

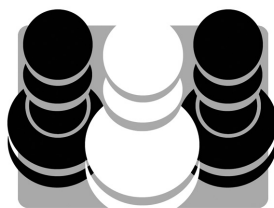
Chess Tactics from Scratch

Understanding Chess Tactics

2nd edition

By

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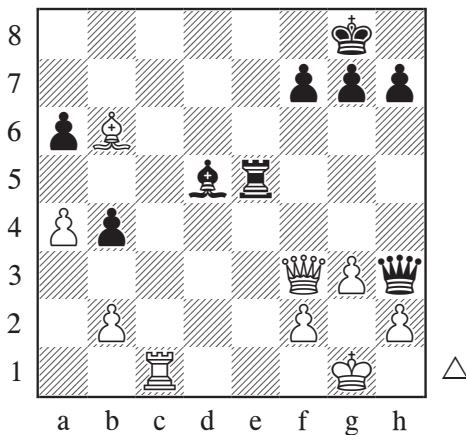
What is this book about?

Chess is a visual game. A chess player must be able to recognize elementary patterns, therefore the tactics in this book will be primarily explained graphically. This approach is supported by a large numbers of diagrams, which will also allow the reader to study this book without a chessboard.

Chess is also a game of logic. Logic, in the same way as chess tactics, depends on collecting and processing information. This book will show you how to accurately find the elements of tactics, and work with them creatively.

This book is divided into the following parts:

Chapter 1 Becoming Familiar with the Pieces!

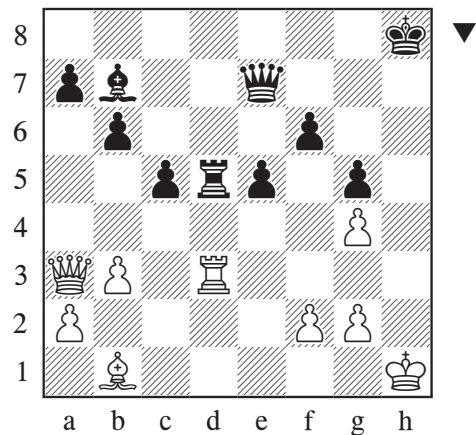


1.g4!

It is an illusion to assume that after 1.g4 the black queen could take the white queen, because Black must defend against ♖c8 mate. That is also why the black bishop has no time to take the white queen.

In this chapter you will learn (among other things) to safeguard yourself against illusions of this kind.

Chapter 2 The Pin



1...♙h7†!

There is much more to know about the pin than might appear at first sight. 1...♙h7† looks like a mistake because of:

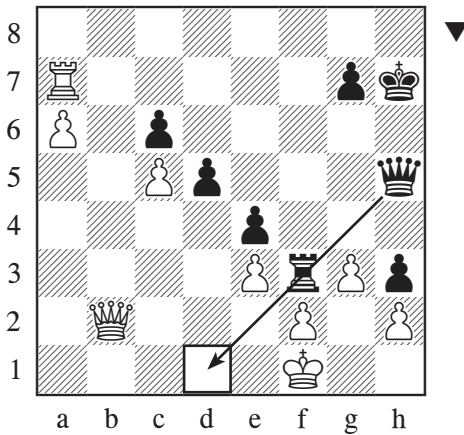
2.♖h3

But we shall see in this chapter that Black has it all under control...

The theme of this chapter is the chain of three points that constitutes the formation of a pin:

- The pin's interaction with other pieces and squares on the board.
- How to recognize the pin if it is in a preliminary state (only two points out of three).
- How to create a pin and work with it.

Chapter 3 The Discovered Attack

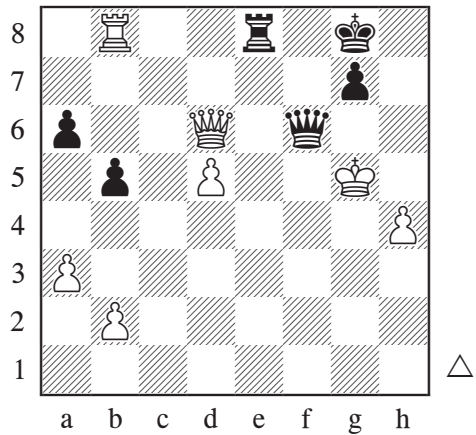


1...♞f7

This time the target of the discovered attack is a square. The formation ♖h5-♞f3-d1 is a similar formation to a pin.

Detailed information about what constitutes a discovered attack and how to create and strike with the discovered attack are demonstrated in this chapter.

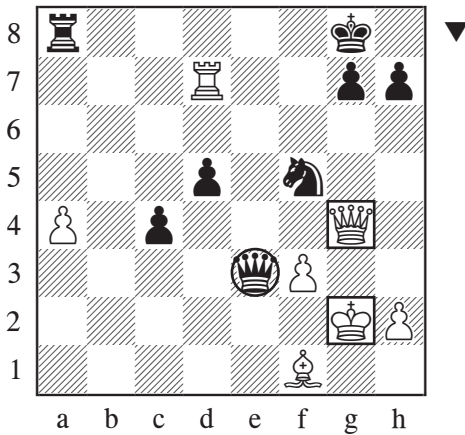
Chapter 4 The Reloader



This is the end of a nice combination by Tal. The black queen gave check on f6 forcing White to take. But the black pawn will take back with a check and reload itself with deadly force. Thus White has no time to save his rook. What the first piece occupying f6 (the black queen) did not achieve on this square, the following piece will do.

The reloading of pieces is explained here and – strangely enough (and deservedly!) – recognized as a tactical motif in its own right and finally given a name in chess literature.

Chapter 5 The Double Attack



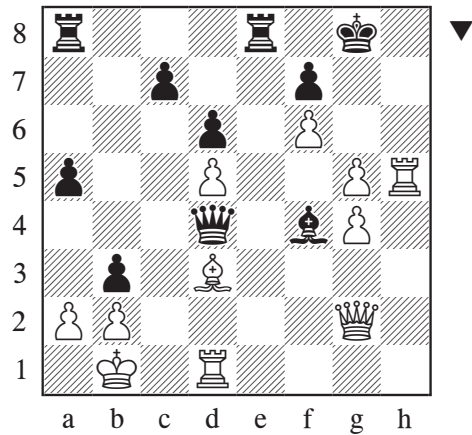
White has just played ♔g3-g4? running into a double attack.

1...♔e6!

The boxed-in squares show the targets of the f5-knight. The encircled square on e3 is the point from where the knight strikes. 1...♔e6 wins the necessary tempo against the undefended d7-rook.

An easy example, but this chapter will also reveal to you the finer points of this motif.

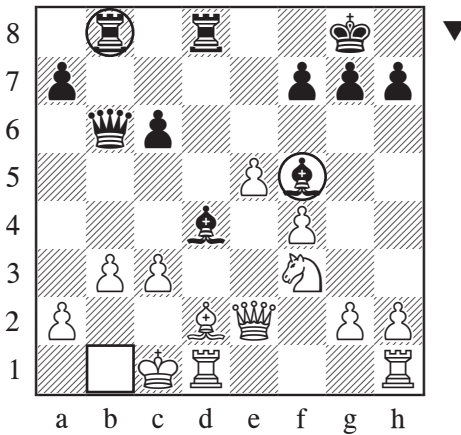
Chapter 6 Overloading



Overloading is when a piece has a responsibility on two important squares. In the diagram the d1-rook is *obviously* defending the d3-bishop, but when we note that the rook must also cover the back rank then we should ask – is the bishop really defended?

1...♔xd3†!

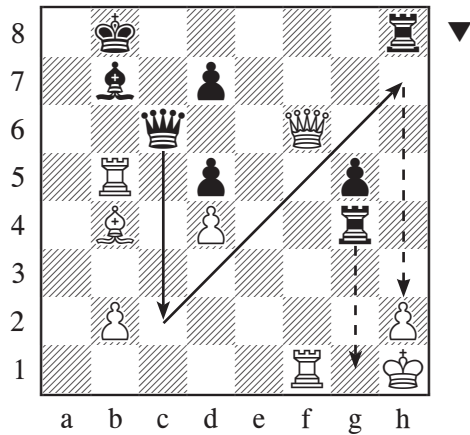
Chapter 7 Mate



1... ♙xb3!

Knowledge of mating patterns (here a potential rook and bishop mate) is essential. This chapter will teach you all of the important ones.

Chapter 8 Gain of Tempo/Intermediate Move

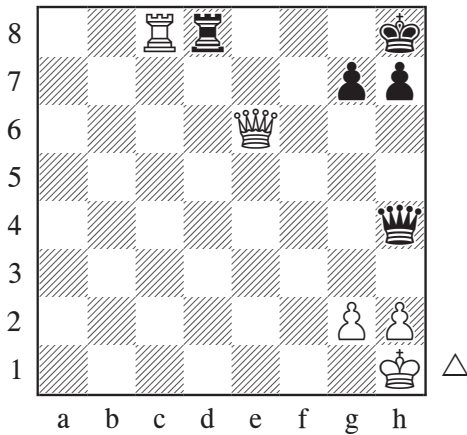


1... ♚xh2†

The tempo lets us find efficient ways to bring our pieces to squares that would otherwise be impossible to reach with a normal timetable. Black was under enormous pressure, but he finds *time* to transfer his queen via c2 (with check) to the mating square h7.

This chapter will tell you how to make combinations possible in the nick of time. Other related themes are also investigated in this chapter.

Chapter 9
The X-ray Attack

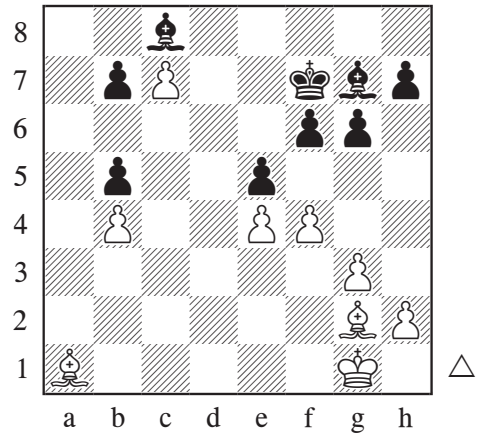


1. ♖e8†

Simple but effective: the X-ray attack!

This small chapter shows you how this frequently misunderstood little motif can clearly be detected and utilized.

Chapter 10
Opening and Closing Lines of Communication



1. ♕h3!

Lines for attack or defence; lines between pieces, squares and tasks; lines to open; lines to close and interrupt – all these are the story of this chapter.

Realize the importance of your pieces working together and learn how to cut off your opponent's pieces from their colleagues.

Chapter 11
Status Examination

Target Square=h4-f2

Not defending the e1-rook (because it must defend e3)

e3=target of knight double attack

Not defending h4 (because it must defend e1-rook)

1... ♖xf4†!

In this chapter we will learn how to organize and effectively prune the calculation process when working with tactics.

This chapter brings it all together: from the easy questions such as ‘How many retreat squares does a piece have?’ to finding complex combinations like the one above.

Chapter 12
Candidate Moves

In this chapter on candidate moves you will learn much more about the above position. The previous eleven chapters are largely about *what to look for*. This last chapter is about *how to look*.

Well, I called Chapter 12 the final chapter and that is true up to a point, as then it's time for the reader to stop reading and start working! Next are 300 puzzles to test your newfound understanding. I will say more about the puzzles on page 233.

Chapter 2

The Pin

Have you ever lost due to an unforeseen pin? Try to find the games, then put the positions on a board and try to figure out why these pins came as surprises. Don't be satisfied with just being able to pinpoint the exact mistakes. Always try to understand the underlying causes of your defeats. In some sense all defeats are caused by lack of understanding. So the question one must ask oneself after a loss is: What more do I need to understand in order to improve my chess?

Essentially a pin is a chain of three chess pieces. The first point in this chain is the attacking piece, the second point is the pinned piece, and the third piece is the target of the pin.

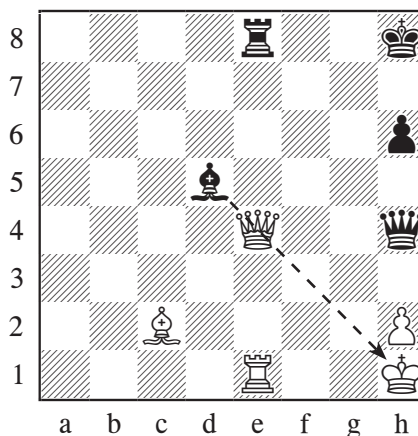
In this chapter I will at first take a closer look at the different kinds of targets, then I will examine the pinned piece, and finally the attacker. The final points to examine are the conditions to set up and to break a pin.

I. The target

1. The King

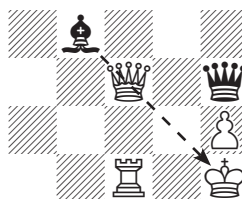
When the king is the target of a pin, the freedom of movement of the pinned piece is always radically reduced. A knight becomes totally immobile; other pinned pieces are only able to move on the line between the attacker and the king. So the pieces lose the attacking and defending functions they might have had before.

In the following diagram the white queen is only allowed to move diagonally between g2 and d5 as it is pinned against the king.

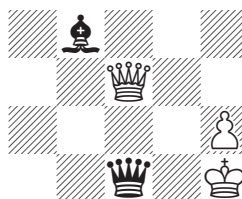


Consequently Black's rook and queen are not under attack by the white queen and there is no mate on h7 either.

The next two diagrams show how the defensive function of the queen disappears with the pin. She can neither defend the rook:



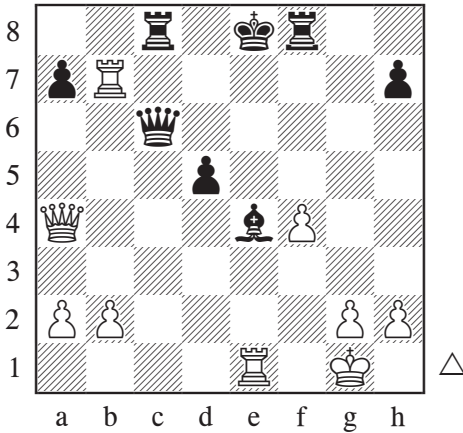
Nor defend a square (mate):



The next example demonstrates the loss of function of a pinned piece rather drastically.

Shumov – Winawer

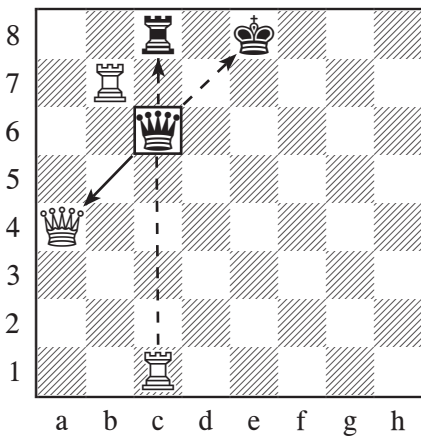
St Petersburg 1875



1. ♖c1

Black will lose the queen or be mated.

As the black queen is pinned by the white queen against the king it loses all its attacking power concerning the white rook on c1 and its mobility to defend the c8-rook against ♖c1xc8 with mate.



If the target is the king the pin is always effectual and we can draw the following conclusions:

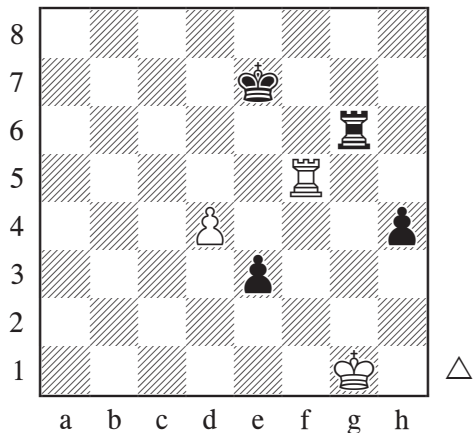
The freedom of movement of the pinned piece is radically (in the case of the knight totally) reduced. The piece is only able to move in the line of fire of the attacking piece.

Therefore, the pinned piece has no chance to defend itself against additional attacks.

Bearing this in mind, it is not very difficult to see that these consequences of a pin against the king also have strategic repercussions. In an endgame the weaker side will try to hold the game by neutralizing the opponent's advantageous pawn structure or even an extra pawn with a piece. What the weaker side is trying to avoid is the exchange of this very last piece. One of the strategic consequences of a pin against the king would be the elimination of a remaining piece by setting up this pin and exchanging the last important piece, transforming the position into a won king and pawn endgame.

Belivsky – Yusupov

USSR 1987



If White wants to stop the e-pawn the king has to move to the f-file. So in this position White resigned because:

1. ♖f1 ♜f6

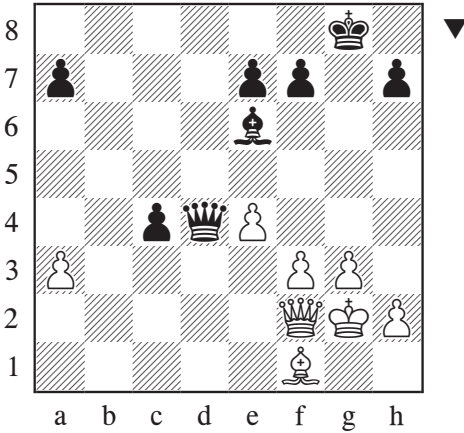
Black will swap off the rooks and one of his pawns will make it to the eighth rank. 1. ♖h1 e2 2. ♜e5† ♞e6! also does not save the day.

Black's last move was 74...♞b3-c2 (74...♞d1 would have lost as well).

Now followed:

Lengyel – Brinck Claussen

Varna (ol) 1962

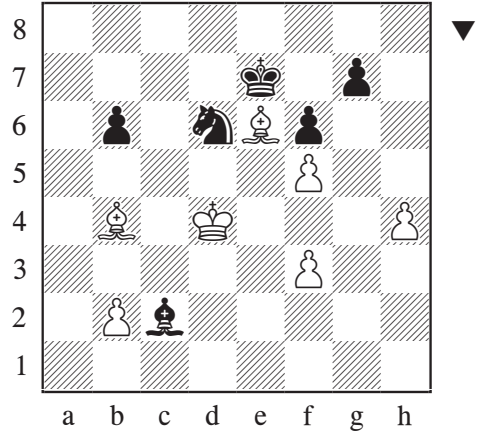


1...♞h3† 2. ♖g1 ♞a1

All the white pieces are paralysed and Black's c-pawn, having no adversary left, will march towards the eighth rank.

Another beautiful example is:

75. ♞e4 ♞b3 76. ♞d5 ♞c2 77. ♞e6

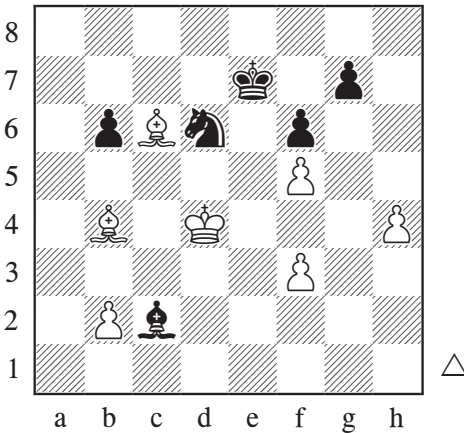


And now White is winning as the knight is pinned against the king and any king move would lose material

In the following example, Black has sacrificed a pawn with 24...f4. Using a pin White turns his material superiority into a won pawn endgame.

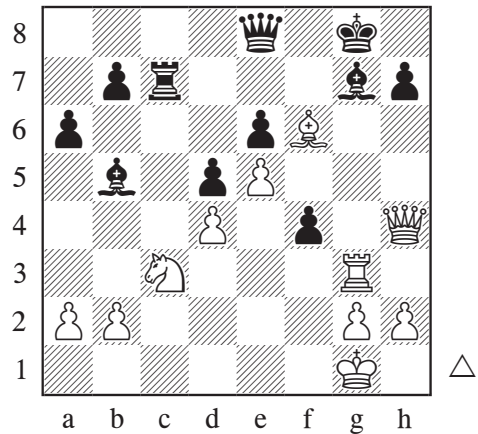
Polugaevsky – Pinter

Zagreb 1987



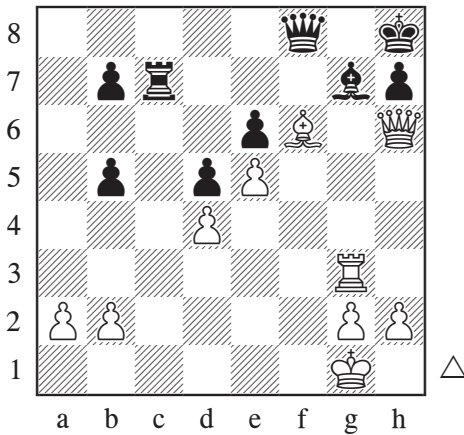
Morphy – Anderssen

Paris (11) 1858

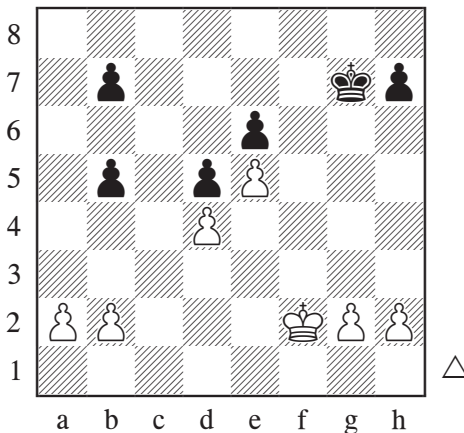


25. ♖xf4 ♕f8 26. ♗xb5 axb5 27. ♖h6 ♔h8

With the threat of 28... ♖xf6!



28. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 29. ♔f2! ♔g8 30. ♖xg7†
 ♖xg7 31. ♗xg7 ♔xg7



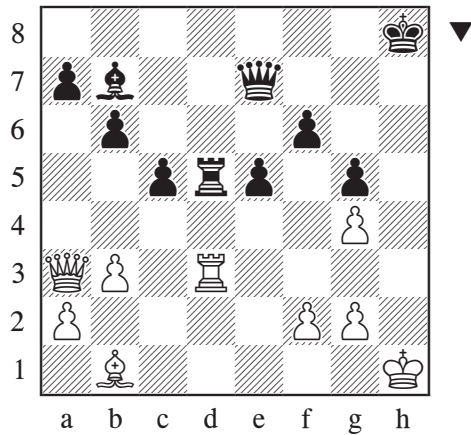
And White won the pawn endgame with his extra pawn on the kingside.

Tarrasch once pointed out that it is always dangerous when your king and the opponent's queen are on the same line, no matter how many pieces are in between.

The next example shows that this advice should be taken seriously.

Schatz – Giegold

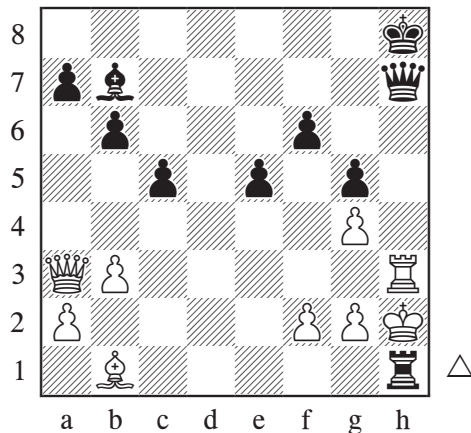
Hof 1928



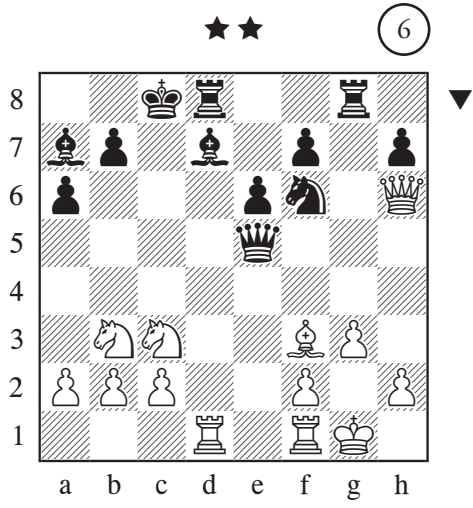
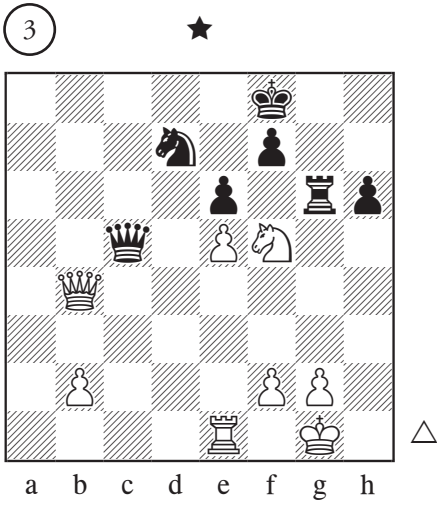
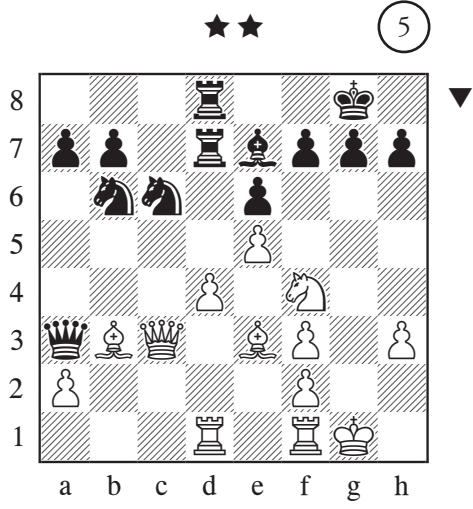
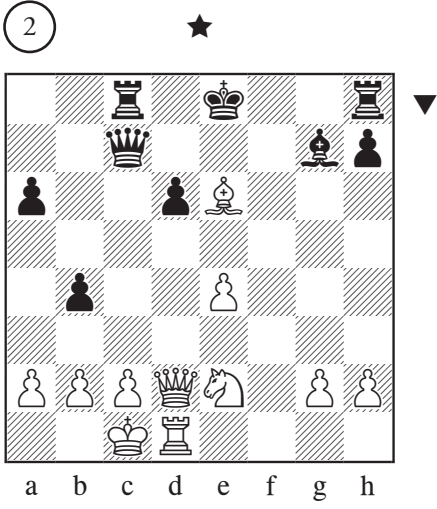
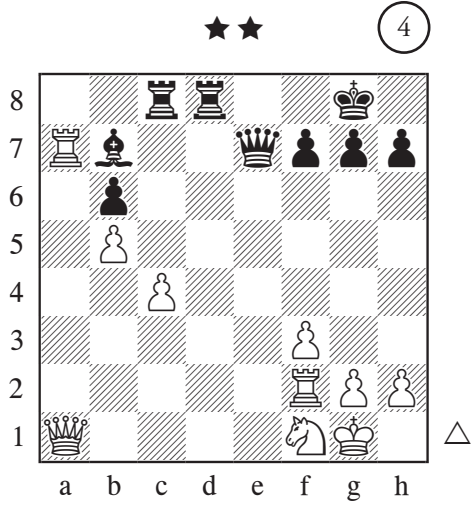
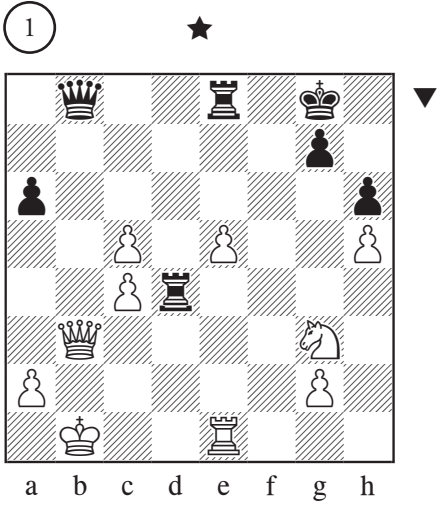
1... ♖h7†

Black gave his opponent the possibility to set up a pin against his king but the pin against the white king was even stronger.

2. ♖h3 ♖d1† 3. ♔h2 ♖h1†!!



White finds out rather painfully that after 4. ♔xh1 the black queen is pinned but not immobile. The rook and now also the g2-pawn are pinned against the king. Consequently, the rook is not defended. 4... ♖xh3† and White loses the rook and the game at once.



(1) Zapata – Kacheishvili, Arlington 2010

Black was already doing quite well, but after **31...♖d3!** White simply resigned.

(2) A. Hunt – Cheparinov, Plovdiv 2010

20...♙h6! 0–1

(3) Edouard – St. Novikov, Moscow 2011

39.♖c1! A typical combination. **1–0**

(4) Granda Zuniga – Gonzalez Garcia, Mexico 2010

White won a crucial pawn with: **27.♙a6! ♖d7 27...♙xa6 28.♖xe7** wins a piece. **28.♙xb6 ♖xc4?** (Diagram A) **29.♖d2? 29.♖e2!** would have won the b7-bishop, because **29...♙xe2 30.♙xb7!** leaves Black's back rank inadequately defended. **29...♖xd2?** It is hard to say why Black did not play **29...♖cc7. 30.♖xb7! ♖xg2† 30...♖d7 31.♖b8† 31.♙xg2 1–0**

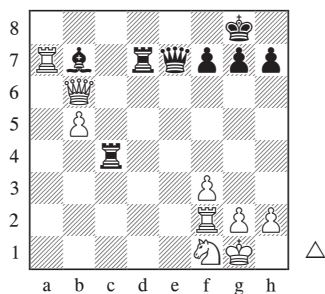
(5) Kosteniuk – Kacheishvili, Las Vegas 2010

The pins from d7 to d1 and a3 to c3 decided the game after: **21...♗xe5! 22.♙c1 22.dxe5 ♖xd1** and Black wins. **22...♙b4 23.♙xb4** (Diagram B) The following knight checks are quite funny. **23...♗xf3† 24.♙g2 ♗h4† 25.♙g3 ♗f5† 26.♙g4 ♗h6† 27.♙h5 ♙xb4 28.♗xe6 fxe6 29.♙xh6 ♖xd4 30.♙xe6† ♙h8 31.♖xd4 ♖xd4 32.♖g1 ♙f8 33.f4 ♗d5 34.♙g5 h6 35.♙g6 hxg5 36.♖xg5 ♗xf4† 37.♙f7 ♖d6 0–1**

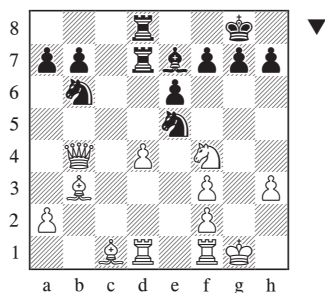
(6) Salgado Lopez – Smirin, Paks 2011

18...♖xg3†! 19.hxg3 ♙xg3† 20.♙g2 ♖g8 21.♙h2 (Diagram C) **21...♙c6! 22.♙xg3 ♖xg3 23.♗d5** Black also wins against the best defence: **23.♙h2 ♖xg2† 24.♙h3 ♗g4 25.♗d5 ♙xd5 26.♖xd5 ♖xf2 27.♖dd1 h5** and the ending is eventually winning. **23...♙xd5 24.♖xd5 ♗xd5 25.♙h1 ♖g5 26.♗d2 ♗f4 27.♙f3 f5 28.♗c4 ♗h3 29.♗d6† ♙c7 30.♗xb7 ♗xf2† 31.♙h2 e5 32.♗a5 e4 33.♙e2 f4 0–1**

A



B



C

