



THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

Jeff Coakley

PROOF GAMES: Artificial Fruits of Labour

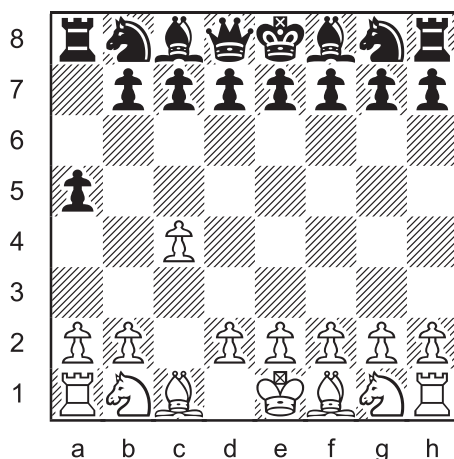
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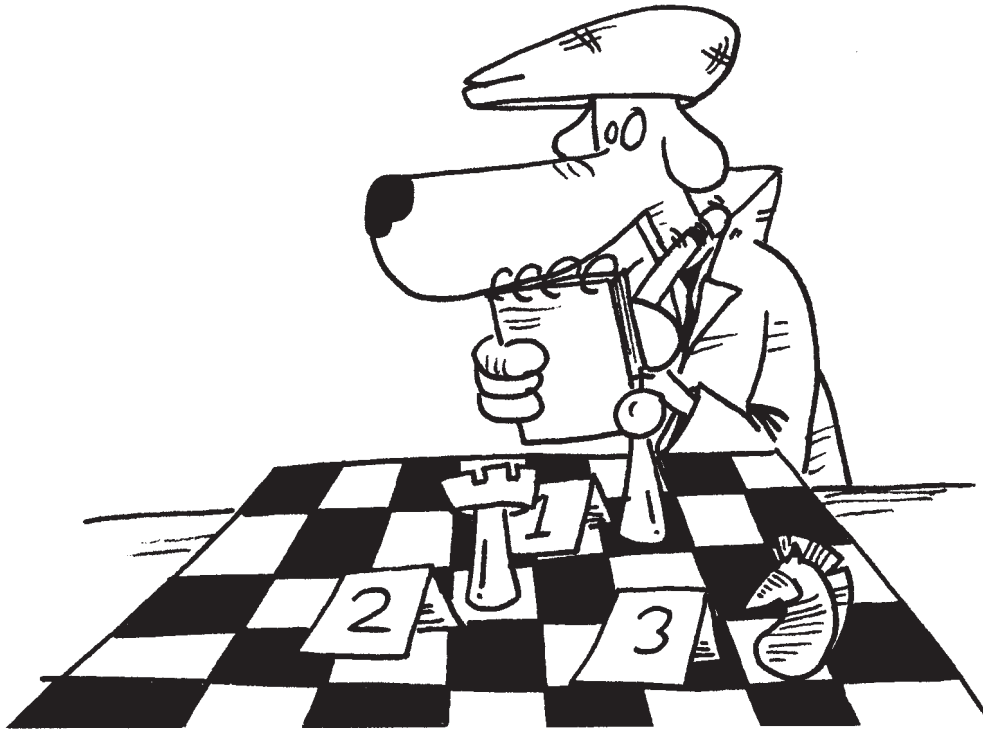
The task in a *proof game* is to show how a given position can be reached in a legal game. The puzzles in this column have a *move stipulation*. The position must be reached in a precise number of moves, no more and no less. The first two problems are proof games in 4.0 which means four moves by each side.

The positions may be silly, and the strategy willy nilly, but the moves are legal.

Proof Game 76

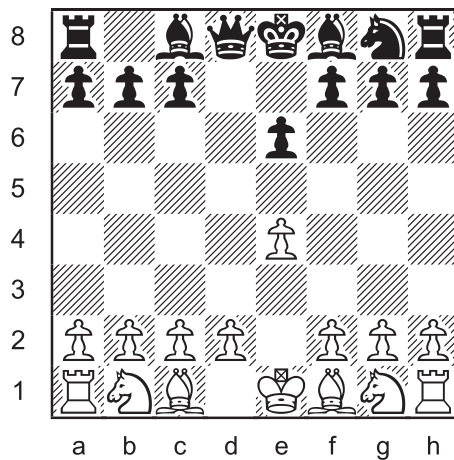


This position, with White to play, was reached in a game after each player made exactly four moves. What were the moves?



Chess crime is on the decline. Thanks in part to the work of ace detective Harmonius Hound. His investigative methods are now standard procedure for chess enforcement agencies throughout the world. Criminals, beware.

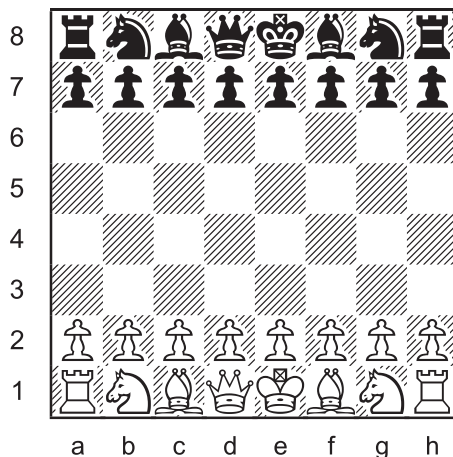
Proof Game 77



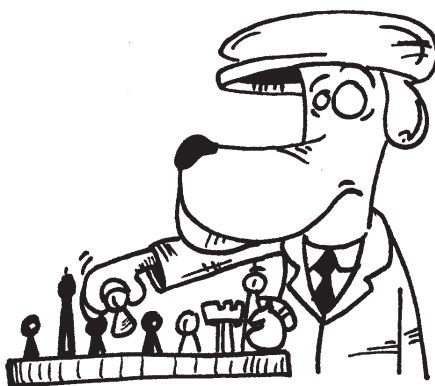
This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?

A *synthetic game* is similar to a proof game. But instead of finding the move sequence that leads to a given position, the task is to compose a game that ends with a particular move.

Synthetic Game 37

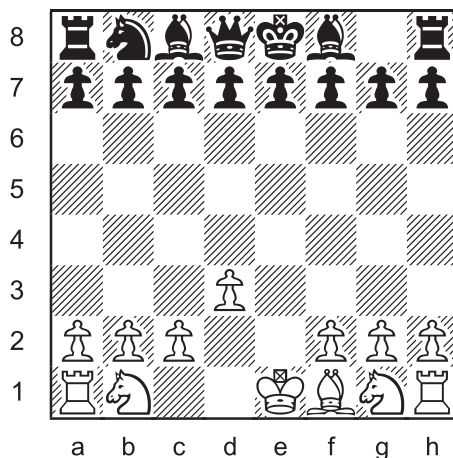


Compose a game that ends with the move **4...Qe5#**



The game below is 4.5 moves. Longer by a half step over our usual fare, but still a manageable length for the dedicated solver.

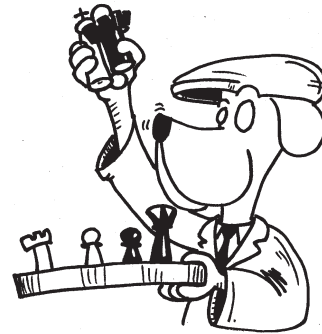
Longer Proof Game 51 (4.5 moves)



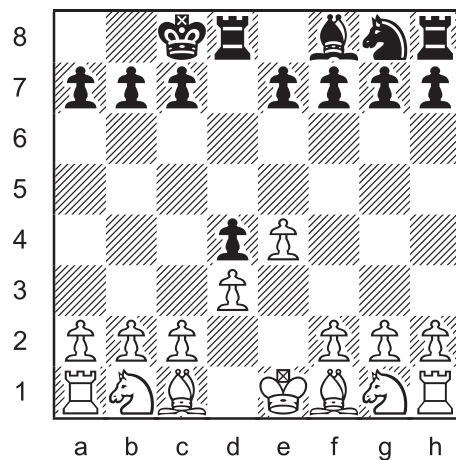
This position was reached after White's fifth turn. What were the moves?

PG SHOWCASE

The following proof games exceed the normal limits of solvability for most chess detectives. They are presented here, not as puzzles, but as artistic endeavours, demonstrating some of the compositional possibilities in this type of retro problem.

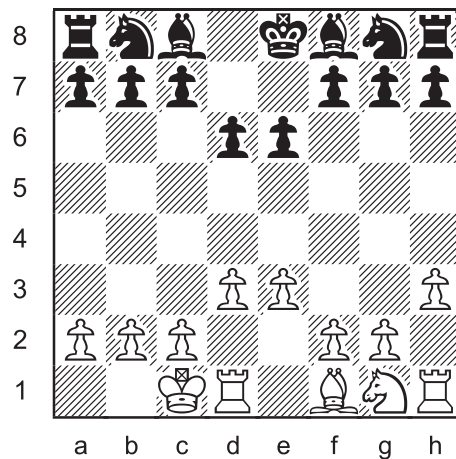


Longer Proof Game 52 (6.0 moves)



This position was reached after Black's sixth turn. What were the moves?

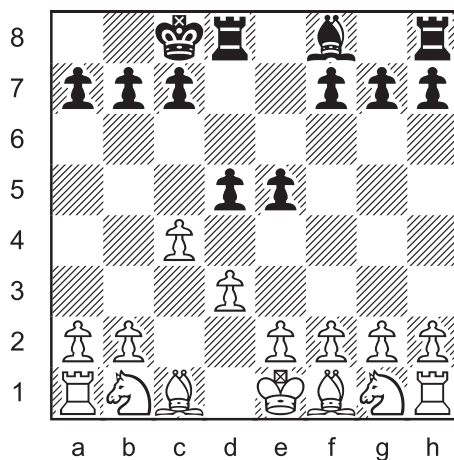
Longer Proof Game 53 (6.5 moves)



This position was reached after White's seventh turn. What were the moves?

By now, our theme of “fake castling” should be quite familiar. Our final problem adds a bit of sweetner to the artificial fruit.

Longer Proof Game 54 (7.0 moves)



This position was reached after Black's seventh turn. What were the moves?



Harmonius Hound, stealthily honing his skills at the chess cafe.

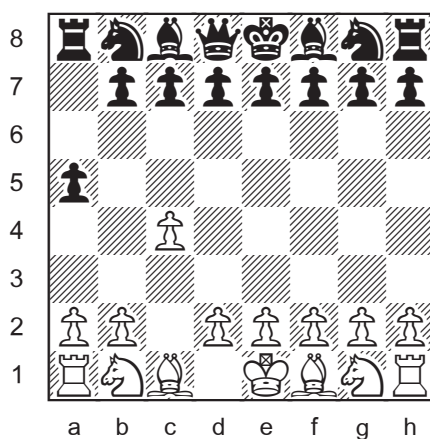
SOLUTIONS

All problems by J. Coakley, *Puzzling Side of Chess* (2018). Proof game 76 is from *Winning Chess Puzzles For Kids Volume 2* (2010).

PDF hyperlinks. You can advance to the solution of any puzzle by clicking on the underlined title above the diagram. To return to the puzzle, click on the title above the solution diagram.

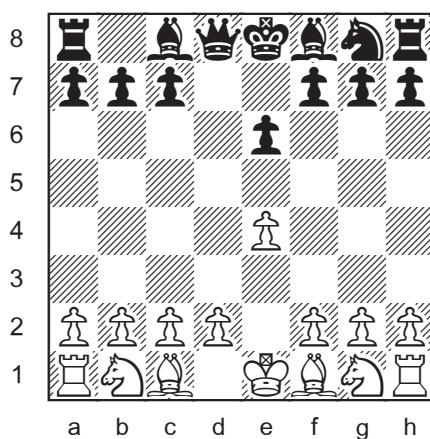
Archives. Past columns and a detailed index of problem-types and composers are available in the *Puzzling Side of Chess* archives.

Proof Game 76



1.c3 a6 2.Qa4 a5 3.Qc6 Nxc6 4.c4 Nb8
Two pawn tempi and a switchback knight.

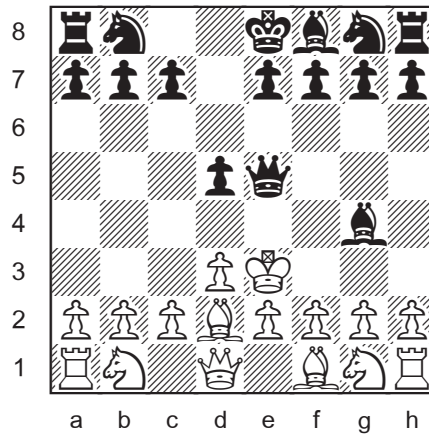
Proof Game 77



1.e4 Nc6 2.Qh5 Ne5 3.Qxe5 e6 4.Qxe6+ dxe6

The fate of the missing black knight is the key to solving this case.

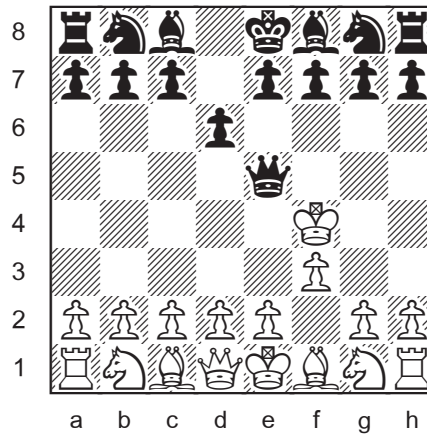
Synthetic Game 37



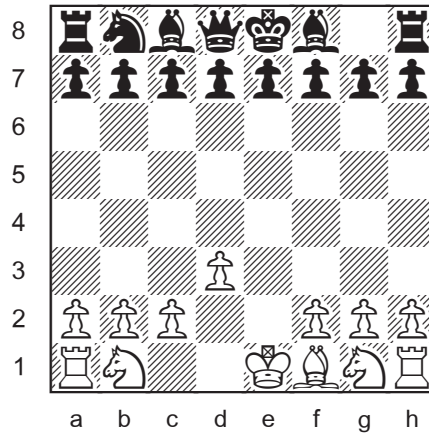
1.d3 d5 2.Kd2 Qd6 3.Ke3 Bg4 4.Bd2 Qe5#

Black's second and third moves can be switched. White can also play 4.Qd2.

A different approach is 1.f3 d6 2.Kf2 Qd7 3.Ke3 Qe6+ 4.Kf4 Qe5#. See diagram below. White can substitute 3.Kg3 or Black 3...Qb5.

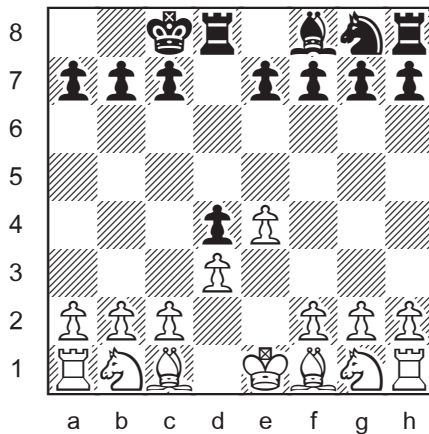


Longer Proof Game 51 (4.5 moves)



1.d4 Nf6 2.d5 Nxd5 3.Bf4 Nxf4 4.Qd3 Nxd3+ 5.exd3
A busy black knight. White pawn confusion on the d-file.

Longer Proof Game 52 (6.0 moves)



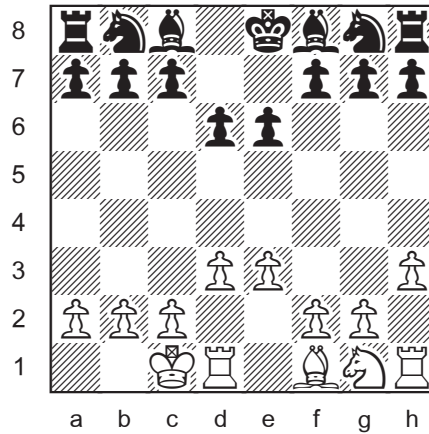
1.e4 d6 2.Qg4 d5 3.Qxc8 d4 4.Qxb8 Kd7 5.Qxd8+ Rxd8 6.d3 Kc8

Artificial play by Black with a pawn tempo to boot.

As best I can tell, 6.0 is the fewest moves in a unique proof game with “fake queenside castling”. Can anyone achieve it in fewer?



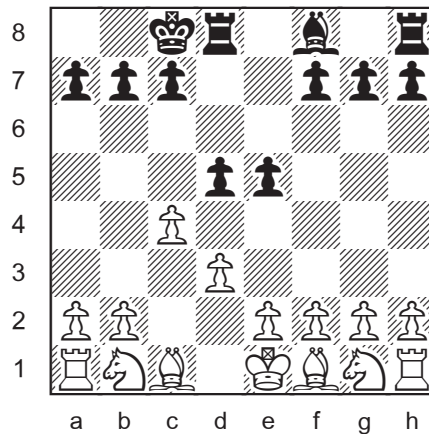
Longer Proof Game 53 (6.5 moves)



1.d3 e6 2.Bg5 Qxg5 3.h3 Qc1 4.e3 Qxb1
5.Kd2 Qxd1+ 6.Rxd1 d6 7.Kc1

Another artificial happening on the queenside, this time by White.

Longer Proof Game 54 (7.0 moves)



1.c4 Nh6 2.Qc2 Nf5 3.Qxf5 d5 4.Qxc8 e5
5.Qxb8 Kd7 6.Qxd8+ Rxd8 7.d3 Kc8

The capture of a black knight on f5 is the fruity bit in this problem.

Until next time!

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