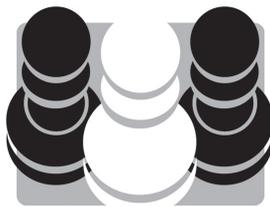


Mating the Castled King

By

Danny Gormally



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Preface

Right from when we first start to play chess, we are taught quick knock-out ways of checkmating our opponent's king. We quickly learn Scholar's mate and other speedy methods of scoring an easy win. At that point, the more difficult and sophisticated job of trying to break down a castled king is only a vague outline in our mind. Eventually we develop various slapdash methods of attacking the king that has fled to safety. However, it seems to me that the topic of attacking the castled king is poorly represented in chess literature, and as a consequence, very few of us are true masters of this tricky subject.

While writing this book, it occurred to me that attacking the castled king can be broken down into three different methods:

1) A blitzkrieg attack. This is the kind of attack that comes out of nothing. A good example of this is when a hook can be attacked with ♙xh6, which we will look at in detail in this book. From seemingly little danger, the enemy king comes under a terrible assault.

2) Playing directly for the attack. Typically White (though sometimes Black, of course) plays for an attack right from the opening. Pawn storm in the Sicilian are typical of this, or the ♖e1-h4 method of trying to break down a kingside fianchetto. In this book we'll examine many examples of this type of attack.

3) The attack is an indirect consequence of the previous play. This type of attack tends to arise as a consequence of general play, and is the most common. Only once we have achieved strategic dominance do we launch an assault. Karpov was a master of this, only choosing to attack when everything was in his favour.

I learned a lot from writing this book. I've always been a very intuitive player rather than having a great mastery of the theory of the game. As I consider myself a natural attacking player, I was surprised during the process of writing this book to discover how little I knew about the specifics of attacking a castled king. It seems to me that we spend more time studying the finer points of the game, like positional strategy and pawn structures, and forget about what really wins the game – mating the guy's king.

I think it's a common misconception that when you become a grandmaster, all the secrets of chess knowledge are revealed to you. Like some secret freemasons' ceremony, where as well as learning about the shape-shifting lizards who control the world government and who faked the moon landings, you also learn about the deep mysteries of chess strategy. Sadly it isn't true, and like everyone else I have to work at it. (Certainly writing this book helped immensely in that regard.) A chess brain is like a muscle which has to be continually exercised. I've tried to emphasize throughout this book how important it is to keep looking at lots of chess puzzles in magazines, etc. Chess is all about pattern recognition, it's all about knowing past situations and putting that knowledge into practice, and you have to keep working on that ability.

Even so, I hope the reader enjoys this book, and remember folks, it's only a game. Anyone who knows me will be aware I struggle to take anything too seriously, and I've tried to reflect that. As well as the serious theory, you'll also learn about:

The Tower of Terror – a satanic monument to evil which has the power to destroy an enemy army on its own.

The Twins of Evil – dreaded harbingers of doom that have often been known to hang out at Terror Tower.

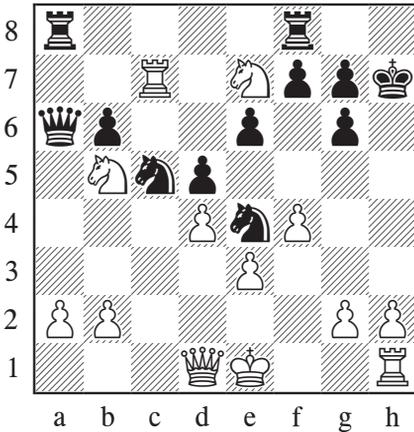
The Shotgun – not to be confused with the Sniper, this is an extremely dangerous weapon that comes in very useful in close encounters.

Enjoy.

Danny Gormally
Alnwick, March 2014

147. Hakan Degismez – Etem Durucay

Kusadasi 2004



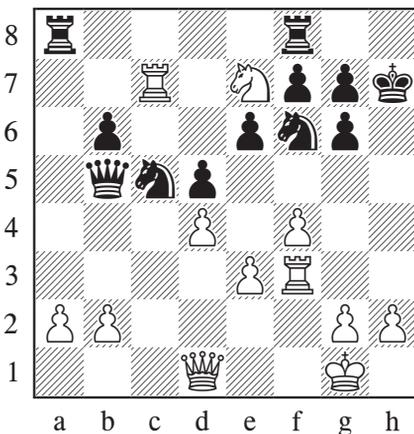
The mating idea has quite a simple execution here. White's knight is already in place so all he needs to do is bring a rook to the h-file.

21.0-0! ♖xb5

What else?

22.♠f3 ♘f6

A desperate attempt to plug the hole on the h-file.



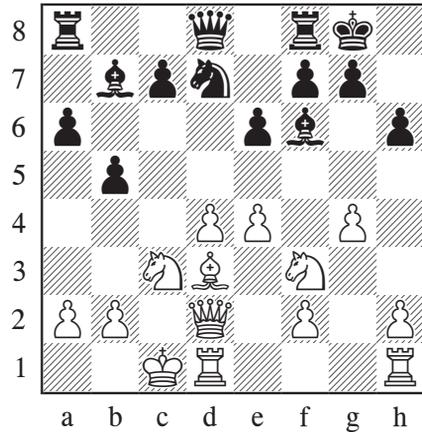
23.♠h3† ♘h5 24.♠xh5†

24.♖xh5†! also mates.

1-0

148. Ruediger Wocke – Jens Wulff

Germany 1992



13.h4!

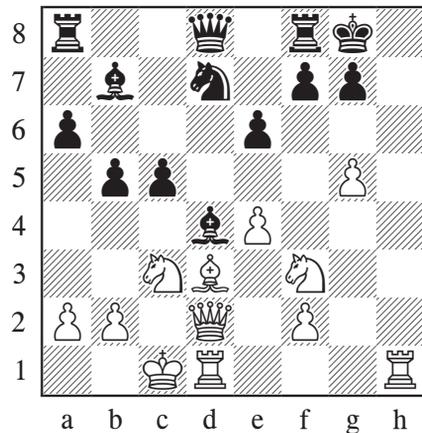
Black must now find some way to meet the threat of g4-g5.

13...c5 14.g5! hxg5?

Rather suicidally, Black allows the h-file to be opened.

14...cxd4 is a much better defence. If White meets it with the simple 15.♘e2, retaining his threats on the kingside, then Black can sacrifice the f6-bishop with 15...♗c5!?, resulting in a thoroughly messy position.

15.hxg5 ♗xd4

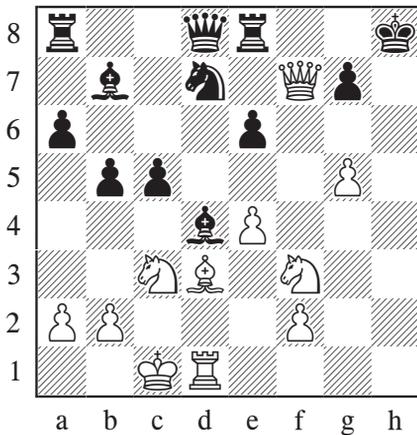


White now has the simple plan of transferring his queen to the h-file.

16. ♖f4! ♜e8

It may look as if Black has everything under control, and is ready to flee with his king in the event of the direct 17. ♖h4. But he has missed an important tactical detail...

17. ♖h8†! ♔xh8 18. ♖xf7

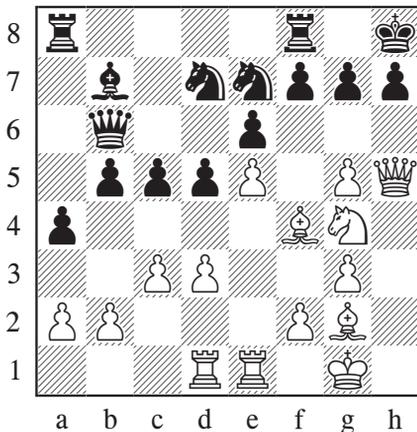


♖h1 is coming, with mate.

1-0

149. Marcelo Cukier – Zoltan Lehmann

Halle 1995

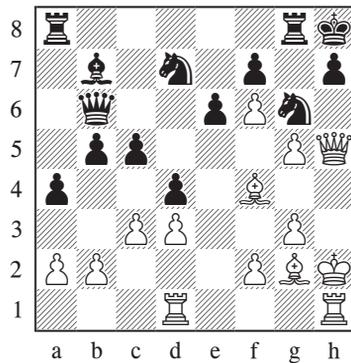


Certain openings are much more likely to lead to mating scenarios on the h-file than others. One such opening is the King's Indian Attack, which was made famous by some model games of Bobby Fischer. We'll come back to this opening at various points during this book, but suffice to say that White's plan is generally very thematic and straightforward – moves like h4-h5, ♖f1-h2-g4 and ♖f4 come naturally and easily. In the current position Black is completely cramped, particularly by the pawn on g5. All White has to do is get a rook to the h-file, and the attack should quickly break through.

20. ♖f3

White prepares ♖g2 followed by ♖h1.

Another way to clear the way for the rook is: 20. ♔h2!? d4 21. ♖f6! (21. ♖h1 is also good for White, though 21...g6 22. ♖h3 h5!? might allow Black to struggle on) 21...gxf6 22. ♖h1 ♖g8 23. exf6 and White's attack is winning. One beautiful possibility is: 23...♖g6

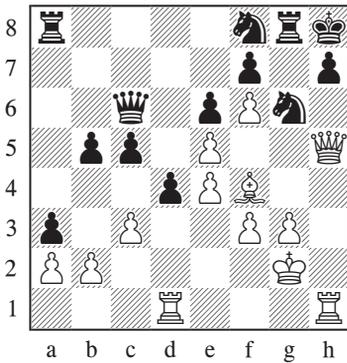


24. ♖xh7†! ♔xh7 25. ♔g1† ♖h4 26. ♖xh4† ♖g6 27. ♖h6† ♔f5 28. ♖h3#

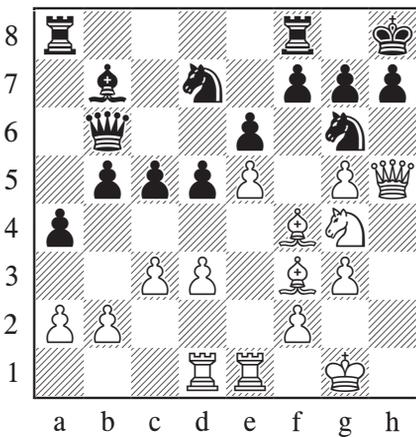
20... ♖g6

20...d4 looks a better attempt to interfere with White's plans, but after 21. ♖e4 ♖xe4 22. dxe4 White will soon bring a rook to the h-file. For example: 22...a3 23. ♔g2 ♖c6

(23...axb2 24.♖h1 h6 25.♘xh6! and the attack crashes through) 24.♘f6! gxf6 25.f3 ♖g8 26.♖h1 ♘f8 27.gxf6 ♘eg6



28.♗xh7†! ♘xh7 29.♖xh7† ♘xh7 30.♖h1† ♘h4† 31.♖xh4† ♘g6 32.♖h6#



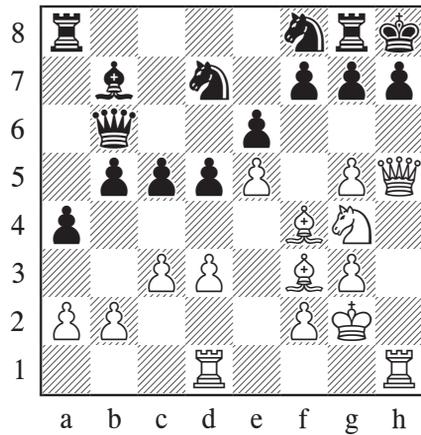
21.♔g2 ♖g8

Although Black was in trouble anyway, there seems something not quite right about his last couple of moves. It's almost as if he's playing for a self-mate.

22.♖h1 ♘gf8

Perhaps earlier Black thought he could defend here with 22...♘df8, but on reaching this position he probably realized that this would be met by the methodical and crushing build-up of pieces on the h-file: 23.♖h2!

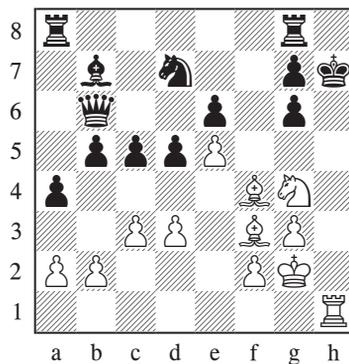
♘xf4† 24.gxf4 g6 25.♗h4 followed by ♘f6, ♖dh1 etc.



At first it looks as if there is no way through for White, but now came the coup de grâce:

23.g6!

The final dagger in Black's heart: 23...fxg6 (23...♘xg6 24.♗xh7#) 24.♗xh7† ♘xh7 25.♖xh7† ♘xh7 26.♖h1#

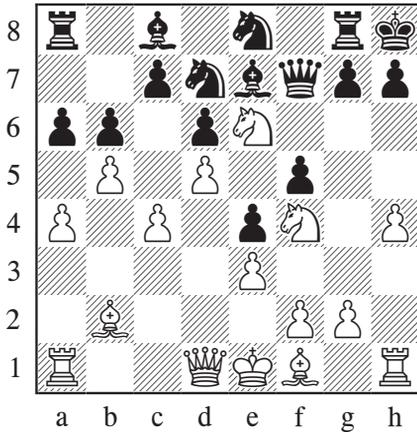


An elegant mate.

1-0

150. S. Gorzel – Renate Schmidt

Germany 1993

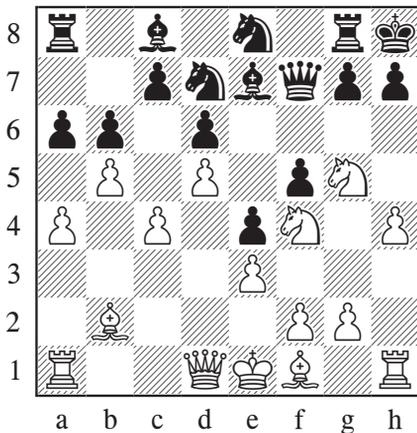


The black king is in a gruesome situation, utterly surrounded and entrapped by its own army, while the white pieces buzz around angrily, threatening to land a lethal sting to the black king's heart.

17. ♖g5!

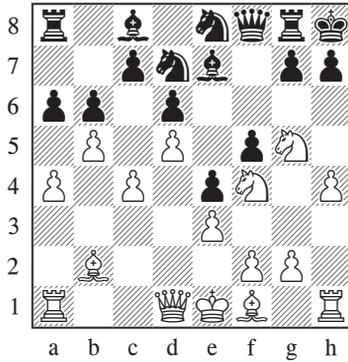
Prising open the h-file, after which the white attack is totally overwhelming.

17.h5 looks very strong, threatening ♖g6†, but Black can defend with 17...h6. White then retains a strong attack with 18.g4, but it is not nearly as convincing as the game continuation.



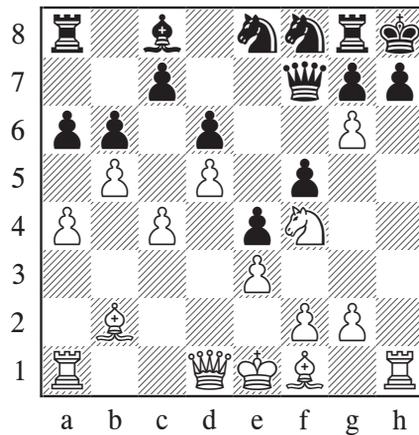
17... ♗xg5

Not surprisingly there is no realistic defence available to Black. For example: 17... ♖f8



18. ♖g6† (The prosaic 18. ♖h5 wins of course, but somehow seems less elegant.) 18...hxg6 19.h5! Mate is unavoidable, yet again showing the dangers of allowing your king to become entrapped on the edge of the board.

18.hxg5 ♖f8 19.g6!



The finish could be 19... ♗xg6 20. ♖xh7† ♗xh7 21. ♖h5# or 19... ♖e7 20.gxh7 ♖xh7 21. ♖g6#.

1-0