

CHESS

ONE - A COMPLETE INTRODUCTION TO THE ROYAL GAME



Vassilis Aristotelous

CYPRUS CHESS CHAMPION - FIDE INSTRUCTOR - FIDE ARBITER

CONTENTS

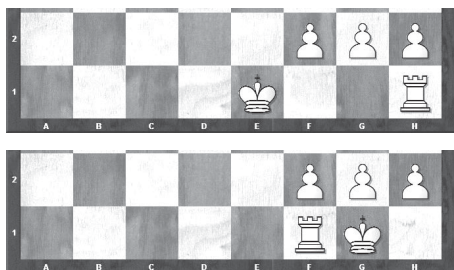
Preface	11
Introduction	13
The ELO Rating System	16
History of Chess	18
World Chess Champions	23
Grains on the Chessboard	24
The Basics	27
How the Pieces Move	29
The Value of the Pieces	33
The Relevant Value of the Pieces	37
Piece Mobility	39
Pawn War	40
Zugzwang	40
Chess Notation	43
Chess Symbols	48
Exercises on Moving, Capturing and Checking	50
Answers to the Exercises (move - capture - check)	83
Special Moves (En Passant, Castling, Promotion)	95
Castling Strategy	100
Attack and Defence	105
Zwischenzug	113
Exercises on Attack and Defence	114
Solutions to the Exercises (attack & defence)	128
Check, Checkmate and Stalemate	131
Types of Checks	135
Exercises on Checking the King	138
Types of Checkmates (Mating Patterns)	159
Back Rank Mate Combinations	165
Exercises on Mating Patterns	191
Draw	207
Solutions to the Exercises (check & checkmate)	212
Phases of the Game (Opening, Middlegame, Endgame)	217

Opening Repertoire	219
Development	224
Weak Pawns - Strong Pawns	231
The Most Popular Chess Openings	234
Ruy Lopez Opening	239
Sicilian Defence	241
The King's Indian Defence	255
Minority Attack	259
Middlegame Planning	260
King and Pawn Endings	264
Check Clock and Time Control	268
Chess Etiquette	270
Touch and Move	271
Tactics	272
Exercises on Tactics	282
Solutions to the Exercises (tactics)	292
Chess Problems	296
Great Chess Composers	299
293-Move Problem!	322
Answers to the Problems	325
Stephen Joseph, a tribute	339
About the Author	347



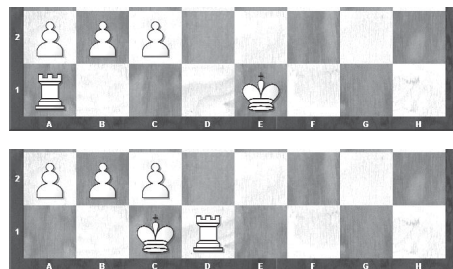
CASTLING

Castling is a special move in chess where we put our King into safety and our Rook into the game. It usually occurs in the first moves of the game and in the developing stage of the opening.



It is the only case in chess where two pieces are played in the same move. In this move, the King and the Rook are moved in the way shown in the diagrams above. It is done by moving the King two squares towards the Rook which will take part in the castling and by moving the Rook over and beside the King.

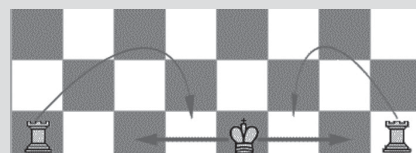
You should be careful how you move the pieces during the castling procedure. It is very important to move the King first to his new square and after you release it then take the Rook and move it. All the above should be done with the same hand and keep the correct order, first the King and then the Rook, otherwise if you move the Rook first it will be considered a plain Rook move and you are going to miss your chance for castling!



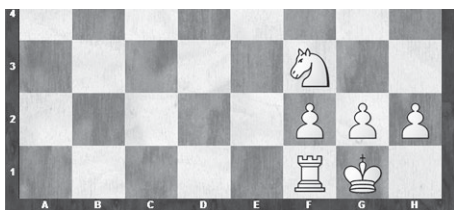
There are two kinds of castling, the short castling and the long castling. The short castling is taking place on the King's side while the long castling is taking place on the Queen's side. The naming is derived from the distance covered by the Rook; the short, two-squares distance of the King's side and the long, three-squares distance of the Queen's side.

Castling can only be done if the following conditions and pre-requisites exist:

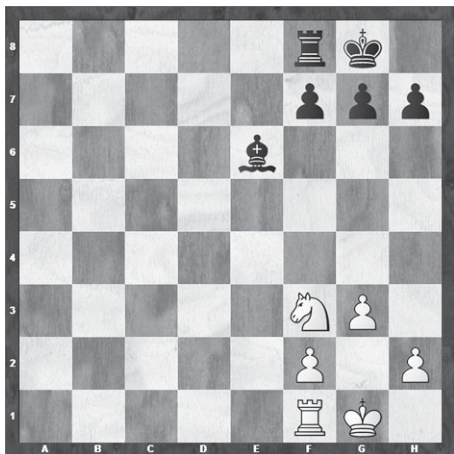
1. The King has never moved before.
2. The Rook involved has never moved.
3. The squares between the King and the Rook involved are not occupied.
4. The King is not in check.
5. The King does not cross over or land on a square in which he would be in check.



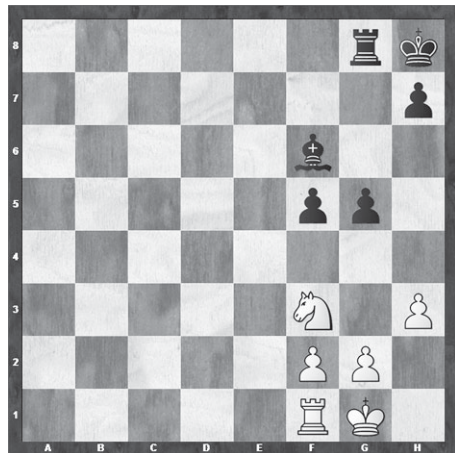
Short castling is more common and quicker since it needs fewer pieces to vacate and it is considered a bit safer than the long castling. The pawns in front of the castled King are better not moved because they seriously weaken the safety of the King. It is a well known fact that the more the pawns in front of our castled King are moved, the weaker our King's position becomes. After a normal play in the opening we reach the position of the diagram below where our King enjoys the maximum safety possible.



If the g-pawn is moved then a weakness on the light squares is visible. Black could easily exploit this situation by trying to control the squares around the g3-pawn, f3, g2, h3. A Bishop move like Bh3 is a good idea. This could be the start of White's downfall.

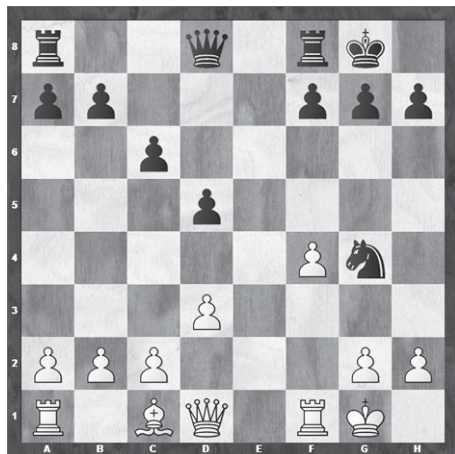


If the h-pawn is moved then another weakness is created. It's much easier for the opponent to open lines of attack.



After White's move of h3, Black began a procedure to play g4, forcing the opening of the g-file with a disastrous effect on White's side.

If the f-pawn is moved then a weakness is created through the g1-a7 diagonal.

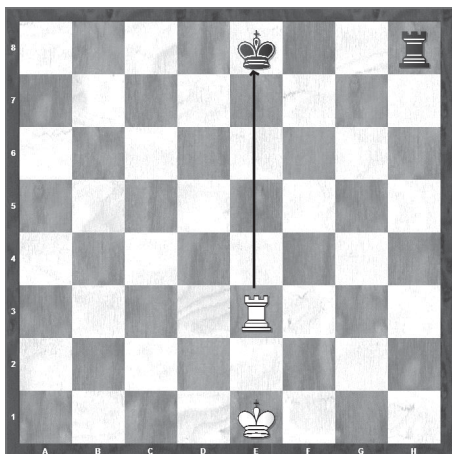


Black can exploit this by giving a check with Qb6+ and then a coordinated attack follows with the Black Knight.

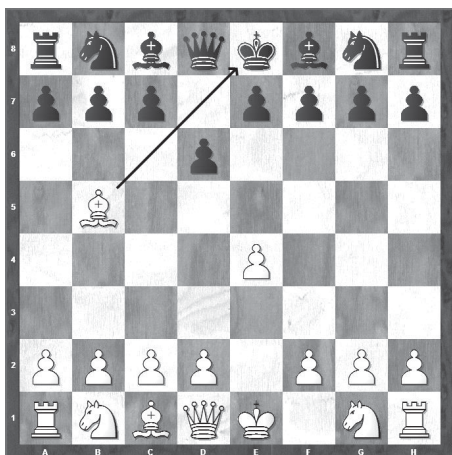
CHECK - THE KING IS IN CHECK

When is a check?

Check is when the King is threatened. When an opponent's piece threatens our King then we are in check.



On the diagram above, the white Rook gives check to the black King.



On the diagram above, the white Bishop gives check to the black King. Note that the announcement of check is not mandatory and practically in serious play

CHECK MATE

When is a checkmate?

When after a check, the side with the attacked King cannot react in any one of the following ways:

1. Capture the attacking piece.
2. Block the check by placing a piece between the attacker and the checked King.
3. Move the King away onto a safe square.

When is not possible to do any of the above then it is a checkmate and the game is over.

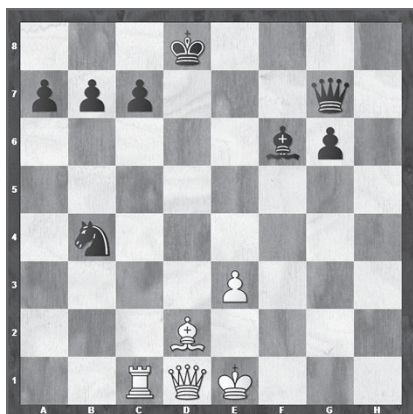
does not exist. Usually the beginners announce the checks and maybe this is not a bad idea, so their opponents notice it and avoid making irrelevant moves. On the higher level, of course, this is totally unnecessary and even insulting because there is not a chance that the opponent won't notice a threat against his King.

When one is in check, he has to take care of his King to get it out of the threat. He cannot play any other move but he has to respond against the check, by capturing the attacking piece, blocking the checking ray or moving the King into a safe square.

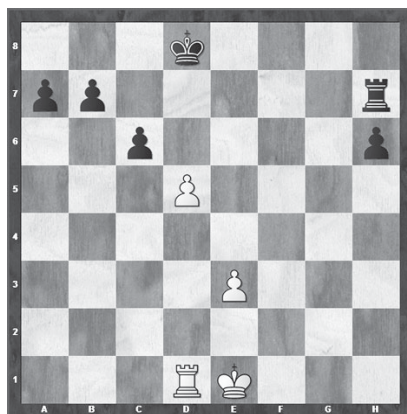
There are three ways to get out of check. The first one is to capture the

WHITE TO PLAY AND MAKES A DISCOVERED CHECK

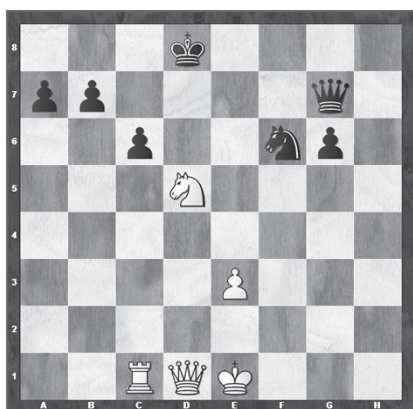
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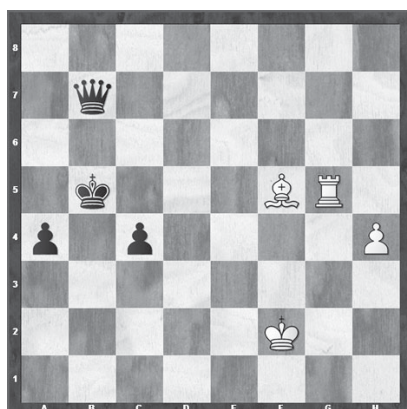
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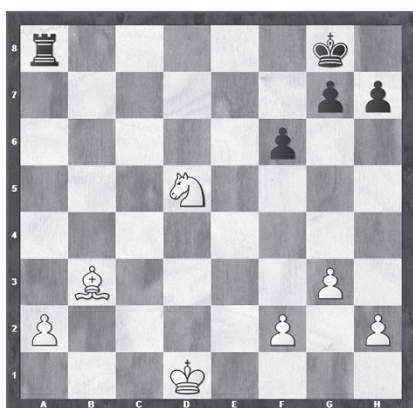
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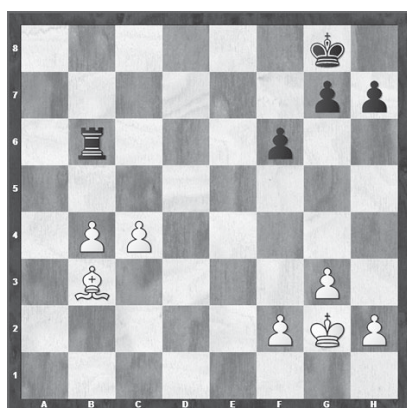
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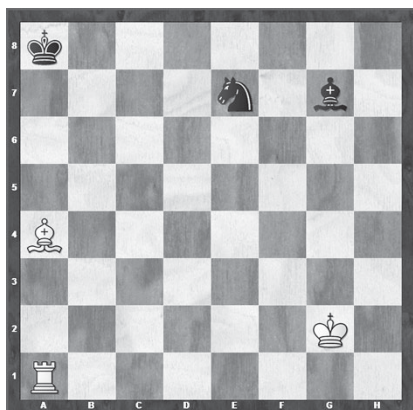
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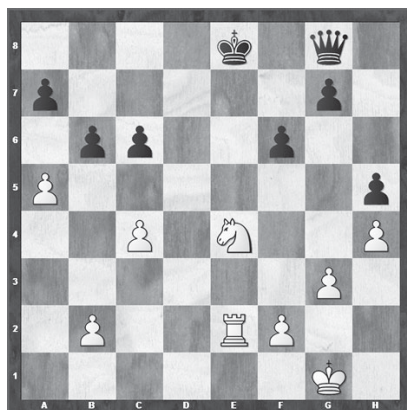
18

WHITE TO PLAY AND MAKES A DOUBLE CHECK

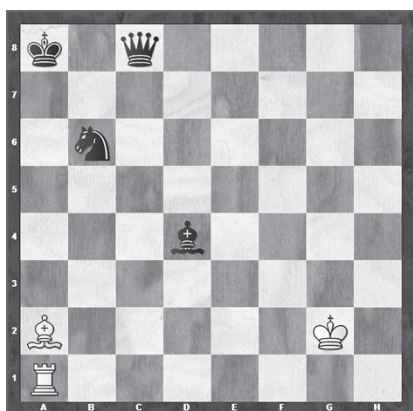
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25



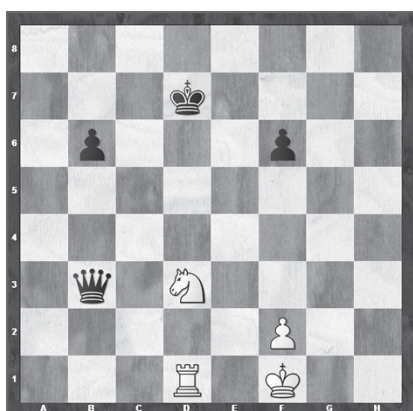
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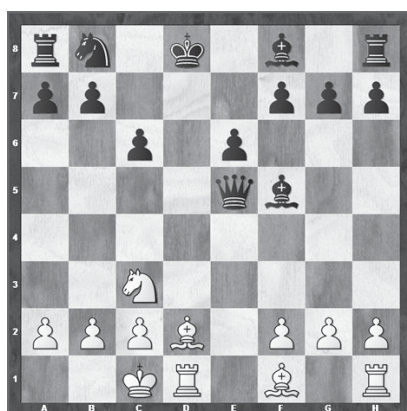
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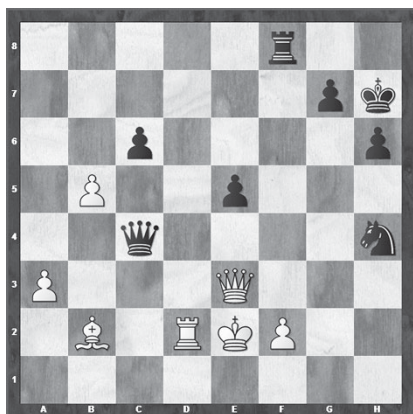
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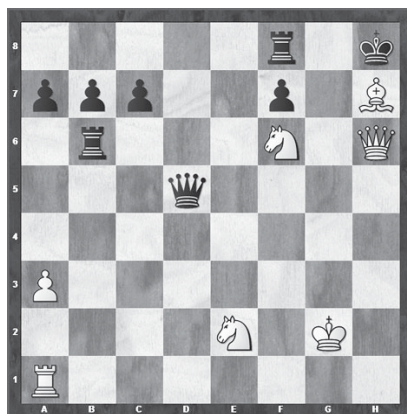
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WHITE TO PLAY AND MAKES A CROSS CHECK

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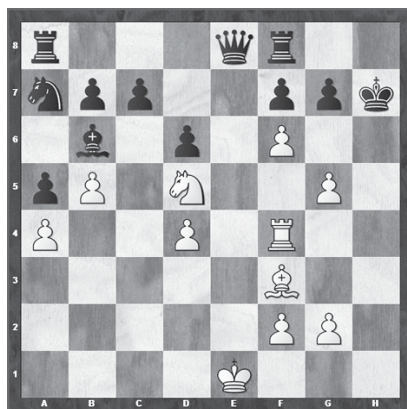
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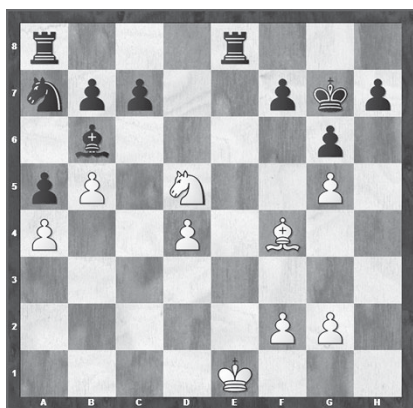
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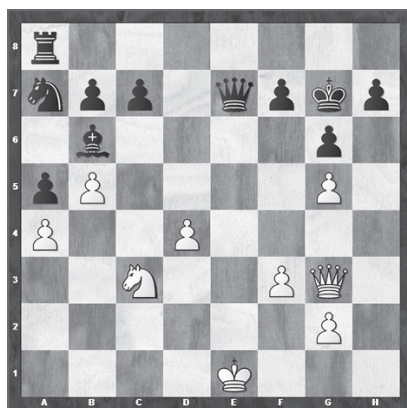
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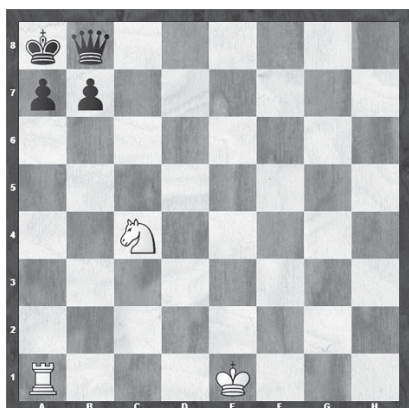
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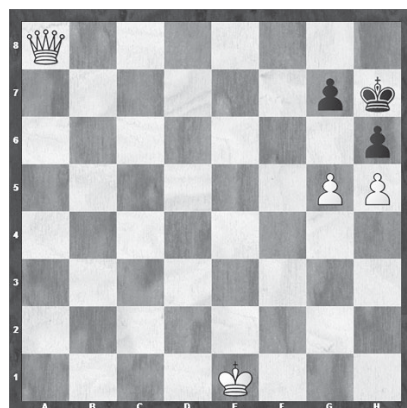
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EXERCISES ON MATING PATTERNS

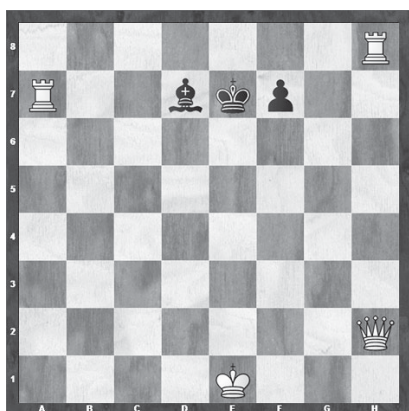
Find White's winning move and name the mating pattern (solutions on page 212)



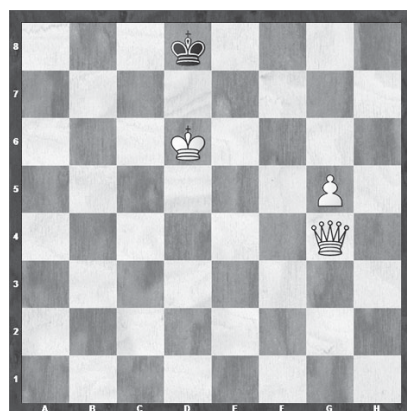
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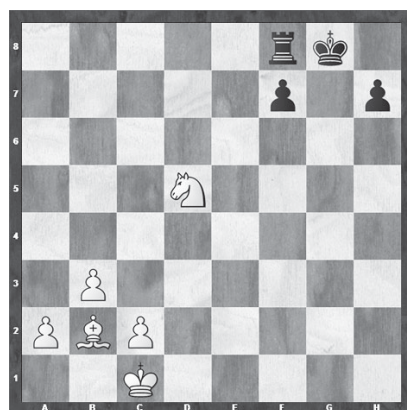
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Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 Nb6, and White can even continue with a fourth pawn in the centre, 5.f4, the Four Pawns Attack, building a huge centre which will receive hits and pressure from Black, later on.

KING SAFETY

The King is somewhat exposed in the middle of the board. Measures must be taken to reduce his vulnerability. It is therefore common for both players to castle in the opening, bringing their Kings in safety and simultaneously developing their Rooks.

GOOD PAWNS

Most openings strive to avoid the creation of pawn weaknesses such as isolated, doubled and backward pawns, pawn islands, etc. Some openings sacrifice endgame considerations for a quick attack on the opponent's position. Some unbalanced openings for Black, in particular, make use of this idea, such as the Dutch and the Sicilian. Other openings, such as the Alekhine and the Benoni, invite the opponent to overextend and form pawn weaknesses.

MINOR PIECES

Minor pieces are the Knights and the Bishops. We call them like this to differentiate them from the heavy pieces which are the Rooks and the Queen.

The Fundamental Strategic Aims of the Openings

Development: This is the technique of placing the pieces on useful squares where they will have an optimal impact on the game. This procedure is critically important to be fast and efficient.

Control of the centre: Control of the central squares allows pieces to be moved to any part of the board relatively easy, and can also have a cramping effect on the opponent. They correctly say that whoever controls the centre, controls the game.

King safety: Castling should be usually done as soon as possible. It is very important to put the King away from the centre, safely protected in the corner, before the atrocities begin.

Pawn structure: Players strive to avoid the creation of pawn weaknesses such as isolated, doubled, or backward pawns, and pawn islands - and to force such weaknesses in the opponent's position.



WEAK PAWNS - STRONG PAWNS

STRONG PAWNS

1) Passed pawns

A passed pawn has no enemy pawns on the adjacent files, or they do not control the squares which the pawn has to pass along the way to promotion. Naturally, passed pawns are often a valuable asset, especially in the endgame.

2) Outside passed pawn

Sometimes passed pawns are already bad enough but outside passed pawns are really lethal. They are passed pawns that are far away from the action. They are often put to good use by decoying the opponent's King or other pieces. Then while his King is away, your King mops up his other pawns and promote one of your own.

3) Connected pawns

Pawns of the same color placed on adjacent files and able to protect each other. Such pawns are harder to stop since they don't need protection from other pieces and are quite self-sufficient on the way to becoming a Queen. Of course, there are exceptions to these rules. In some situations even passed or connected pawns may be weak.

4) Wing Majority

It's the situation when one side has more pawns on one side of the board, either the King's side or the Queen's side. The potential of making a passed pawn and managing in the endgame to promote to a Queen and winning or just the fact your opponent has to prevent you from doing so gives you the advantage.

WEAK PAWNS

1) Double (triple) pawns

Two pawns of the same color placed on the same file. Such pawns can't protect each other and are even more limited in mobility. Naturally, there are exceptions when such pawns may become strong. For example, well-protected by other pieces double pawns that control the centre can be a major force.

2) Pawn islands

Single pawns scattered all over the board. In the endgame they often become easy targets for the opponent's pieces.

3) Isolated pawns

Can be either a strength, or a weakness. In the endgame they often become vulnerable, while in the middlegame they can be quite formidable.

4) Backward pawns

While other pawns of the same color have gone a long way, they are still stuck on or near their initial position. They may either be blocked or unable to move since the square in front of is under attack by the opponent's pieces.

5) Crippled Majority Wing

It's the situation when one side has the benefit of a Pawn Majority, but because of a pawn weakness, like double pawns, can not utilize the advantage. This Pawn Majority is becoming "crippled", since it cannot get mobilized and create a passed pawn, hence the term Crippled Majority Wing.

TACTICS

Tactics are the tricks and techniques chess players use to get a quick advantage in the game. Tactics win games!

The more you know about tactics, the better you play and the better you play, the more you win.

Tactics can usually be found when there are unprotected pieces and when pieces are lined up, either straight or diagonally in ways that can be attacked. Also the position of the King usually plays a vital role in tactics.

THE TACTICS:

- **Double Attack**
- **Pin**
- **Skewer**
- **Discovery**
- **Double Check**
- **Removing the Guard**
- **Overload**
- **Deflecting**
- **Decoy**
- **Trapping**



Sometimes you find nice tactical moves in your game, you play them and win material. Most of the times, though, there are no forcing moves to be found and you need to play a strategic move rather than a tactical one; a move that improves your position without trying directly to win your opponent's pieces or checkmate his King.

But strategy and tactics are linked, because the main goal of positional (strategic) play is to increase the power of your pieces and create fertile conditions for tactical strikes later on. Sometimes this is a matter of arranging your pieces so that they have more freedom of movement and at the same time restricting your opponent; sometimes it is a matter of coordinating your pieces so that they aim for the same square; sometimes it is a matter of arranging your pawn structure to help your pieces achieve their purposes.

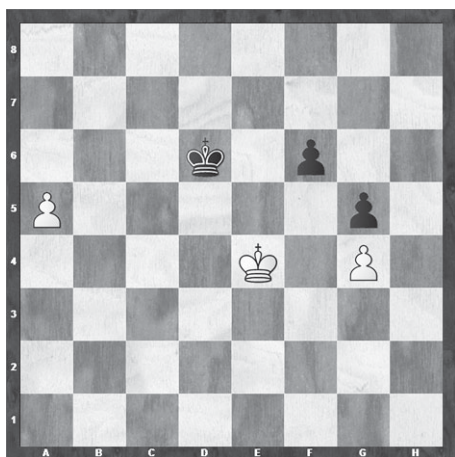
Tactics can be found when:

1. There are unprotected or poorly guarded pieces
2. Pieces are lined up, either straight on ranks and files or diagonally in diagonals in ways that are exposed to attack
3. The King is exposed and vulnerable

When you see any of the above, look for tactics!

Decoy

Sometimes you want an enemy piece to move to a new square so you can do something to it, in its new location. The technique we use for this, is called Decoy. Another name for Decoy is Luring. Decoy is usually used in the endgame, where one side has an outside passed Pawn that is sacrificed to lure the opposing King away from the main body of Pawns on the other side of the board.

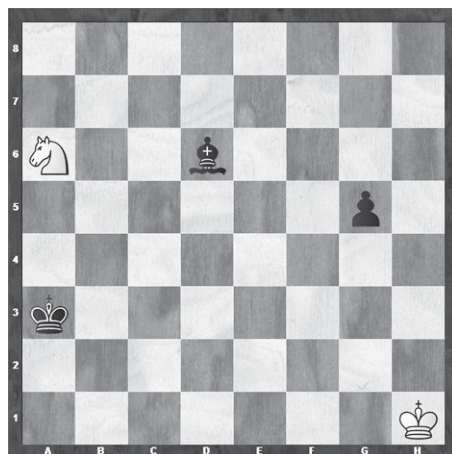


For example, in the diagram above, we see the outside White pawn racing for the Queening square. This is a Decoy. The Black King is lured away and the White King attacks and takes the Black pawns to win.



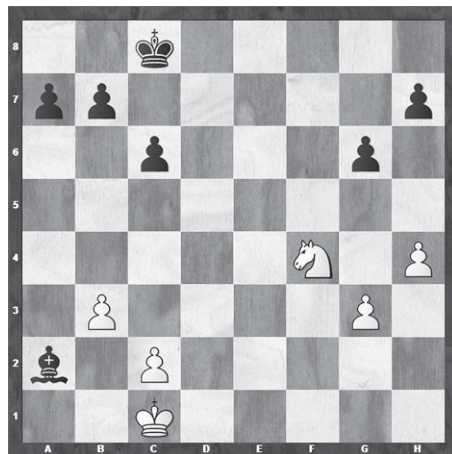
Trapping

If a piece has no safe moves, it is trapped. Simply attack it and take it. A trapped piece is one that is stuck someplace and has no way to escape before the enemy can take it.



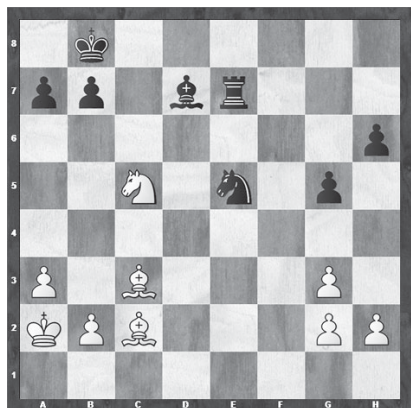
In the diagram above, we see the White Knight trapped without any way of escape. The Black King would just walk over and take it.

In the diagram below, White trapped with the Black Bishop, with no way to exit, and the White King will go and take it.

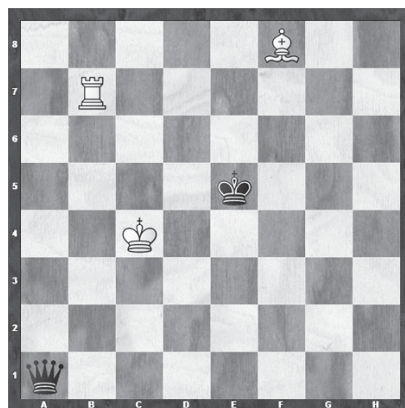


TACTICS

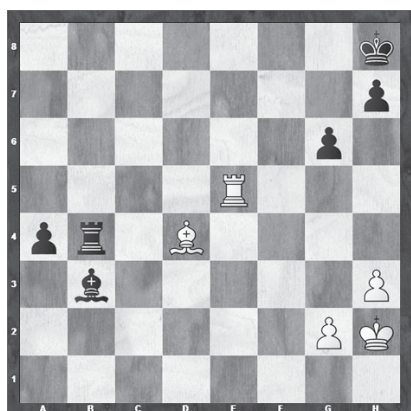
White makes a tactical move. Find the move & identify the tactic (solutions p. 292)



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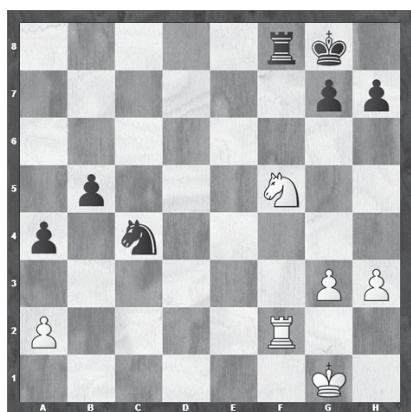
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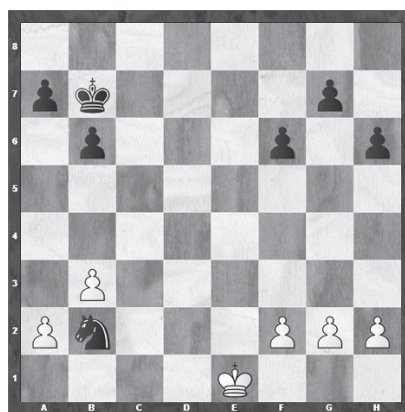
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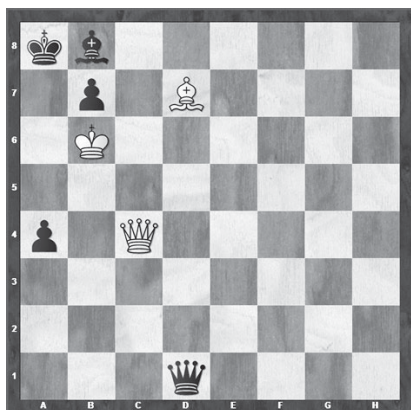
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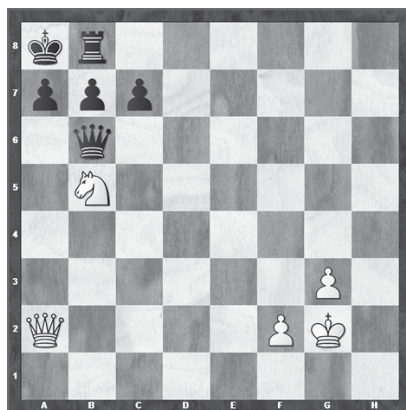
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WHITE TO PLAY AND CHECKMATE IN TWO MOVES

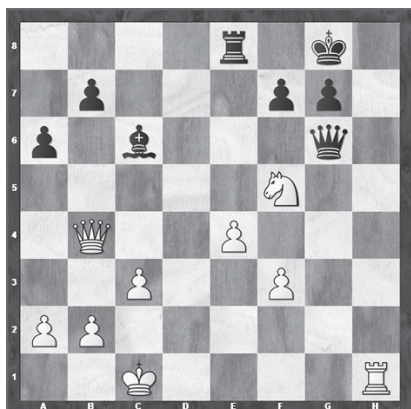
The answers of the problems are found on page 325.



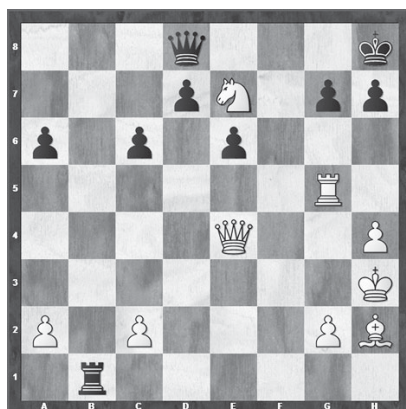
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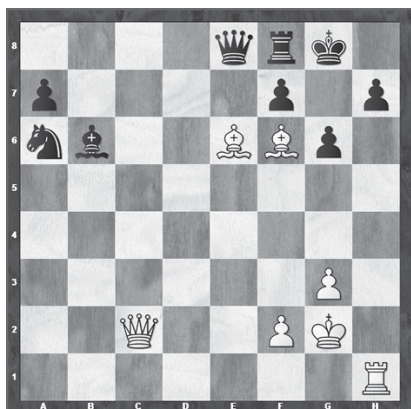
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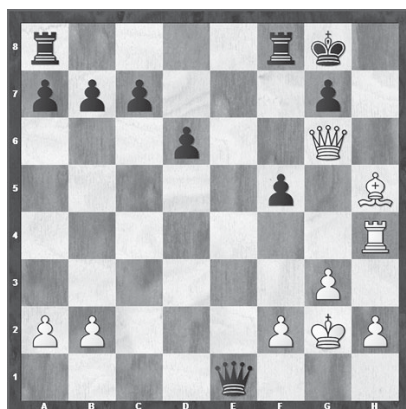
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96