

1500 Forced Mates

Jakov Geller

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Introduction

Tactics are an integral part of any chess game. During the game, even the most ingenious strategic ideas may not lead to a win without the clear calculations of lines. Any tactical line, in turn, may also be divided into component parts, each of them consisting of one tactical pattern or a standard combination of several techniques. Chess players should have good knowledge of all tactical blows and standard combinations as well as a good sense of timing for such tactical blows. Further, they should strive to make a minimal number of mistakes during calculation.

Extensive tactics practice should involve a thorough analysis of many different topics. Mating combinations should be the first of them, for several reasons. First of all, checkmate is the ultimate tactical achievement. To give checkmate, chess players are ready to make any strategic concessions or sacrifices. Secondly, lines with continuous checks do not require any special chess training. They are simple even for beginners. Thirdly, this topic introduces players to the overwhelming majority of tactical themes. Through the prism of multiple checks, the reader will learn to checkmate the opponent's king without error and gain a basic knowledge of other tactical patterns, which is necessary for further study of tactics.

The book is divided into thirty-one chapters, most of which are dedicated to a single tactical method. Such methods include sacrifices, pawn promotion, vacation, attraction, elimination, deflection, blocking, seizing the square, x-rays, pins, discovered checks, double checks, windmill and interference. Every chapter includes a detailed description of the method, the solutions of several typical examples and a number of puzzles. The rest of the chapters are titled Combinations; they are used to consolidate the provided knowledge and test the acquired skills. They contain the theoretical basics of the combinations and cases studied, but to solve these puzzles the reader will also need to use techniques they studied in previous parts of the book, rather than in only the current chapter. Therefore, each new tactical method studied gradually increases the diversity of combinations used in the subsequent chapters. The puzzles in every chapter also gradually increase in difficulty. The last chapter makes the book useful even for top-level players, because it consists solely of difficult puzzles and can be used as a universal test to check forced mating skills.

All the puzzles in this book have been thoroughly checked by computers for a lack of mistakes and alternative solutions. It's highly unlikely that the reader will hence manage to solve the puzzle in a way not intended by the author!

Methodological Recommendations

Learning materials grow in abundance each year, and it becomes increasingly hard to navigate the information flows of the modern world. You often find yourself studying dozens of sources, sometimes of mixed quality, to get hold of genuinely useful and carefully selected material. Indeed, even a set of puzzles that was considered optimal just ten years ago may be obsolete and ineffectual now. Chess itself is becoming increasingly younger, and professional players have less and less time to learn. Thus, in my view, the effectiveness of methodical literature is very important now.

One of the main goals of this work was to create a “perfect” tactical handbook for solving puzzles on a given theme. To achieve that, the following ideas were implemented in this book:

- A clearly developed system defining the sequence of study topics;
- The possibility to check and re-check the extent to which the student has learned the material;
- A gradual increase in difficulty of the puzzles;
- The complete absence of unsolvable puzzles;
- A minimum number of alternative solutions.

The greatest value of this book is in the learning system that can be used as a foundation for young chess players to study tactics. I have used this system countless times when working with my pupils and it has proved to be highly successful. Together with the carefully crafted examples it turns this work into a universal textbook that can be used by both students and coaches. An experienced coach can add new examples to the present line-up of puzzles, constantly expanding the core material for each chapter.

Tactical Vision

Not all games can be won thanks to even a thorough study of core tactics. When you have limited time, there’s no point in searching for a complicated winning line on every move, because often no such line exists. Thus, during the game the player must instinctively sense when to stop and calculate concrete lines. It’s important to understand that none of the following conditions guarantees that the game will be won with an immediate tactic. Rather, it should prompt the player to ask whether he or she should search for a forced mate in the given position.

You should start looking for a forced mate in the following situations:

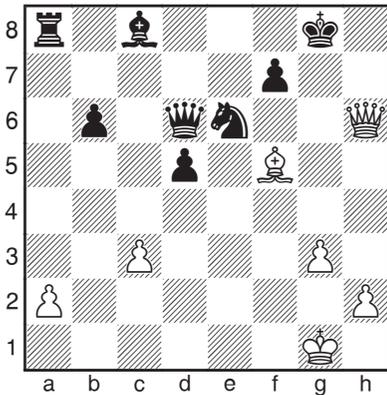
- A number of your pieces are in immediate proximity to the opposing king;
- One of your long-range pieces (queen, rook or bishop) is X-raying the opposing king;
- A battery of your pieces is directed towards the opposing king;
- The opposing king is exposed (fully or partially lacking pawn cover);
- There's a weak square (or squares) in immediate proximity to the opposing king;
- The back rank that hosts the opposing king is poorly defended;
- The opposing king is blocked (it has only a few possible moves);
- Most of the opposing pieces are positioned far away from their king.

Finally, it's important to understand that the list of conditions for carrying out other tactical blows would be quite different.

WINDMILL

Another special case of a discovered check has an unusual name: the “windmill”. A windmill in chess is a typical combination with alternating ordinary and discovered checks, which is used to win material and improve the position of pieces without losing time.

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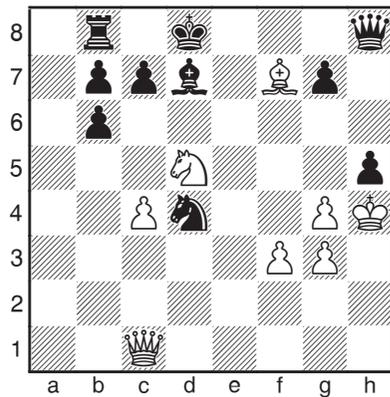


Here, we see one of the most popular windmill patterns. The white bishop can go to any square along the b1-h7 diagonal without wasting a move! To solve the puzzle, you have to get it to the g6 square: **1. ♗h7+! ♔h8** **2. ♗g6+! ♔g8**. The position has only slightly changed in comparison with the diagram, but now white can deliver a mate in two: **3. ♖h7+ ♔f8** **4. ♖xf7#**.

The windmill can be built with

many different pairs of pieces, for instance, a queen and knight:

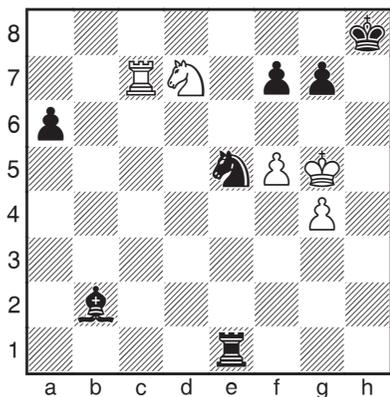
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After **1. ♖g5+ ♔c8**, white can improve the position of his knight: **2. ♞e7+! ♔d8** **3. ♞c6+! ♔c8**. From the c6 square, the knight can finish the combination: **4. ♞a7#**. We should note that other discovered knight checks don't lead to a win, for instance, **3. ♞g6+ ♔c8**, and white can't play **4. ♞xh8?** due to **4... ♖f3+ 5. ♖h3 ♞xg5+**, and black soon wins. Still, even if white plays the wrong discovered check on the third move, he can still retreat with **4. ♞e7+!**, and then, after **4... ♔d8**, finish the combination in the correct way.

In the next position, the windmill is performed by a rook and knight:

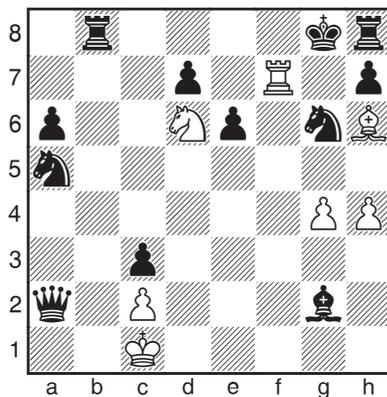
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After **1. ♖c8+ ♔h7**, white uses the windmill pattern to get the knight to g6 and deliver checkmate: **2. ♞f8+! ♕g8 3. ♞g6+ ♕h7 4. ♖h8#**. **2... ♕h8** changes nothing: **3. ♞g6+ ♕h7 4. ♖h8#**.

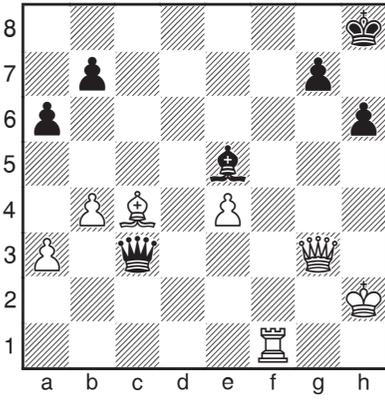
The most famous windmill is probably the construction built with a rook and a bishop:

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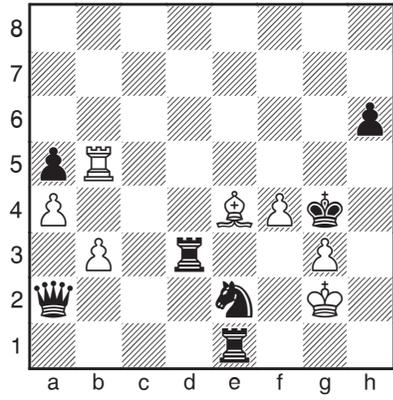


The white rook can visit all the squares on the seventh rank with checks: **1. ♖g7+! ♕f8 2. ♖xd7+! ♕g8 3. ♖g7+! ♕f8 4. ♖b7+! ♕g8**, and now it delivers checkmate: **5. ♖xb8+ ♞f8 6. ♖xf8#**.

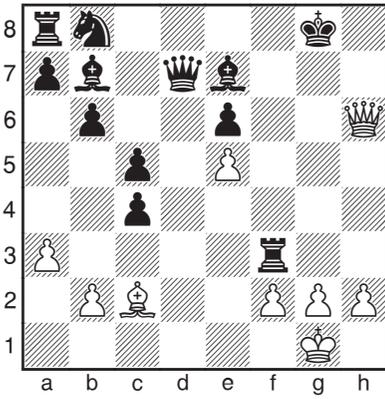
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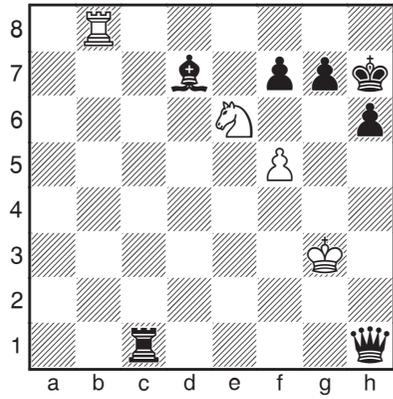
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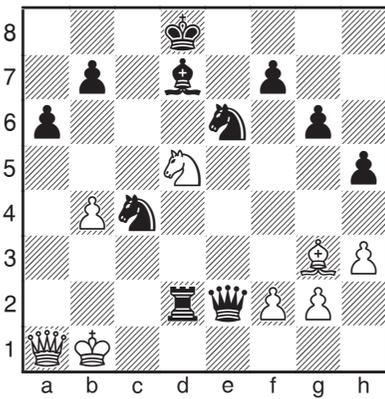
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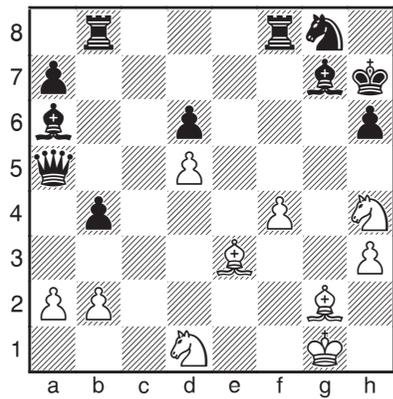
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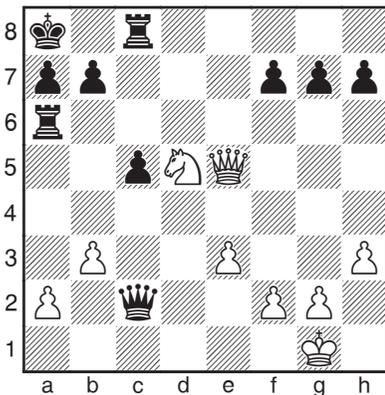


Chapter 28

COMBINATIONS

In this chapter, we use the windmill tactic in conjunction with all other tactics we studied in the previous chapters. Actually, it's almost impossible to assemble a "pure" windmill without using additional tactical patterns. The windmill is used much more often as part of a combination, to eliminate the opponent's pieces with checks or to improve the position of a piece without losing the right to move.

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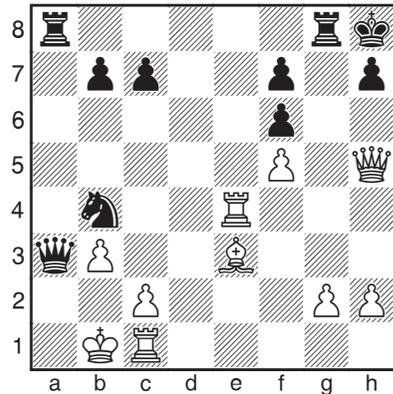


Smothered mate is one of the most famous checkmating patterns. White plays **1. Nc7+!** **Qb8** **2. Nxa6+!** **Qa8** **3. Qb8+!** **Rxb8** **4. Nc7#**. After **1... Rxc7**, white checkmates with **2. Qe8+** **Rc8** **3. Qxc8#**. In addition to a short windmill, white used deflection, double check and

blocking in this puzzle.

The ending of the next puzzle is also standard:

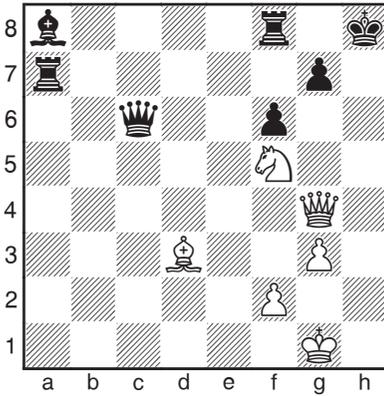
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After landing an "attraction + elimination" blow with **1. Qxh7+!** **Qxh7**, white plays **2. Rh4+** **Qg7** and checkmates the black king with a windmill on the h-file – **3. Qh6+!** **Qh7** **4. Qf8#**. **3... Qh8** **4. Qf8#** changes nothing.

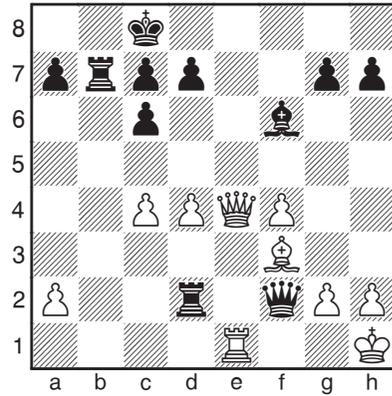
Most combinations that include a windmill are fairly complicated. Let's look at two more examples:

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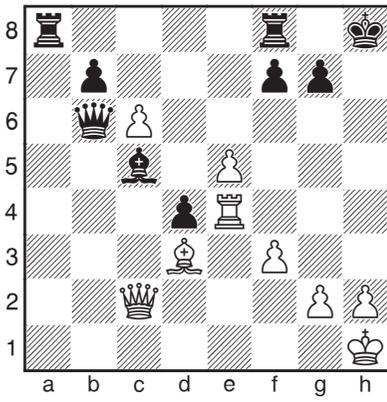
White needs only a couple of pieces to deliver checkmate. After carefully calculating the lines, he should play **1. ♖h5+ ♔g8**. Then he uses “vacation” to get rid of his own knight: **2. ♞e7+ ♜xe7**. And, finally, he delivers a checkmate with the windmill: **3. ♙h7+! ♔h8 4. ♙g6+! ♔g8 5. ♖h7#**.

1306

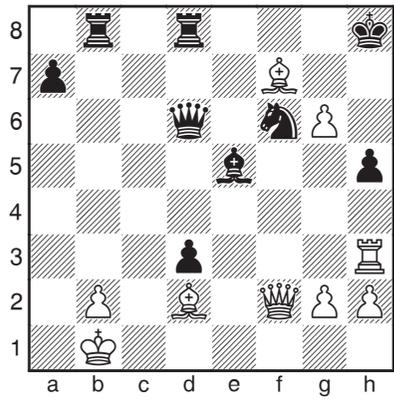


The decisive move is **1. ♖e8+! ♙d8** – the black bishop is forced to block the escape square for the king. Then **2. ♖xd7+!** follows (the standard “attraction + elimination” idea) **2... ♔xd7 3. ♙g4+ ♔d6**. And only now the windmill makes a sudden appearance: **4. ♜e6+! ♔d7 5. ♜e5+! ♔d6 6. c5#**. Of course, black loses even more quickly after **2... ♔b8 3. ♖xd8#**.

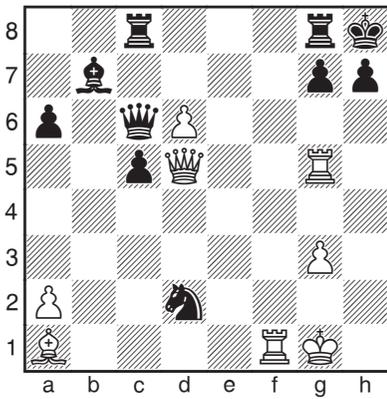
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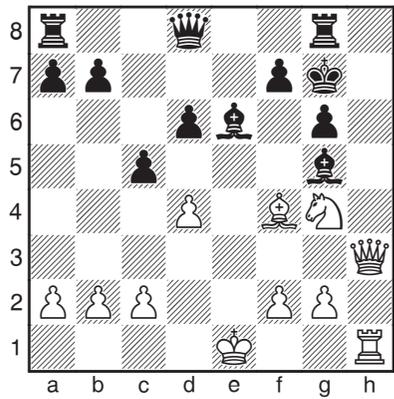
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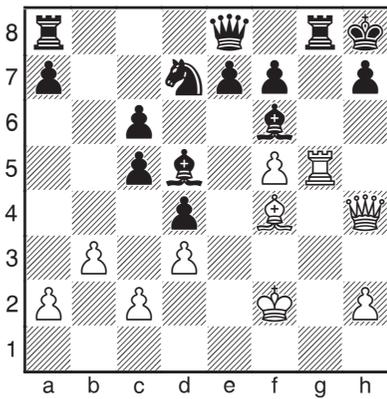
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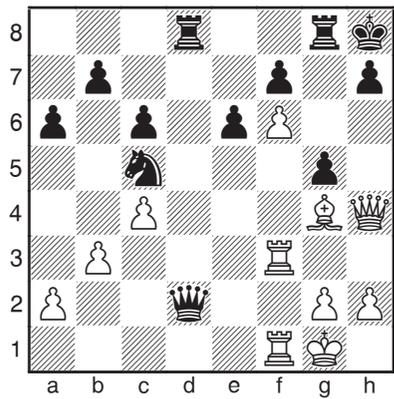
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1309



1312



1348 1. ♖g3+ ♔f8 (1... ♔f6 2. ♗g5#)
2. ♕h6#.

1349 1. ♖g2+ ♔h5 (1... ♔h7 2. ♖h3#;
1... ♔h6 2. ♖h3#) 2. ♖h3#.

1350 1. h4+ ♔f5 2. ♕g4+ ♔e5
3. ♖d5#.

1351 1. h5+ ♔g5 2. f4+ ♖xf4 3. ♖g7#.

1352 1. ♗g4+ ♔h7 (1... ♔h8
2. ♗h3+ ♔g7 3. ♗g2+ ♔h8
4. ♖h3#; 1... ♔h6 2. ♗h3+ ♔g5
3. ♗g2+ ♔h4 4. ♖h3#) 2. ♗h3+
♔g6 3. ♗g2+ ♔h7 4. ♖h3#.

Chapter 30

1357 1. ♖e8+ ♕xe8 (1... ♗xe8
2. ♗f6#) 2. ♗f8#.

1358 1. ♘d8+ ♔g7 2. e8=♘#.

1359 1. ♗xg7+ ♘xg7 2. ♕xg7+ ♔g8
3. ♕c3#.

1360 1. ♗xg8+ ♖xg8 2. ♕g6+ ♔f8
3. ♖e8#.

1361 1. ♖e8+ ♖xe8 (1... ♕xe8
2. ♗f8#) 2. ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 3. ♗f8#.

1362 1. ♕xf7+ ♔f8 (1... ♗xf7
2. ♘h6+ ♔f8 3. ♗xf7#) 2. ♕e6+
♗f7 3. ♗xf7#.

1363 1. ♖f8+ ♖xf8 (1... ♕xf8
2. ♗g8#) 2. ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 3. ♗g8#.

1364 1. ♘d5+ ♔b7 (1... ♔b8
2. ♗c7#; 1... ♔d7 2. ♗c7+ ♔e8
3. ♗e7#; 1... ♔d8 2. ♗c7+ ♔e8
3. ♗e7#) 2. ♗c7+ ♔a6 3. ♗b6#.

1365 1. ♖c8+ ♖xc8 (1... ♘xc8
2. ♗d8#) 2. ♖xc8+ ♘xc8
3. ♗d8#.

1366 1. ♘e8+ ♔g8 (1... ♗f6 2. ♗xf6+
♔g8 (2... ♕g7 3. ♗xg7#)
3. ♗xf8#; 1... ♕g7 2. ♗xg7#)
2. ♗h8+ ♔xh8 3. ♖xf8#.

1367 1. ♗e8+ ♖xe8 (1... ♕xe8 2. c7+

gxf3 3. c8=♗#; 1... ♗d8 2. c7+
gxf3 3. ♗c6#) 2. ♖xe8+ ♕xe8
3. c7+ gxf3 4. c8=♗#.

1368 1. ♖f7+ ♔g8 (1... ♗xf7
2. ♗xf7#) 2. ♖d7+ ♔f8 (2... ♗f7
3. ♗xf7#) 3. ♖f1+ ♗f7 4. ♗xf7#.

1369 1. ♘d8+ ♗f7 (1... ♔h8 2. ♗e8+
♕f8 3. ♗xf8#; 1... ♔f8 2. ♗e8#)
2. ♗xf7+ ♔h8 3. ♗e8+ ♕f8
4. ♗xf8#.

1370 1. ♘h6+ ♔h8 2. ♘f7+ ♔h7
(2... ♔g8 3. ♖b8+ ♔h7 4. ♖h8#)
3. ♘g5+ ♔h8 (3... ♔g8 4. ♖b8#;
3... ♔h6 4. ♖h7#) 4. ♖b8#.

1371 1. ♖f7+ ♔e8 2. ♘f6+
♕xf6 3. ♖g7+ ♕xg6 (3... ♔f8
4. h8=♗#) 4. h8=♗#.

1372 1. ♕h7+ ♔h8 2. ♕g6+ ♔g8
3. ♖h8+ ♔xh8 4. ♗h5+ ♔g8
5. ♗h7#.

1373 1. ♘f5+ b6 (1... ♔a8 2. c8=♗+
♖xc8 3. ♖xc8#) 2. axb6+ ♔a8
(2... ♔b7 3. ♘d6+ ♔a8 4. b7#)
3. c8=♗+ ♖xc8 4. ♖xc8+ ♔b7
5. ♘d6#.

1374 1. ♗h8+ ♔f7 (1... ♕xh8
2. ♖xh8+ ♔f7 (2... ♔g7 3. ♖1h7#)
3. ♖1h7#) 2. ♗xg7+ ♔xg7 (2...
♔e8 3. ♖h8#) 3. ♖h7+ ♔f8 (3...
♔g8 4. ♖h8+ ♔f7 (4... ♔g7
5. ♖1h7#) 5. ♖1h7#) 4. ♖h8+ ♔f7
(4... ♔g7 5. ♖1h7#) 5. ♖1h7#.

1375 1. ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 2. ♘g6+ ♔g8
3. d6+ (3. ♖h8+ ♔f7 4. d6++) 3...
♖xb3 (3... ♗c4 4. ♕xc4+ ♕f7
5. ♖h8#; 3... ♗d5 4. ♕xd5+ ♕f7
5. ♖h8#; 3... ♕f7 4. ♖h8#) 4. ♖h8+
♔f7 5. ♖f8#.

1376 1. ♕d5+ ♔h8 2. ♘f7+ ♔g8
3. ♘d6+ ♔h8 4. ♘f7+ ♔g8