After 11. ... Kxe6, the Black king would be chased out and checkmated quickly with 12. Qd5+ Kf5 12. g4+! Kxg4 13. Rg1+ and Black has no defense. 1–0.

20. Petrosian–Pachman

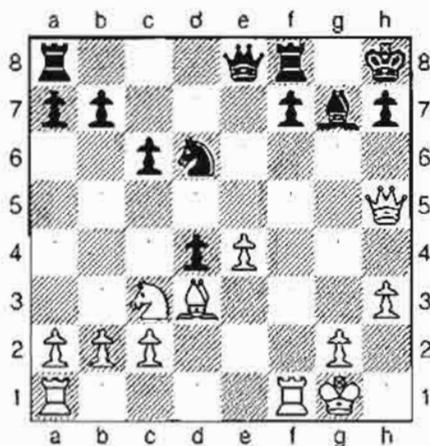
Bled, 1961



Former World Champion Tigran Petrosian was famous for his positional play, but as this combination proves, he was an awesome tactician too. 19. Qxf6+! An impressive queen sacrifice to get the Black king out in the open. 19. ... Kxf6 20. Be5+ Kg5 and now the point—a quiet move—21. Bg7! and Black cannot prevent checkmate in a few moves after either the White h- or f-pawn gets involved. 1–0.

21. Fischer–Benko

New York, 1963

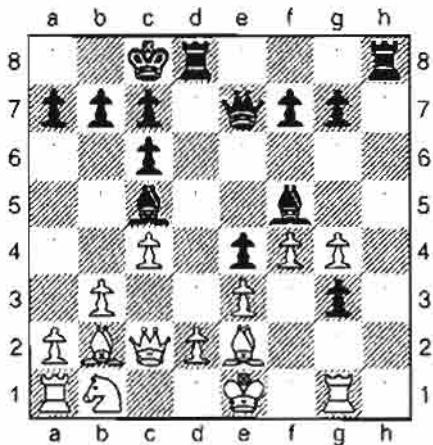


White's most obvious try, 19. e5, fails, as Black can hold on after 19. ... f5!. That is why White had to find a way to stop that defense. 19. Rf6! blocks the f-pawn. Now after either 19. ... Bxf6 or 19. ... dxc3, White wins with 20. e5. Instead, after 19. ... Kg8 20. e5 h6 21. Ne2, White

Twenty-five Famous Combinations

simply moves the knight out of the danger. If Black takes the rook with 21. ... Bxf6, he cannot prevent the checkmate after 22. Qxh6; or after 21. ... Nb5 White responds with 22. Qf5. 1–0.

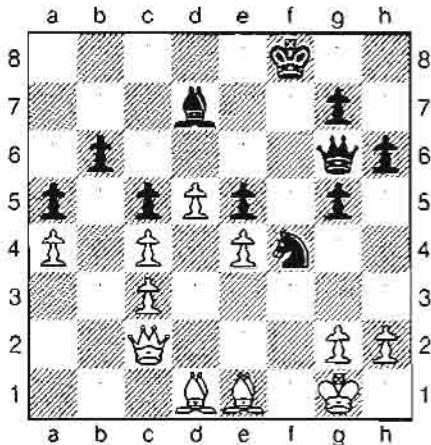
22. Larsen—Spassky Belgrade, 1970



This game was played during the "USSR Versus the Rest of the World" match. The White king never castled and never made it to safety. Boris Spassky, who was the reigning world champion, found a quick way to end the game. 14. ... Rh1! 15. Rxh1 g2 16. Rf1 Trying to save the rook with 16. Rg1 does not help either: 16. ... Qh4+ 17. Kd1 Qh1 18. Qc3 Qxg1+ 19. Kc2 Qf2 20. gxf5 Qxe2 21. Na3 Bb4 22. Qxb4 Qd3+ 23. Kd1 g1Q#. 16. ... Qh4+ 17. Kd1 gxf1Q+ and White resigned because after 18. Bxf1 Bxg4+ White gets mated in two more moves: 19. Kc1 Qe1+ 20. Qd1 Qxd1#. 0–1.

23. Spassky—Fischer

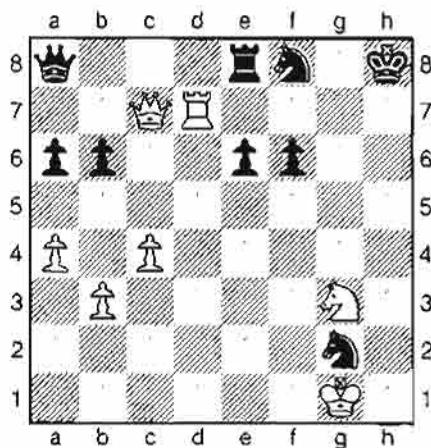
Reykjavik, 1972



This is game five of the “chess match of the 20th century” between Boris Spassky and Bobby Fischer. Here the American hero found a “petite” combination that caused his opponent to resign. 27. ... Bxa4!. After 28. Qxa4 Qxe4 Black has dual threats—mate on g2 and e1. And after 29. Kf2 Nd3+ ends White’s hopes. 0–1.

24. Karpov—Csom

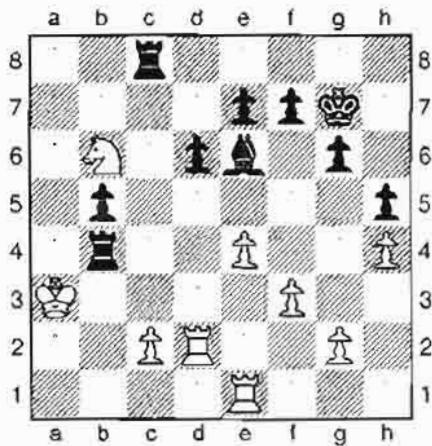
Bad Lauterberg, 1977



Black has a material advantage, but White’s attack on the Black king comes too fast. 50. Nf5! With this move White created two powerful threats: 51. Qh2+ and mate in two with 51. Rh7+ Nxh7 52. Qg7#. 1–0.

25. Anand–Kasparov

New York, 1995

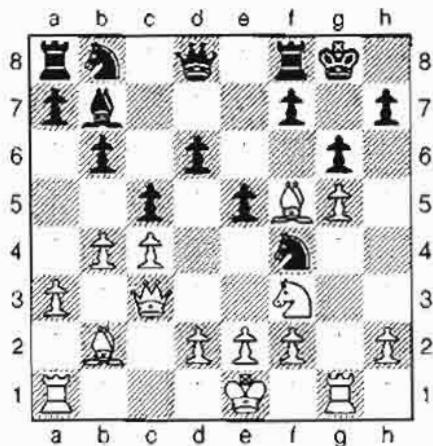


This position was reached in the 11th game of the PCA World Championship, which was held on the top floor of the World Trade Center. The opponents were the Indian chess genius Viswanathan “Vishy” Anand and one of the best chess players ever, Garry Kasparov. Anand noticed the following combination too late: 31. ... Rxc2!. It “only” wins an additional pawn after 32. Rxc2 Rb3+ 33. Ka2 Re3+, but two extra pawns with no compensation for the opponent is a winning advantage on the grandmaster level. 0–1.

Susan's Corner

Susan Polgar–Chiburdanidze

Calvia, 2004



This game was played at the chess Olympiad during the USA-Georgia match. Here I noticed a fascinating combination connected to the just weakened dark-square diagonal (a1-h8).

14. Nxe5!!

The following variation is what would have happened had Black accepted the sacrifice with 14. ... dxe5. White would have had a winning attack after 15. Qxe5 f6 (or 15. ... Ng2+ 16. Rg2 f6 17. Be6+) 16. Qxf4 gxf5 17. gxf6+ and now either 17. ... Kh8 18. f7+ or 17. ... Kf7 18. Rg7+ Ke8 19. Qe5+ would have ended the game instantly.

14. ... Nxe2

After the game my opponent told me that she did not overlook my combination but was hoping for this counter-trap.

On 14. ... gxf5, again 15. Nc6 wins.

Also, a pretty variation would decide the game after 14. ... Qe7. Now it seems that White is in trouble because the knight cannot move.

However, there is a hidden resource in 15. Be4!! Another stunning sacrifice to liberate the knight. 15. ... Bxe4 (If 15. ... dxe5 16. Bxb7 Qxb7 17. Qxe5 f6 18. Qxf4 and White is two pawns up.) 16. Nc6! (But not 16. Nxg6 fxg6! and the Black king escapes via f7.) 16. ... Nd3+ 17. Kf1 and Black loses the queen or gets mated.

The possible refutation 14. ... Qe8 is somewhat different. Still 15. Be4!! Bxe4 but now the knight is unable to move away to attack the Black queen. 16. Ng4! Nd3+ 17. Qxd3! Bxd3 18. Nh6#.

15. Nxf7!!

The second combination! It would have been a big mistake to take the knight with 15. Kxe2 dxe5 16. Qxe5?? because 16. ... Re8 pins the queen.

15. ... Nxc3

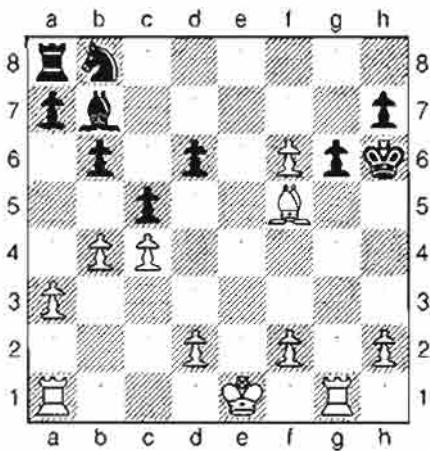
After 15. ... Kxf7 I planned 16. Qg7+ Ke8 17. Bf6 and Black's position is hopeless, for example: 17. ... Rf7 18. Qg8+ Rf8 19. Qe6+ followed by mate.

16. Nh6+!

This is the whole idea! Black comes out ahead after 16. Nxd8 Rxd8 17. Be6+ Kf8 18. dxc3 and now 18. ... Re8.

16. ... Kg7 17. Bxc3+ Rf6 18. Bxf6+ Qxf6 19. gxf6+ Kxh6

Twenty-five Famous Combinations



My opponent and I both saw this variation in our heads at move 13. Unfortunately for my opponent, she forgot that she no longer had her rook on f8.

20. Be6

I will regret this move for the rest of my life. I was short on time so I did not notice the worthy end of this nice combination: 20. Rb1! and Black is helpless against Rb3-h3 (20. ... gx f5 21. Rb3).

If Black insists on avoiding checkmate by playing 20. ... Bf3 21. Rb3 Bh5, trouble comes from the other side: 22. Be4, and Black loses more material. This is one of those combinations when everything just clicks!

Naturally, because of my significant material advantage I had a winning position anyway. My opponent resigned on move 39.

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