

Summer 2023 Chess Puzzle Evening

Linton Chess Club

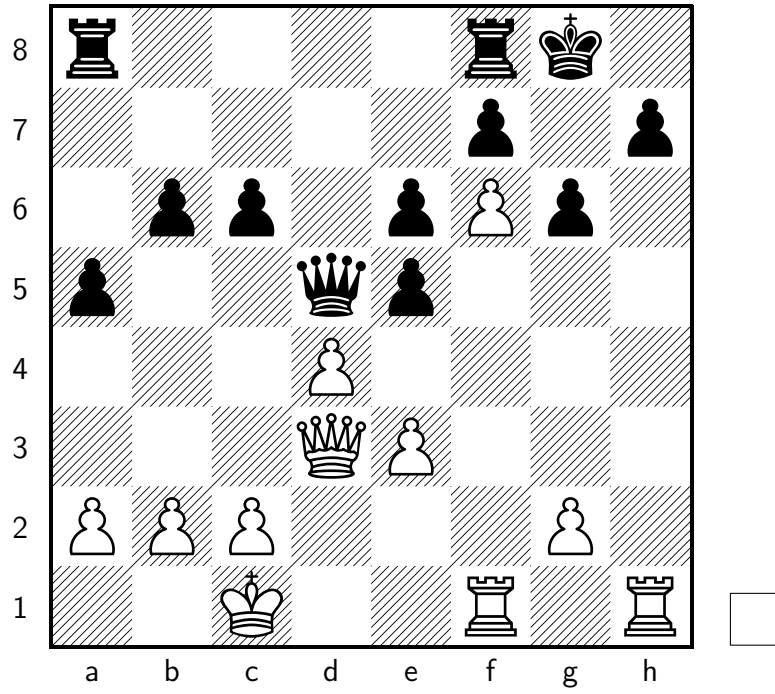
18th July 2023



Contents

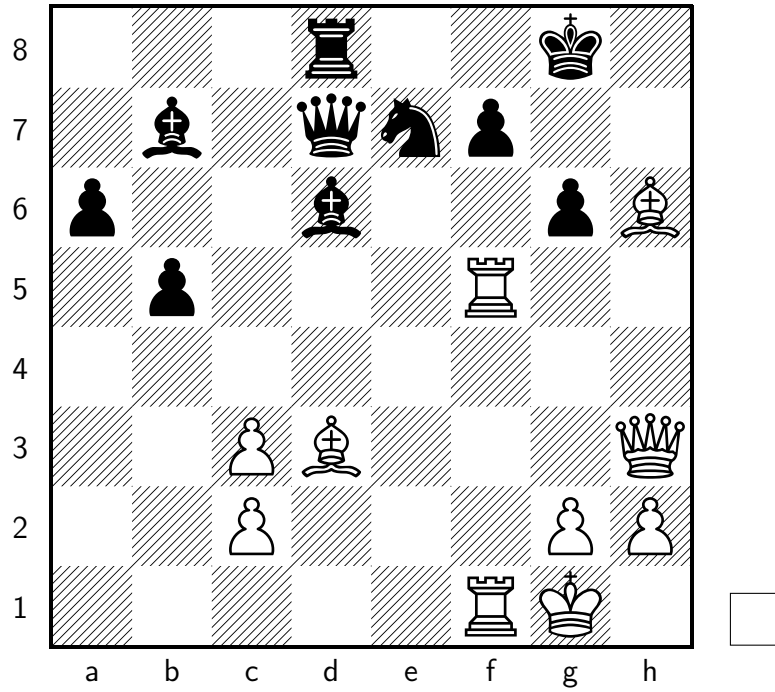
Puzzles	1
Linton Club Championship, round 4	1
John Nunn vs. James Plaskett	2
Karel Malinovsky vs. Vlastimil Babula	3
Sergei Krasnov vs. Orest Averkin	4
Nigel Short vs. Jan Timman	5
Vasyl Ivanchuk vs. Jordan Van Foreest	6
Evgeny Vladimirov vs. Vladimir Epishin	7
Andrew Volovich vs. Anthony Chan	8
Aadishesh Devalia vs. Anthony Chan	9
Salomon Flohr vs. Efim Geller	10
Levitsky vs. Marshall - “The Gold Coins”	11
Ding Liren vs. Ian Nepomniachtchi	12
Bonus Puzzle: The Dance of the King	13
Solutions	14
Linton Club Championship, round 4	14
John Nunn vs. James Plaskett	15
Karel Malinovsky vs. Vlastimil Babula	16
Sergei Krasnov vs. Orest Averkin	17
Nigel Short vs. Jan Timman	18
Vasyl Ivanchuk vs. Jordan Van Foreest	19
Evgeny Vladimirov vs. Vladimir Epishin	20
Andrew Volovich vs. Anthony Chan	21
Aadishesh Devalia vs. Anthony Chan	24
Salomon Flohr vs. Efim Geller	26
Levitsky vs. Marshall - “The Gold Coins”	27
Ding Liren vs. Ian Nepomniachtchi	28
Bonus Puzzle: The Dance of the King	29
Thoughts, Credits and Acknowledgements	33

#1



2023 Linton Club Championship, Round 4.
White to play. Give the full continuation.

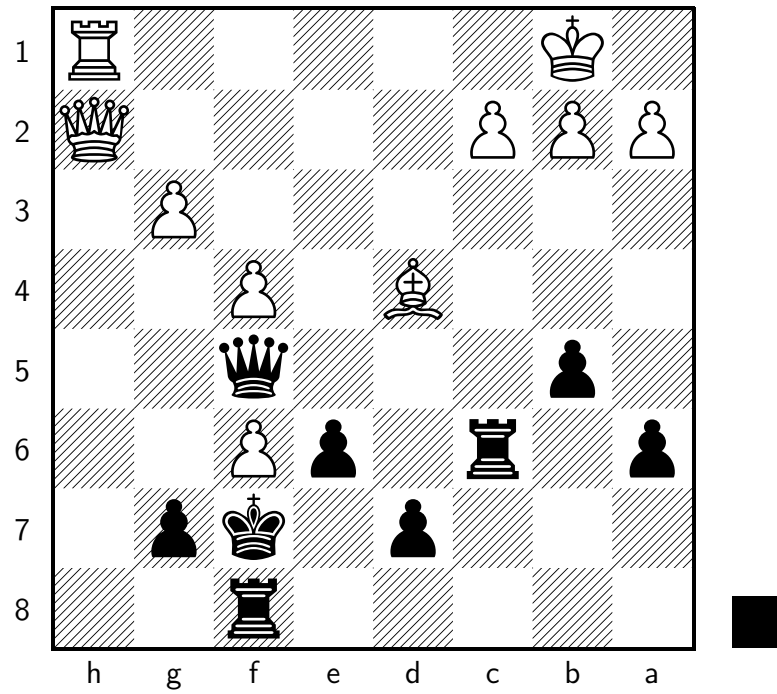
#2



John Nunn vs. James Plaskett British National Club Championship, 1977

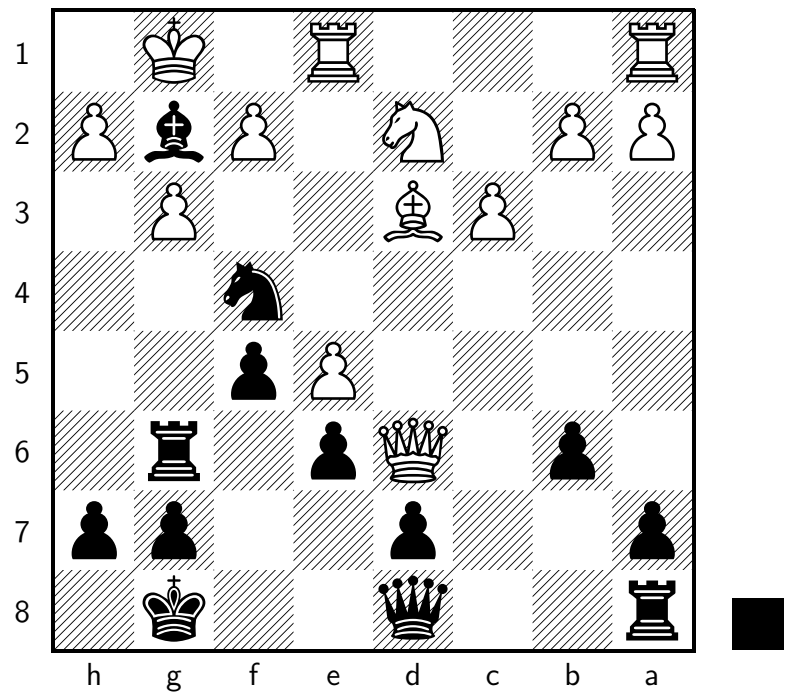
Time to see how the GMs do it. White to play.

#3



Karel Malinovsky vs. Vlastimil Babula. Czech team Championship 2018/19.

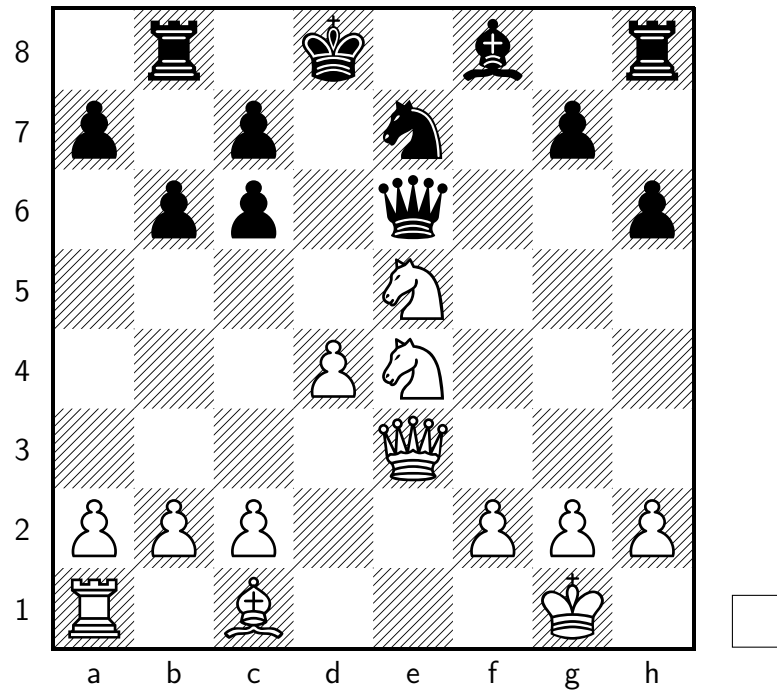
#4



Sergei Krasnov vs. Orest Averkin. Voronezh 1969.

How does Black win the game on the spot?

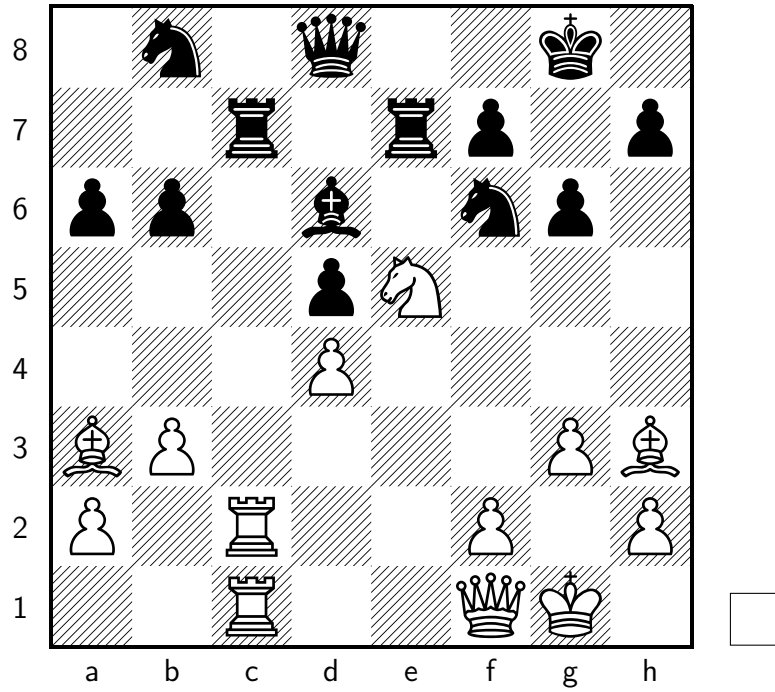
#5



Nigel Short vs. Jan Timman. London 2008.

Master Short swapped queens here with 19 ♖b3 ♜xb3 20 axb3 ♔c8 and went on to lose the game. What did he, uncharacteristically, miss?

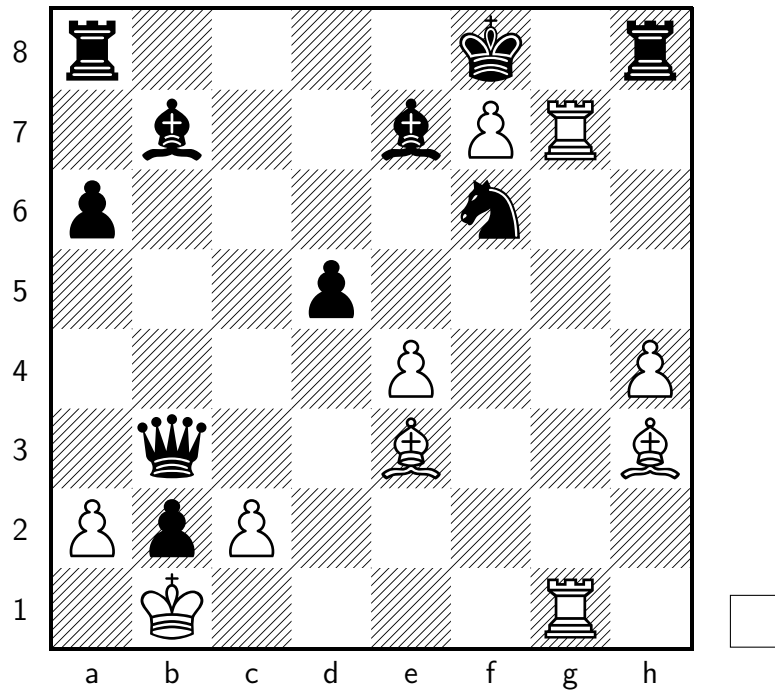
#6



Vasyl Ivanchuk vs. Jordan Van Foreest.
World Team Championship, Jerusalem, 2022.

Ivanchuk is regarded even among the chess elite as an absolute genius and widely regarded as of World Champion calibre. This game, the move he played from this position and the eventual result I feel is absolutely characteristic of Ivanchuk. Can you match his genius and find what was Ivanchuk's brilliant idea here?

#7

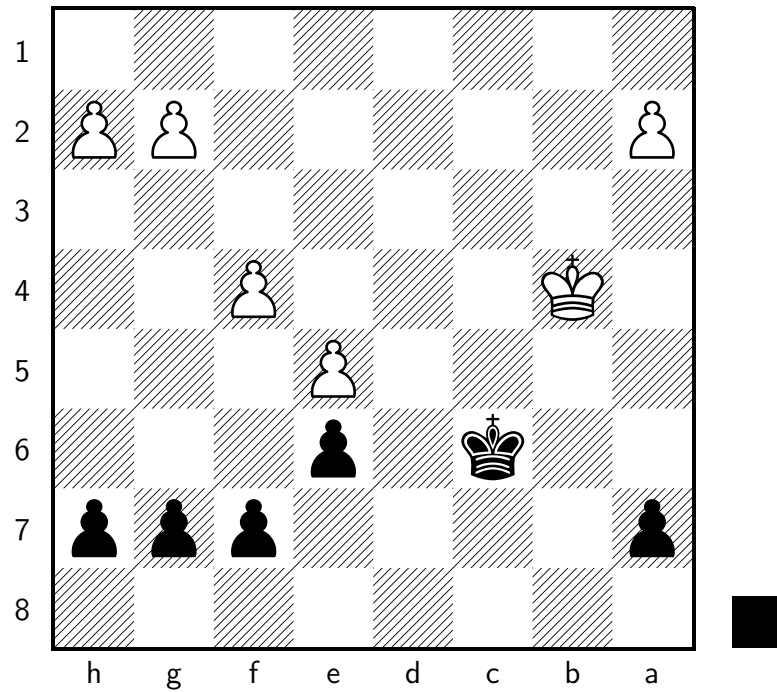


Evgeny Vladimirov vs. Vladimir Epishin. Agzamov Memorial, Tashkent.

White to play here can obviously just capture the Queen back with **1 axb3** or example. But what move did Vladimirov play, that surely shocked his opponent and has been coined by one commentator as Vladimirov's Thunderbolt?

NB. In the original setup on the evening, the position was set up one move before with the black Queen on b6 and white Queen on b3 to show Black's capture offering an exchange of Queens. This probably made it quite confusing though whose turn it was to move and what solvers were being asked to find!

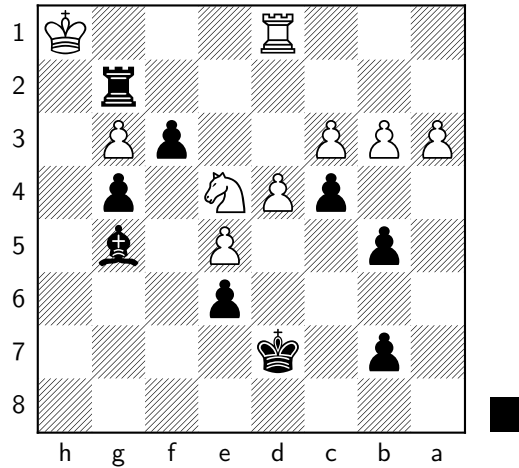
#8



Andrew Volovich vs. Anthony Chan. EACU 2022 Closed U1950.

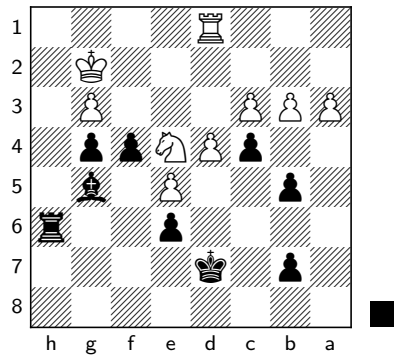
I had purposefully manoeuvred my young opponent into an endgame, but missed my chance here with the clumsy **29... f6??**. This was the right idea, but missed out a key preparatory move. What could/should I have played, and what are the winning ideas/plans?

#9



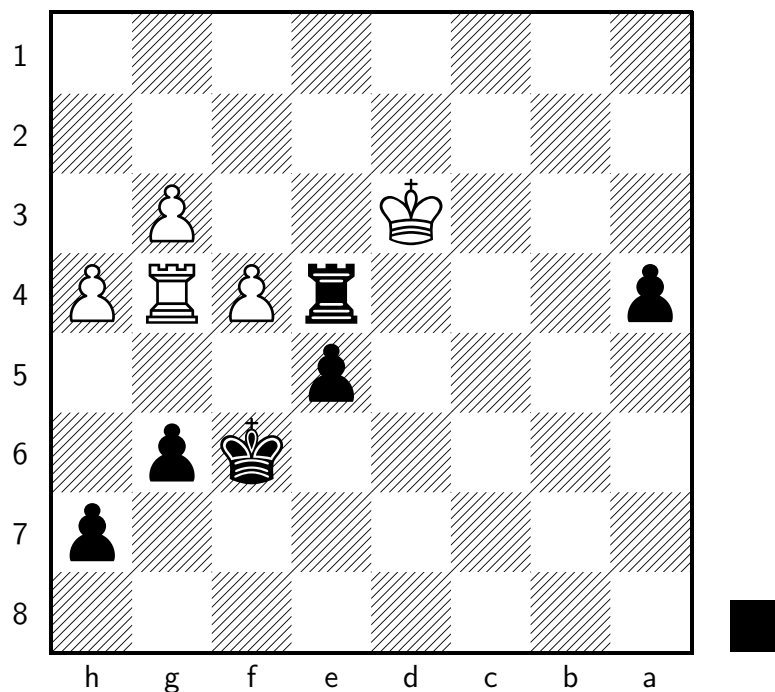
Aadishesh Devalia vs. Anthony Chan.
Cambridge International Open 2023.

My young opponent was clearly very familiar with his London system and hardly ever at the board. However, I have finally managed to navigate out of the opening and middlegame phases into what should have been a winning endgame. How could I have converted most directly from here? Black to win.



NB. For full transparency, on the evening the position presented was actually from this position, with the line **29... f3+ 30 ♔f2 ♖h2+ 31 ♜g1 ♗g2+ 32 ♜h1** leading up to the position to be solved. This was a bit unnecessary and confusing, so you are invited simply to solve from the starting position above. There will be more than one way to win, but we're looking for the cleanest and most direct approach.

#10

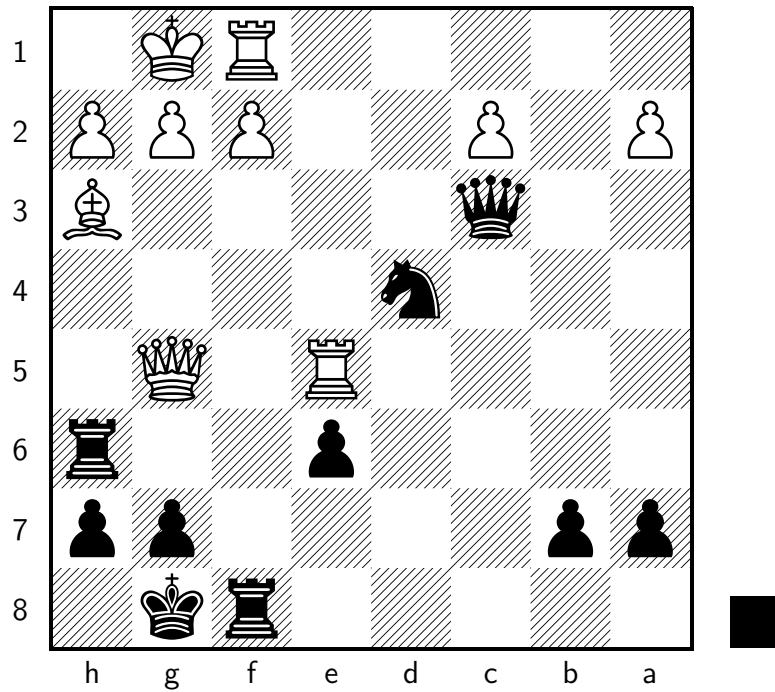


Salomon Flohr vs. Efim Geller. USSR Championship 1949.

One obvious black move is $\dots \text{♜d4+}$ and indeed this should be winning (my engine gives an over 90% chance of winning). But what is the cool kids' move that Geller found and that the engine needs to reach over 1 million nodes to find (and gives an evaluation of 96.2%)?

NB. On the evening, the original context/clue read “White has just played **43** ♗d3 . What is the purpose behind White’s move, and how did Geller brilliantly counter? (Apparently Stockfish has been known to miss this move.)”, which was probably rather more confusing than helpful and most solvers spent most time analysing $\dots \text{♜d4+}$ [which is a worthwhile exercise in itself though, perhaps!].

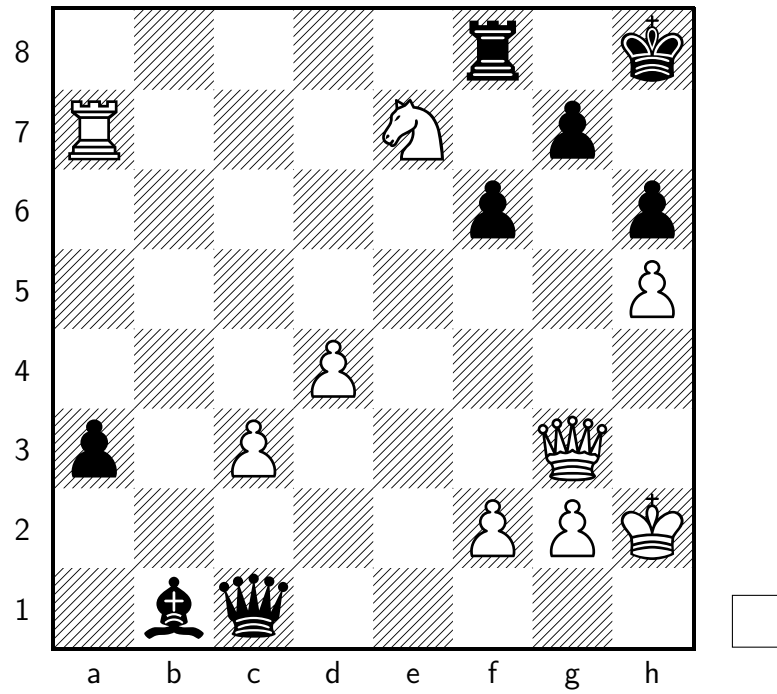
#11



Stefan Levitsky vs. Frank James Marshall. 18th DSB Kongress, 1912.

Almost 111 years ago to the day, this position was reached in a game on 20th July, 1912 between master Stefan Levitsky, and the then US Champion Frank Marshall. After the continuation **22... ♖xh3 23 ♗c5** legend has it that after Marshall's next move, gold coins were tossed onto the board by spectators (although this is contested by other accounts). Can you find Marshall's golden move?

#12

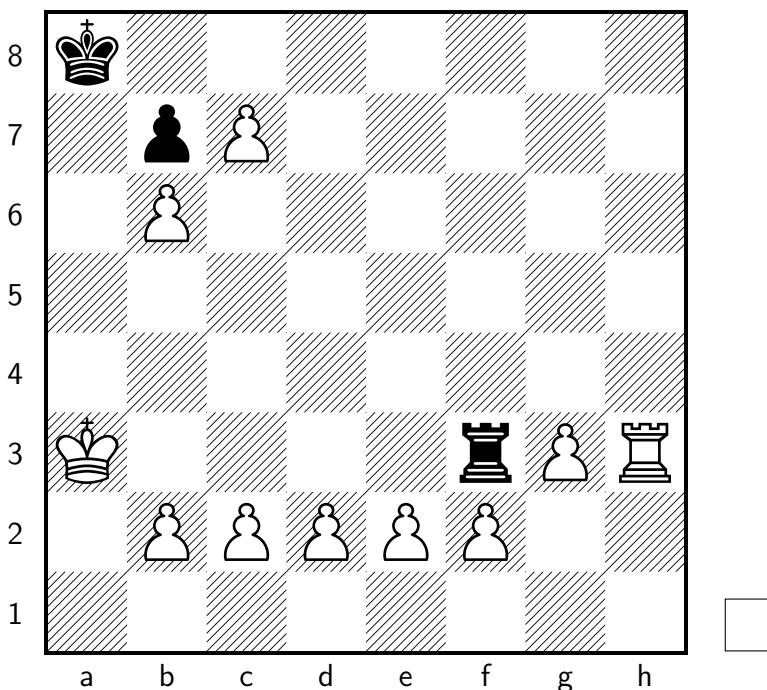


Ding Liren vs. Ian Nepomniachtchi. World Championship 2023.

There are several routes to a win here and Ding didn't necessarily play the engine's top choice. He played **41 d5**. What was the idea behind this mysterious move, initially missed by commentators including Anish Giri, that demonstrated his amazing board vision? Give a continuation.

#13 - Bonus Puzzle - “The Dance of the King”

Konrad Scheffler kindly provided a bonus puzzle/composition on the night, that provided some enjoyable additional anguish and entertainment!



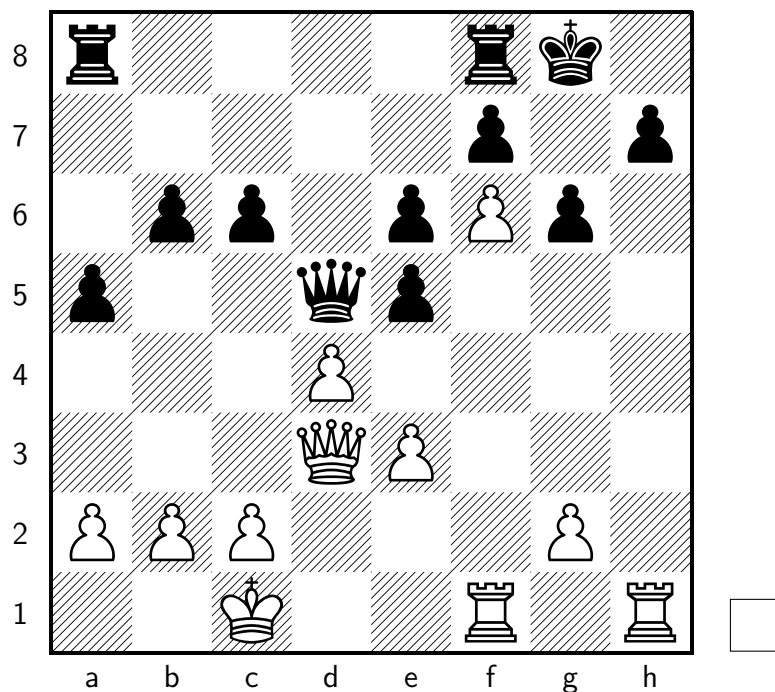
White to move and win!

This puzzle came to Konrad via Lloyd Hill, a friend from South Africa. After a little bit of research, it seems this is a reasonably famous composition but whose origins have been lost to the mists of time.

I did find a reference to an Instagram post by David Llada about 5 years ago (where it was presented from a Black perspective). Even earlier than that, is a reference from an Australian Chess Forum called “Chess Chat” dating back to 2006 (but also where someone had posted that they hadn’t seen that problem in “AGES” so it clearly existed from before then!). The poster had been shown the problem by GM Garcia-Palermo.

Bonus points to anyone who knows anything of the history or origin of this ingenious little composition.

Solution #1



2023 Linton Club Championship, Round 4.

The keys to this position are the monster white pawn on f6 and semi-open h-file, as well as finding a way to get the White Q over to the h-file without a loss of tempo. There is more than one way to win, and either **1 ♖xh7!** or **1 e4** both work, but I think **1 ♖xh7** first is the simplest and this is what was played in the game.

The following key lines demonstrate the ideas.

1 ♖xh7 ♜xa2 2 ♖g7+ ♜h8 3 ♖h1#

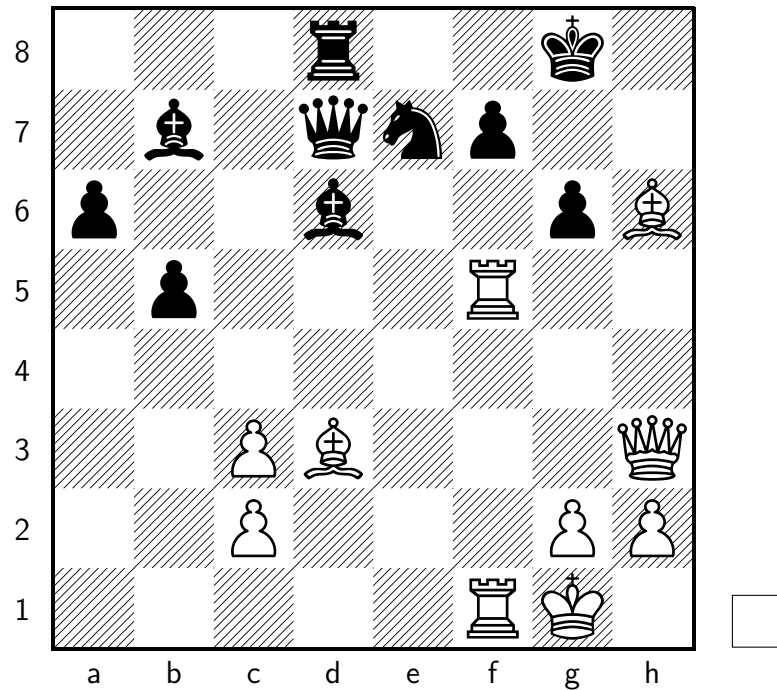
1 ♖xh7 exd4 2 ♖g7+ ♜h8 3 ♖h1+ ♜h5 4 ♖xh5+ g×h5 5 ♜h7#

1 ♖xh7 ♜xh7 2 e4 ♜xa2 3 ♜h3+ ♜g8 4 ♜h6 ♜a1+ 5 ♜d2 and checkmate on g7 is unavoidable.

1 ♖xh7 ♖fd8 2 ♖fh1 ♜f8 3 ♖h8#

1 ♖xh7 ♜xh7 2 e4 ♖h8 3 ♖h1+ ♜g8 4 ♖xh8+ ♜xh8 5 ♜h3+ was the actual game continuation.

Solution #2



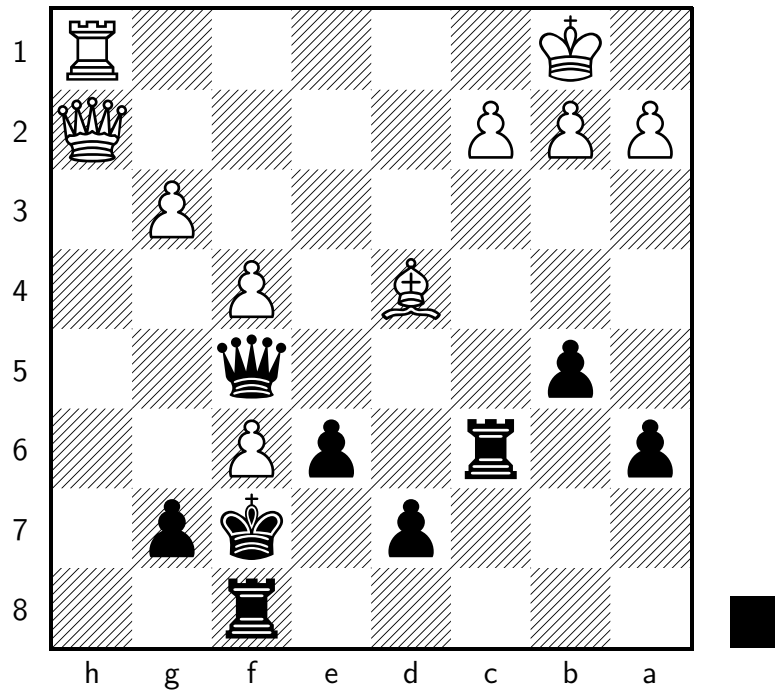
John Nunn vs. James Plaskett British National Club Championship, 1977

Checks, captures, threats.

Sometimes, this includes considering candidate moves where we create a threat, but seemingly putting a piece en prise. This gives rise to the pretty solution **1 ♕g7!** threatening mate on h8 with the Queen. Black's only way to parry the threat is to capture the bishop, but this puts the King directly in the line of fire and allows the forcing sequence:

1 ♕g7! ♖xg7 2 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 3 ♗h7#

Solution #3

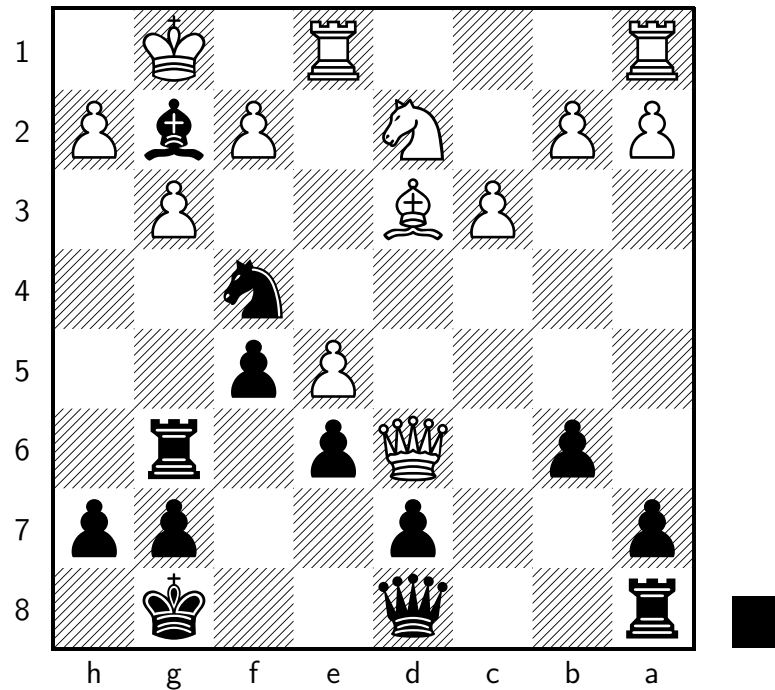


Karel Malinovsky vs. Vlastimil Babula. Czech team Championship 2018/19.

The thing to notice about this position is the co-ordination of the Black Rook and Queen targeting c2. This is currently protected by the White Queen. But what if it wasn't?

1... ♖h8 2 ♜xh8 ♜xc2+ 3 ♔a1 ♜c1+ 4 ♘xc1 ♘xc1# classic deflection.
 1... ♖h8 2 ♜g2 ♘xh1+ 3 ♜xh1 ♜xc2+ 4 ♔a1 ♜c1+ 5 ♜xc1 ♘xc1#

Solution #4

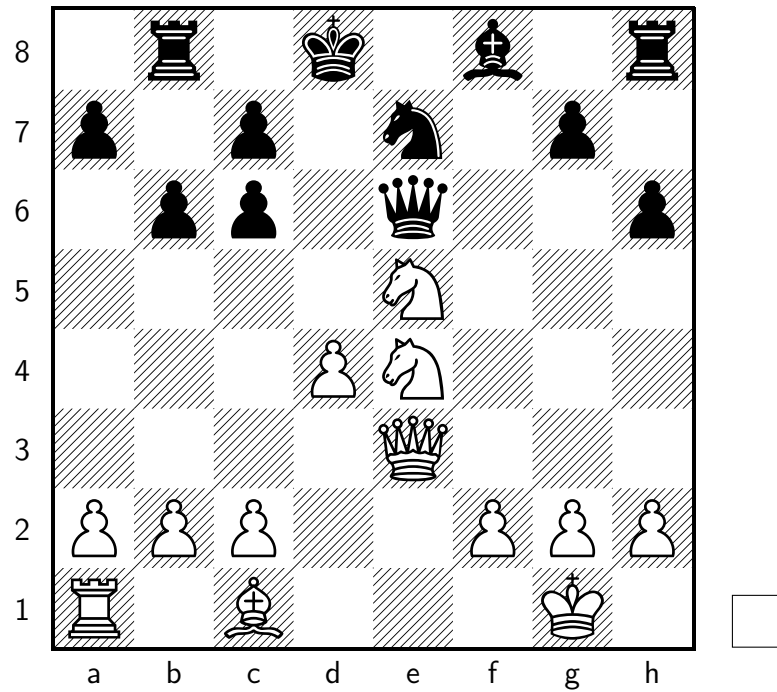


Sergei Krasnov vs. Orest Averkin. Voronezh 1969.

We can see that ... ♖h3+ would almost be checkmate, if the Bishop were defended. This was noticed by our visitor Penny. But we also can see the black rook on g6 x-rays the bishop and would defend it, if the g3 pawn were not there. This leads to consideration of the winning move ... ♖h4! to bring in our heavy artillery.

- 1... ♖h4 2 g×h4 ♘h3#
- 1... ♖h4 2 ♜ed1 ♖×h2+ 3 ♘×h2 ♜h6+ 4 ♘g1 ♜h1#
- 1... ♖h4 2 f3 ♜×g3! 3 h×g3 ♖×g3 -+
- 1... ♖h4 2 g×f4 ♙f3+ 3 ♘f1 ♖h3#
- 1... ♖h4 2 ♙×f5 ♖×h2+ 3 ♘×h2 ♜h6+ 4 ♙h3 ♜×h3+ 5 ♘g1 ♜h1#
- 1... ♖h4 2 ♙f1 ♖×h2+ 3 ♘×h2 ♜h6+ 4 ♘g1 ♜h1#

Solution #5

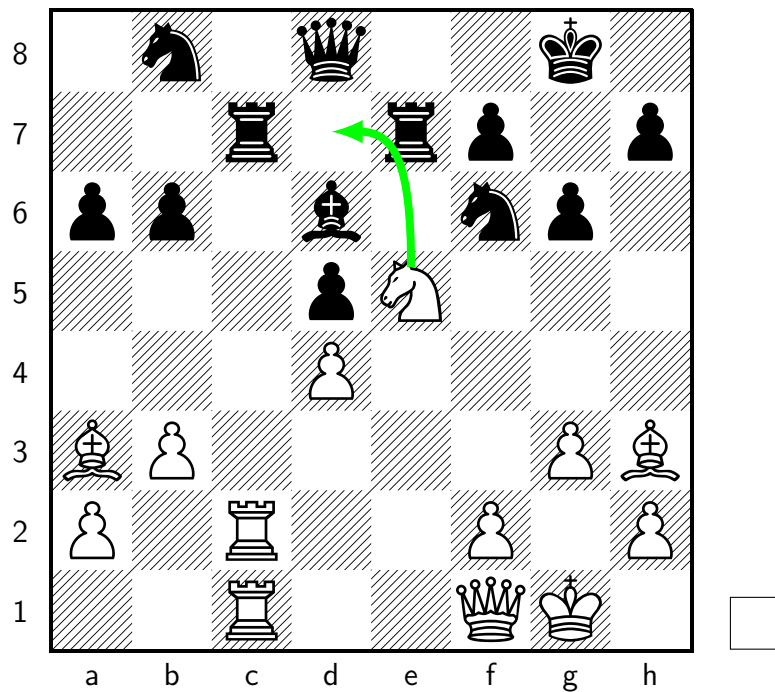


Nigel Short vs. Jan Timman. London 2008.

Key to this position is the central placement of the white knights, and the X-ray of the White Q on the Black Q. We can see juicy forks on c6 and f7. How can we take advantage?

1 ♖d6! cxd6 2 ♗xc6+ ♔d7 3 ♗xb8+ ♕c7 4 ♙xe6 +-
 1 ♗d6! ♙xd6 2 ♗f7+! ♔d7 3 ♗xd6 +-

Solution #6



Vasyl Ivanchuk vs. Jordan Van Foreest.
World Team Championship, Jerusalem, 2022.

Welcome to planet Ivanchuk! Someone on the night mentioned something along the lines that the answer must be to find the most outrageous move possible. This actually is the clue to the position. It's amazing to think this was played in a real OTB game, in fact at the FIDE World Team Championships in Jerusalem.

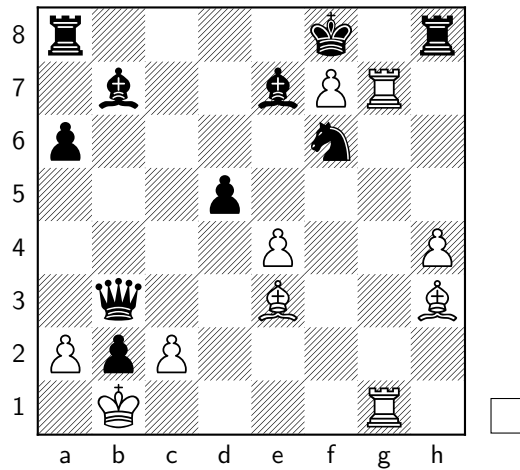
I would have loved to have seen Van Foreest's face when Ivanchuk played ♞d7!! . Sadly, Chucky went on to lose the game. Such is the nature of genius!

1... ♞cxd7 2 ♙xd6 ♞xd6 3 $\text{♞c8} \pm$

1... ♞exd7 2 ♙xd6 ♞xc2 3 ♞xc2 ♞xd6 4 $\text{♞c8} \pm$

1... ♞xc2 2 ♞xf6+ ♙g7 3 ♞xc2 ♙xa3 4 ♞c8 ♞d6 5 $\text{♞e8+} \pm$

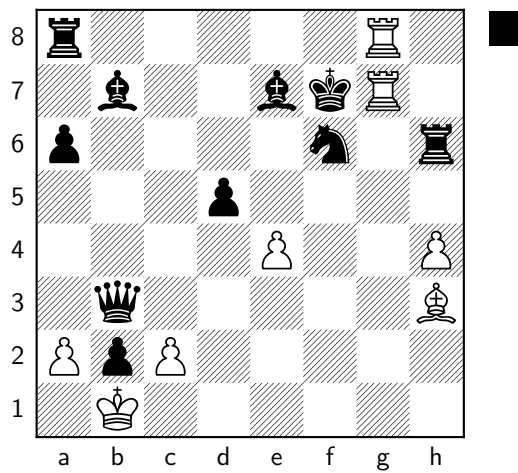
Solution #7



Evgeny Vladimirov vs. Vladimir Epishin. Agzamov Memorial, Tashkent.

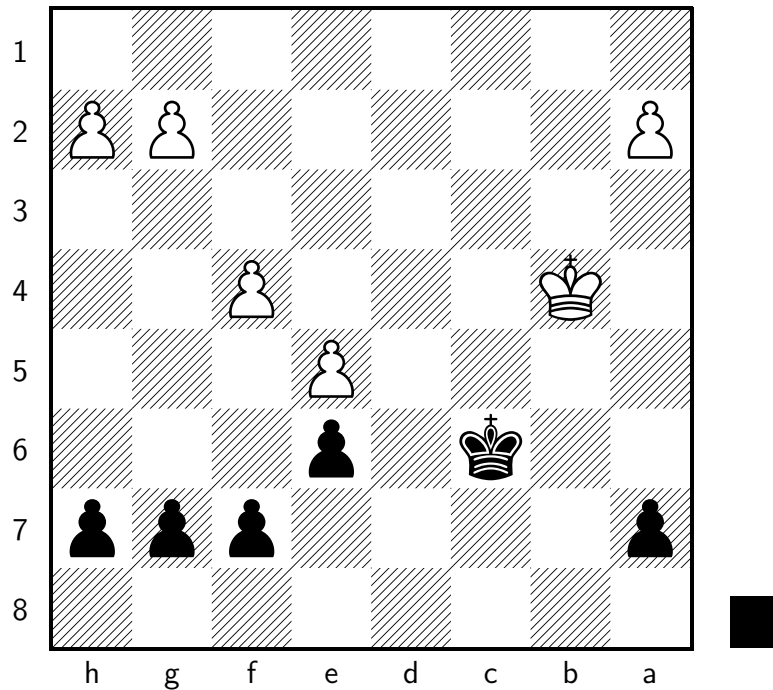
We know we are looking for a “special” move, so ♙h6! is a clear candidate. But how many of us would have even looked for such a move in an actual game?!

1 ♙h6! ♜xh6 2 ♖g8+ ♝xf7 3 ♔g7\# is the main point.



There are other defenses by Black, but all lead to the inevitable loss of significant material.

Solution #8



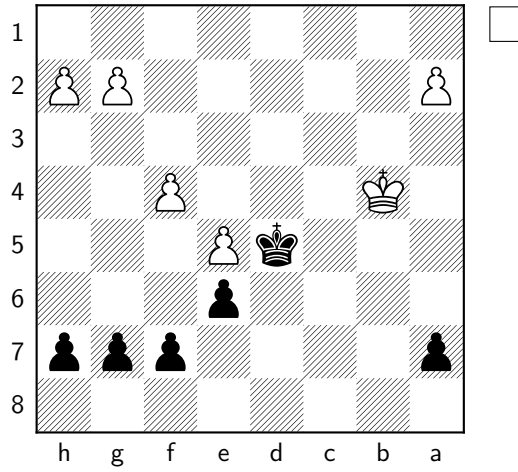
Andrew Volovich vs. Anthony Chan. EACU 2022 Closed U1950.

I like this position because it's almost symmetrical and if anything, Black looks slightly on the back foot because White's e and f pawns look slightly more menacing (at least I think). But it's Black's move and the King is closer to the centre. The keys to this position are:

1. Control the centre with the King.
2. Create a passed pawn on the e-file.
3. In the event of a pawn race, force an exchange of Queens placing the White King offside.

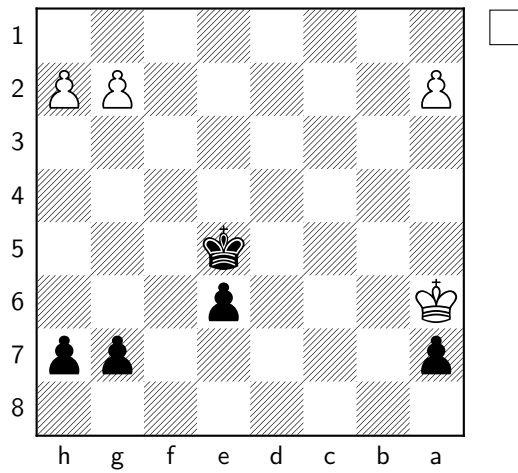
Step 1: Control the centre

29... ♖d5!



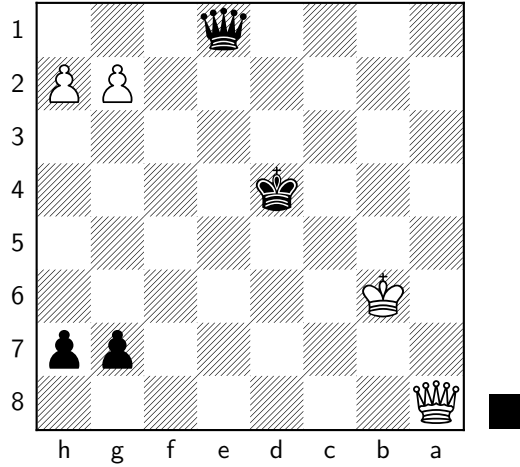
Step 2a: Create a passed pawn

30 ♗b5 f6! 31 ♗a6 fxe5 32 fxe5 ♗xe5

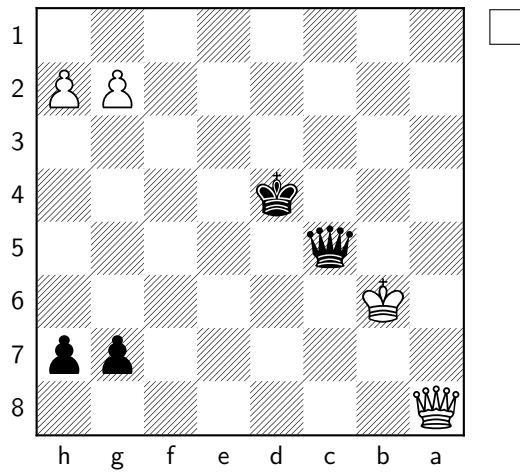


Step 2b: Pawn race

33 ♗xa7 ♗d4 34 ♗b6 e5 35 a4 e4 36 a5 e3 37 a6 e2 38 a7 e1 ♔ 39 a8 ♔

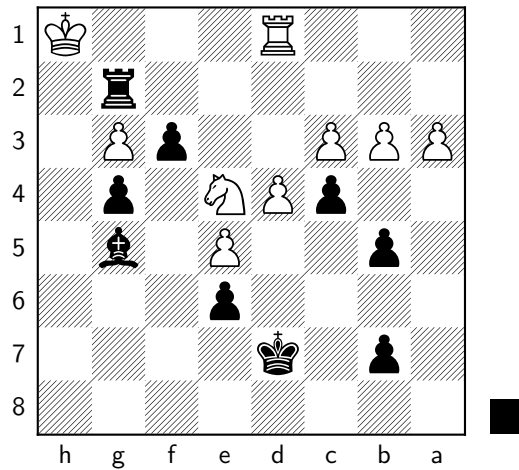


Step 3: Force exchange of Queens and White K offside
39... ♔e6+ **40** ♚c7 ♔e7+ **41** ♚b6 ♔c5+ -+



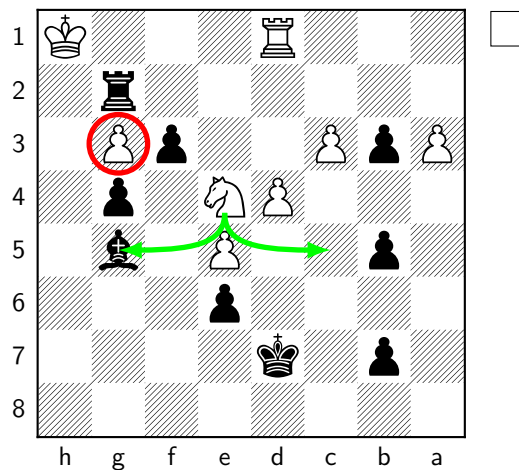
Once the Queens are exchanged it's an easy win for Black given the better position of the Black King.

Solution #9



Aadishesh Devalia vs. Anthony Chan. Cambridge International Open 2023.

In the game, I played the lacklustre ... ♗e7 (which should probably still be winning with good technique ...). The cool kids play **32... cxb3!** though shunning material, relying on pawn power and going directly for the win!

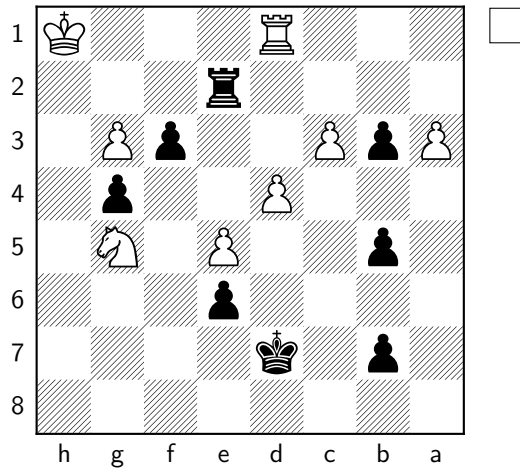


White really only has two options here, ♖xg5 and ♖c5+. But note that the poor white Knight is overworked and critically, needed for the protection of the pawn on g3

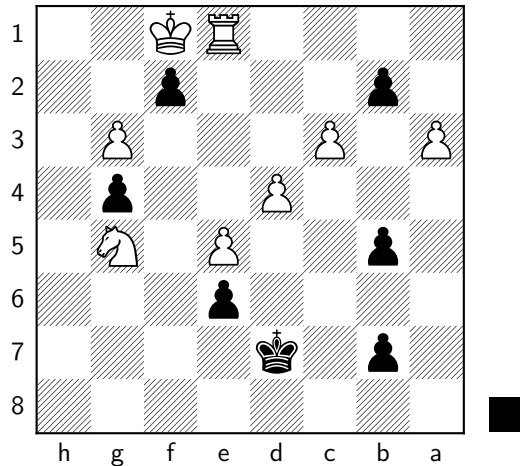
(which is why the variation: **33** ♖c5+ ♕e7 **34** ♖xb3 ♗xg3 -- fails for White.)

There is an important detail in the mainline:

33 ♖xg5 ♗e2! Here the move ... ♗e2 is needed to stop the White knight regaining its central post. Once this is done, Black's b and f pawns will win the day.

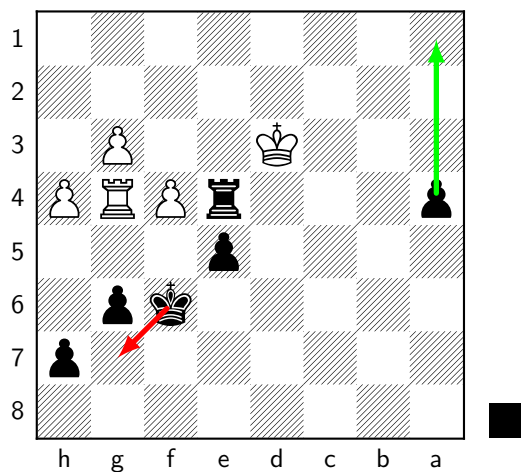


34 ♕g1 b2 **35** ♗b1 f2+ **36** ♕f1 ♗e1+ **37** ♗xe1 --
 (**34** ♗b1 f2 **35** ♕g2 ♗e1 --)



What a great final position this would have been, showing the power of pawns!

Solution #10



Salomon Flohr vs. Efim Geller. USSR Championship 1949.

The clue given probably wasn't the best(!) and it's not really a puzzle, as there is more than one way to win. So apologies to all solvers on the night. The idea was to give the hint that $Kd3$ was aimed at running away the Black Rook, after which $f \times e5+$ would potentially threaten the a-pawn so you want to avoid the check.

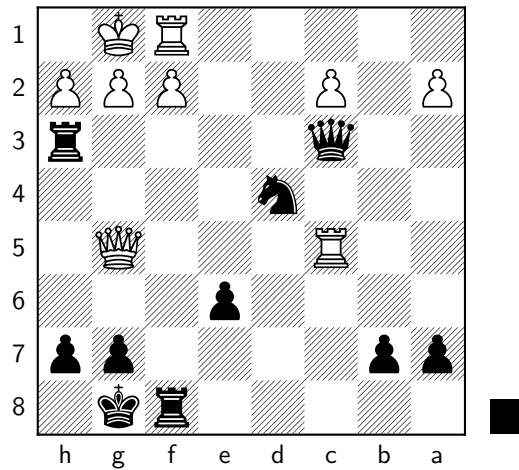
Of course as many pointed out on the night, $\dots \text{♖d4+}$ is a perfectly reasonable response and is also winning for Black! In fact this is Leela Zero's top choice at first. If you leave it running a while it then does pick up on Geller's ingenious idea and much more spectacular move!

43... ♜g7!

The point here being to avoid $f \times e5+$ with check and exploit the cut off nature of the White rook. White cannot take the Black rook, as then the a-pawn can't be stopped from queening.

There was some good analysis on the night demonstrating why the Black K can't stay on the f-file and must go to g7 for this plan to work.

Solution #11



Stefan Levitsky vs. Frank Marshall, DSB Kongress, 1912. “The Gold Coins”

This position provided for some great discussion among solvers on the night. A couple of players had seen this famous position before, but hopefully enjoyed seeing others trying to find Marshall’s golden move!

1... ♔g3! 2 f×g3 ♘e2+ 3 ♕h1 ♖×f1#

1... ♔g3! 2 h×g3 ♘e2#

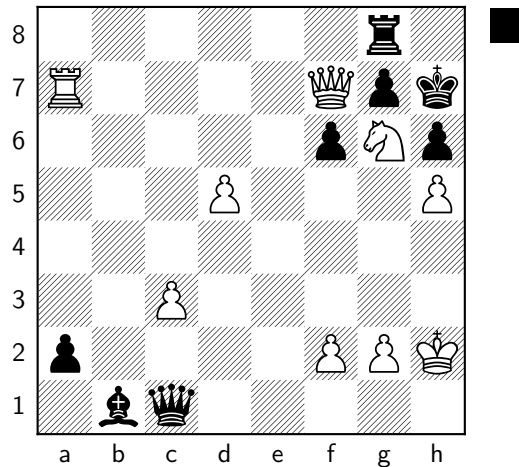
1... ♔g3! 2 ♔×g3 ♘e2+ 3 ♕h1 ♘×g3 –+

There was a lively discussion on the night over whether Marshall deserved gold coins given the last variation, sadly, doesn’t result in checkmate ...

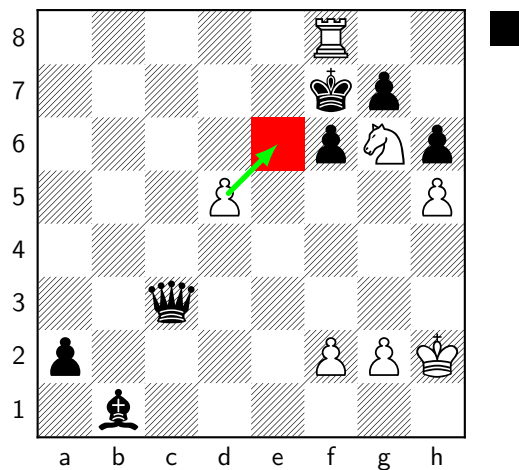
Solution #12

A few solvers had watched this game live and remembered the idea, but it was hopefully still an interesting challenge attempting to reconstruct the continuation that Ding had seen and that was followed in the game.

41 d5! a2 42 ♖c7 ♜h7 43 ♘g6 ♗g8 44 ♜f7!

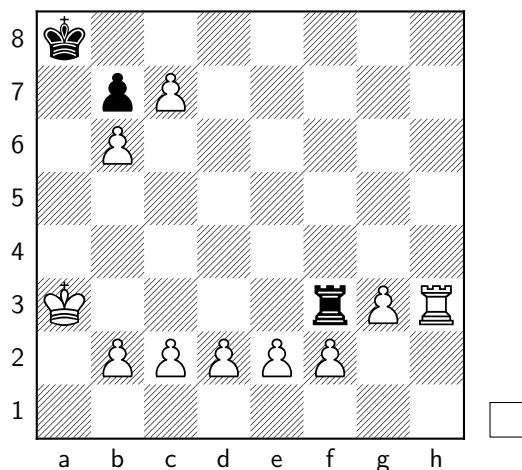


Nepo resigned here, the point being there's nothing much better than:
 44... ♜xc3 45 ♜xg8+ ♜xg8 46 ♗a8+ ♜f7 47 ♗f8#



And the purpose of the mysterious 41 d5 move, creating a mating net, is revealed!

Solution to “Dance of the White King”



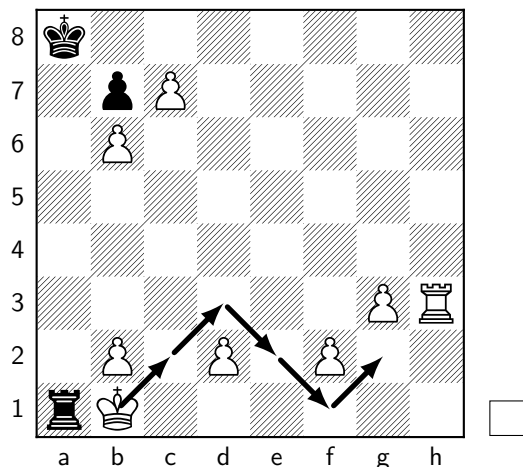
White cannot afford to take the Black Rook, because of stalemate. In the group of solvers I was with, our thinking proceeded along the following lines:

1. We need to find a construction where if the Black Rook checks us, we are somehow able to take with check and mate.
2. We can see that $1 \text{ ♔a2 ♜a3+ } 2 \text{ ♔b1 ♜a1+}$ is a bit of a problem. So giving us some wiggle room from the back rank could be useful.
3. If the White pawn were not on g3, then the above variation would not be a problem because then $♜x\text{a3}\#$ would be possible.

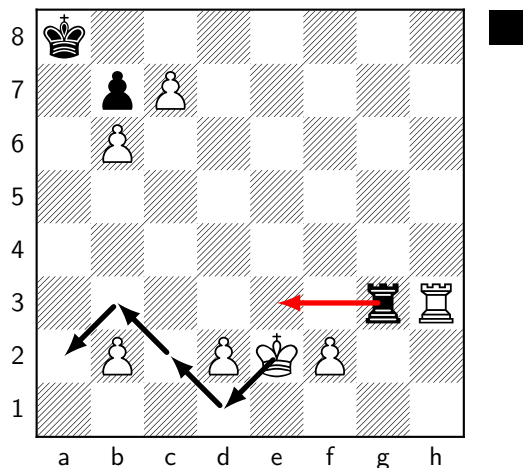
After some false starts and considerable amusement from Konrad, and shuffling the pawns and pieces around, we eventually hit upon the idea of clearing the pawns on c2 and e2 to allow what we initially coined the “waddle” of the White King but I was persuaded by Konrad later would be more elegantly termed a “dance”!

$1 \text{ e3 ♜xe3+ } 2 \text{ c3 ♜xc3+ } 3 \text{ ♔a2 ♜a3+ } 4 \text{ ♔b1 ♜a1+}$

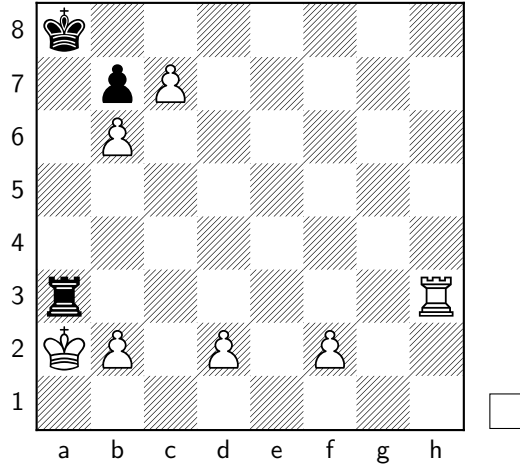
Here we have succeeded in giving our King some breathing room to waddle through c2 and e2 to arrive at g2.



5 ♖c2 ♜c1+ 6 ♖d3 ♜c3+ 7 ♖e2 ♜e3+ 8 ♖f1 ♜e1+ 9 ♖g2 ♜g1+ 10
 ♖f3 ♜xg3+ 11 ♖e2
 and we have succeeded in forcing black to eliminate our g-pawn!

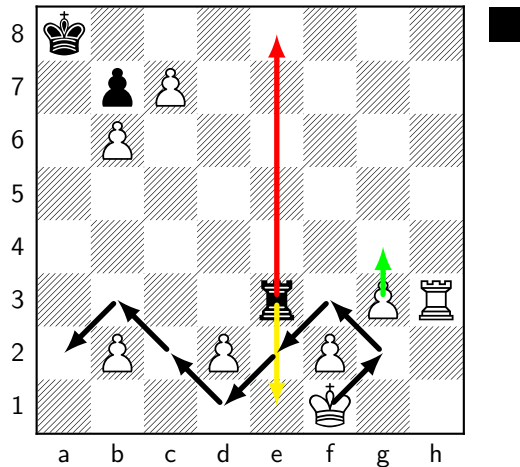


White now has the twin threats of ♜h8# and ♜a3#. Taking White's rook fails due to 11... ♜xh3 12 c8♜# (promote to a rook for the style points).
 The only way for Black to prolong the dance further is with ... ♜e3+ initiating a dance back from whence we came!
 11... ♜e3+ 12 ♖d1 ♜e1+ 13 ♖c2 ♜c1+ 14 ♖b3 ♜c3+ 15 ♖a2 ♜a3+
 ... we finally reach the position we originally envisaged!



For completeness, we should give one other variation, which Leela Zero thinks is Black's best defense delaying the inevitable by one move, where Black avoids taking the g-pawn. The solution here is to clear the g-pawn from the 3rd rank ourselves forcing the Black Rook to check again, when we go back into the familiar reverse dance.

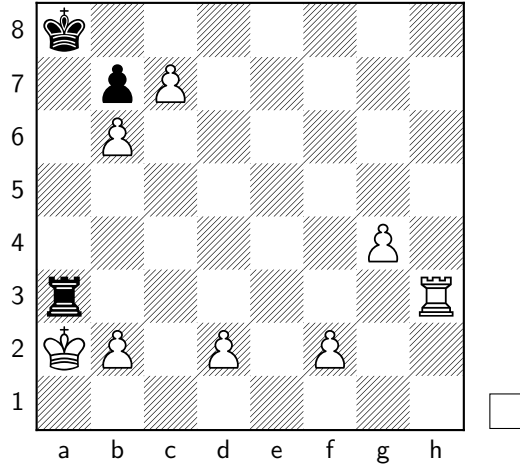
Going back to this position:



Leela Zero gives:

8... ♖e8 9 g4 ♜e1+ 10 ♘g2 ♜g1+ 11 ♘f3 ♜g3+ 12 ♘e2 ♜e3+ 13 ♘d1 ♜e1+ 14 ♘c2 ♜c1+ 15 ♘b3 ♜c3+ 16 ♘a2 ♜a3+

And we are back to a familiar position.



It may amuse you to know that I tried running the composition through Leela Zero, and it took some 7 million nodes and just over a minute to find the solution from the original position. A tricky composition indeed!

Thoughts, Credits and Acknowledgements

The selection of puzzles was aimed at providing a range of difficulty, and a mix of practical, instructive, entertaining, surprising and aesthetic. Hopefully we achieved that to some extent, although in retrospect perhaps a few “cleaner” puzzles could have been included.

Many positions were not true “puzzles” in the sense that they had a single winning line, but all had the merit that all were taken from real games. Generally speaking though, there was a preferred line that was being looked for!

Cover photo

The cover photo shows (from left to right) Paul McMahon, Alan Richardson, Konrad Scheffler, Rob Davies, Paul Kemp (closest to board), Michael Osborn and Simon Marsden. They are contemplating the position from the game Salomon Flohr vs. Efim Geller, from the USSR Championship of 1949 (problem #10). Unfortunately I had caused some confusion by not ruling out ... ♖d4+ which would be a perfectly valid winning continuation!

Hopefully all agree though that Geller’s continuation was worth the inclusion and even Leela Zero prefers this move as its number one choice when given enough time.

Sources

- So, W., Adams, M., Nunn, J., & Burgess, G. (2021). Desert Island Chess Puzzle Omnibus. Gambit Publications.
- Stapczynski, C. (2022, March 17). The 10 best chess moves of all time. Chess.com. <https://www.chess.com/article/view/best-chess-moves>
- King, D. (2022, November 25). Daniel King’s Power Play Show: Ivanchuk’s brilliant idea. Chess News. <https://en.chessbase.com/post/daniel-king-s-power-play-show-ivanchuk-brilliant-idea>
- Bonus Puzzle: “The Dance of the King” - courtesy of Konrad Scheffler, who was shown the puzzle by Lloyd Hill from South Africa.
- The Chess Games of Anthony Chan

Feedback welcome at chess@nybble.com