



THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

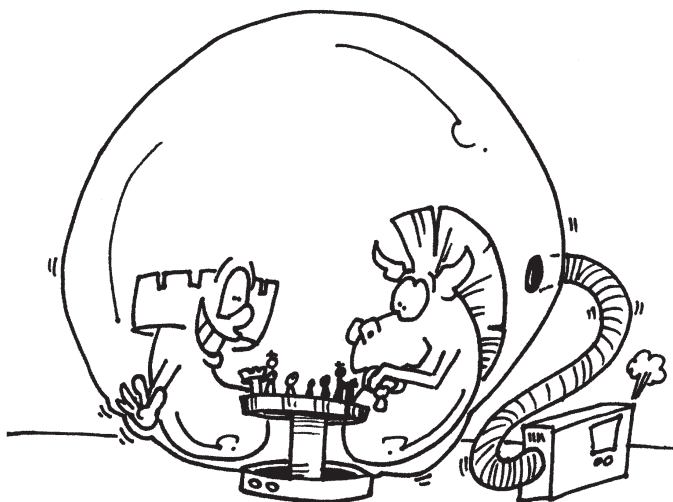
Jeff Coakley

PROOF OF MADNESS

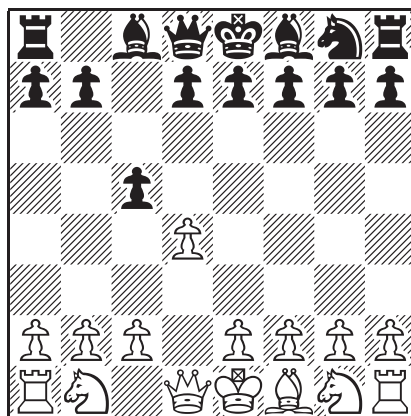
number 233

March 25, 2024

The world is a ball of confusion. The proof is everywhere. Thankfully, an occasional respite from the madness that surrounds us can be found in the logical sphere of chess.



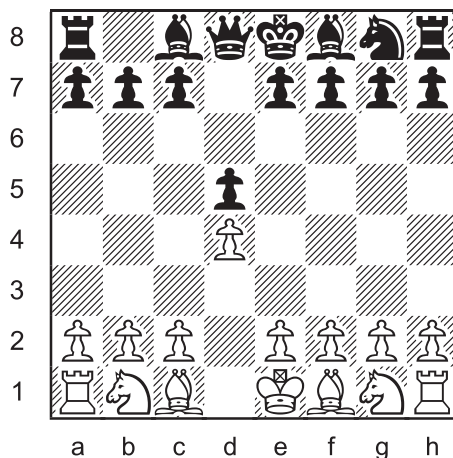
Proof Game 103



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

The general aim of a proof game is to *prove* that a position is legal by showing that it could happen in an actual game. In most puzzles of this type, the goal is to reach the given position in a precise number of moves. No sooner, no later. The positions may be offbeat, and the strategy off-kilter, but the moves are legal.

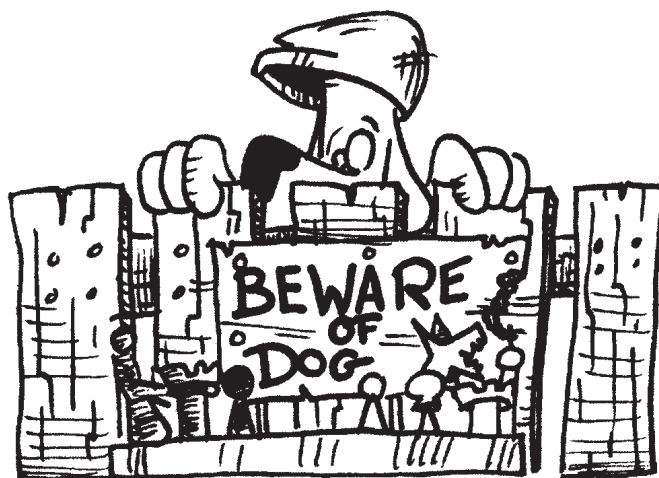
Longer Proof Game 121 (4.5 moves)



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

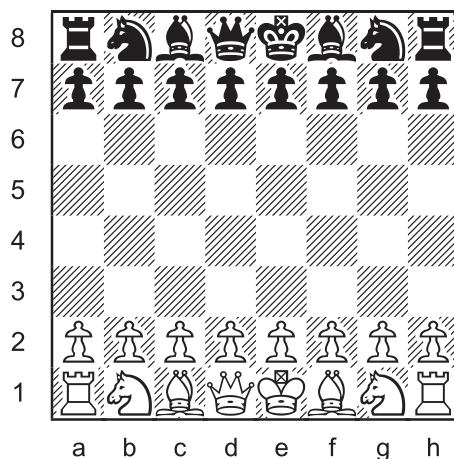
The Chess Detective's Handbook

by Harmonius Hound

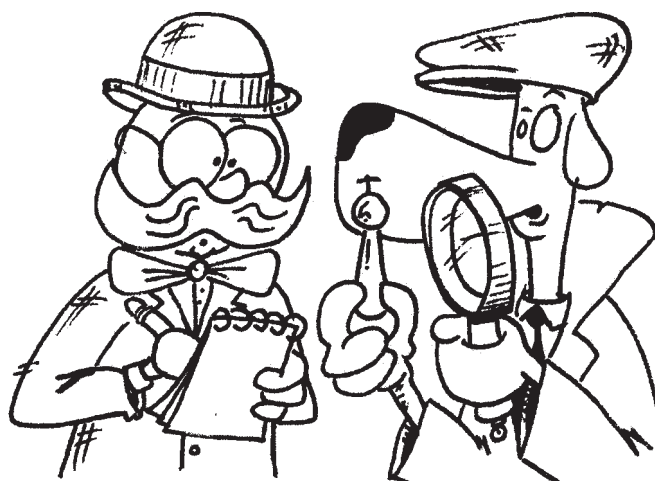


Chapter 6: The Fine Art of Confrontation
Sometimes a bark is more effective than a bite.

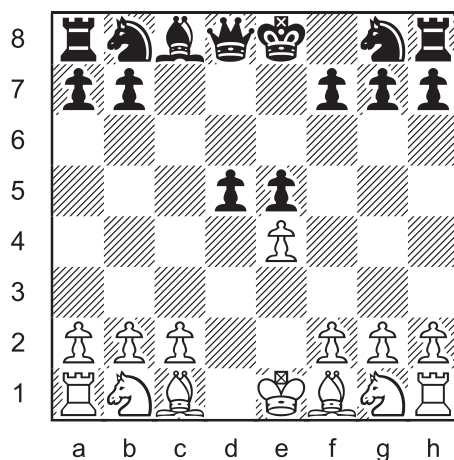
Synthetic Game 55



Compose a game that ends with 5.Bg4#.



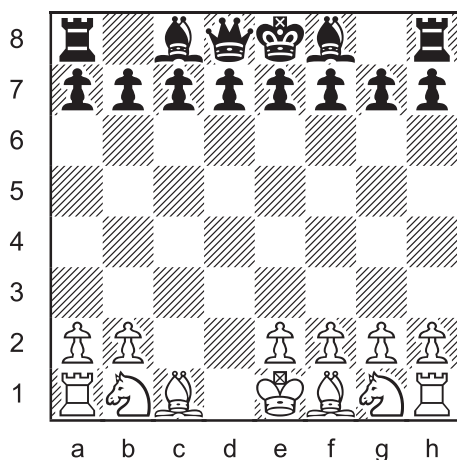
Longer Proof Game 122 (5.0 moves)



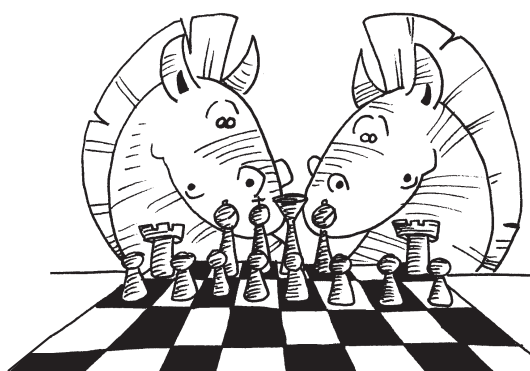
This position was reached after Black's fifth turn. What were the moves?

The next two puzzles are homebase positions in which one side or the other is missing both knights. Solving them may confirm the general consensus that knights are the trickiest of chess pieces.

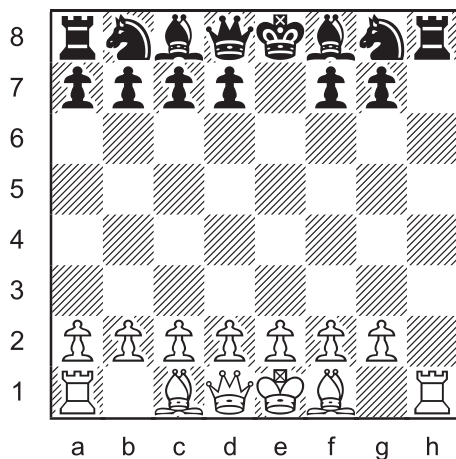
Longer Proof Game 123 (5.5 moves)



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



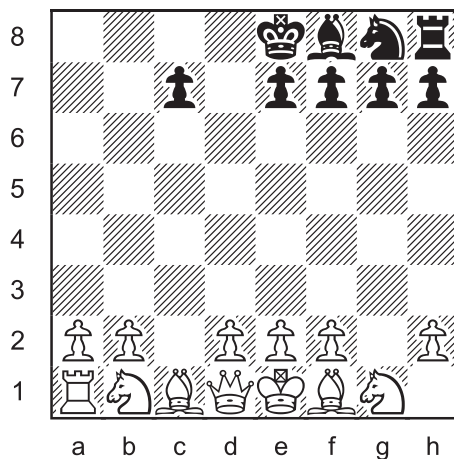
Longer Proof Game 124 (6.0 moves)



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

Solving the final puzzle is like solving the problems of the world. It is probably an insurmountable task for human beings. Hopefully people will keep trying. At least with the world. For the proof game, skipping ahead to the solution page is understandable. But in case you'd like a hint, only one white piece moves.

Longer Proof Game 125 (8.5 moves)



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



Pursuing a Trail of Deduction

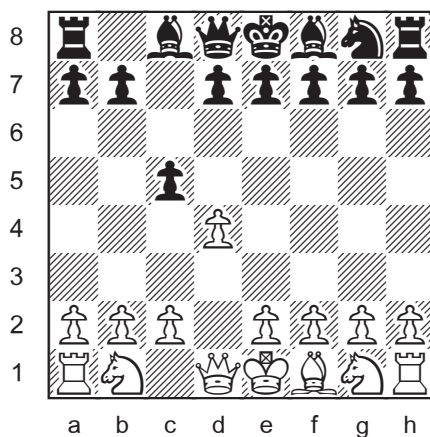
SOLUTIONS

All problems by J. Coakley. Proof game 122 is from a 2019 tourney. Others are *Puzzling Side of Chess* (2024).

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 are available in the *Puzzling Side* archives.

Proof Game 103



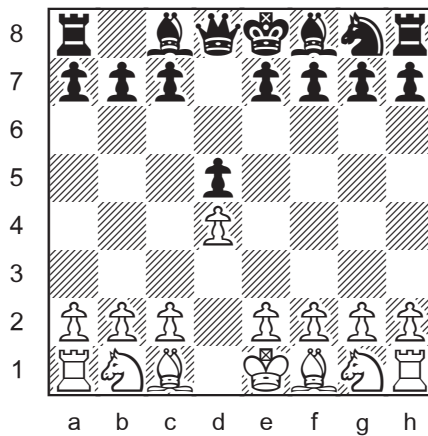
1.d3 c6 2.Bf4 c5 3.Bxb8 Rxb8 4.d4 Ra8

Black rook switchback. Pawn tempi by Black and White.



An unexpected clue at the Cafe.

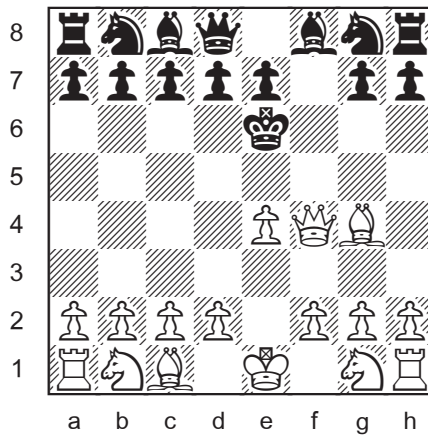
Longer Proof Game 121 (4.5 moves)



1.d4 Nc6 2.Qd3 Ne5 3.Qf3 Nxf3+ 4.Nxf3 d5 5.Ng1
Clandestine operations on f3.



Synthetic Game 55



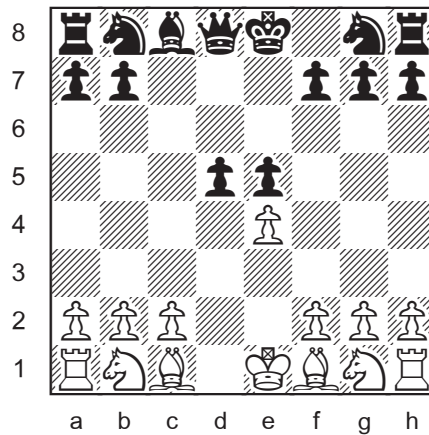
1.e4 f5 2.Qf3 Kf7 3.Be2 f4 4.Qxf4+ Ke6 5.Bg4#

White can also play 2.Qg4. Black can switch moves 2 and 3.

Longer Proof Game 122 (5.0 moves)

J. Coakley 2019

RIFACE Solving Tourney (France)

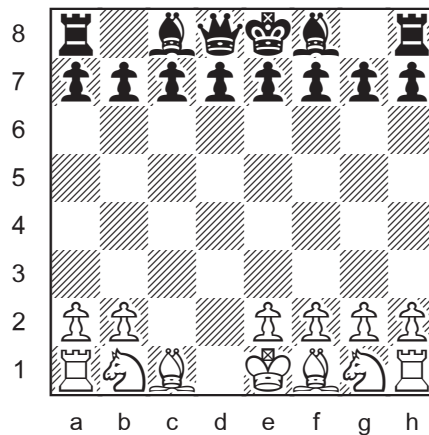


1.d4 e5 2.dxe5 Bd6 3.Qxd6 cxd6 4.e3 dxe5 5.e4 d5

The black e-pawn is the c-pawn. White pawn tempo.
Two captures on vacant square d6.



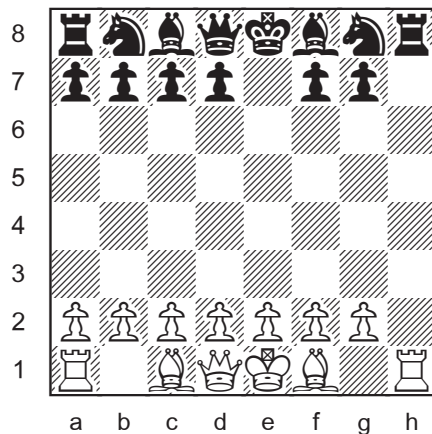
Longer Proof Game 123 (5.5 moves)



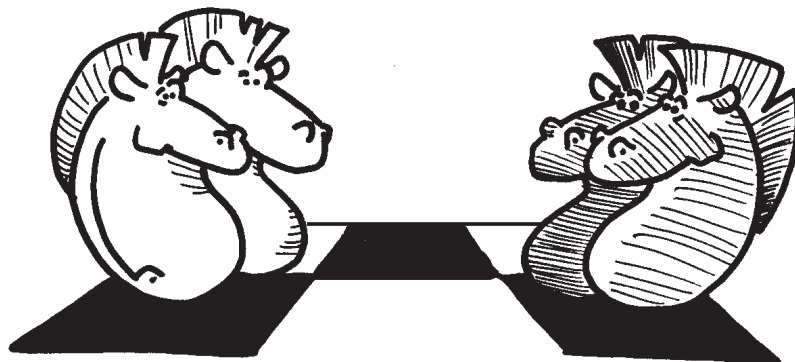
1.d4 Nh6 2.Bxh6 Nc6 3.Bc1 Nxd4 4.Kd2 Nxc2 5.Qe1 Nxe1 6.Kxe1

Missing black knights. Sneaky white royalty.

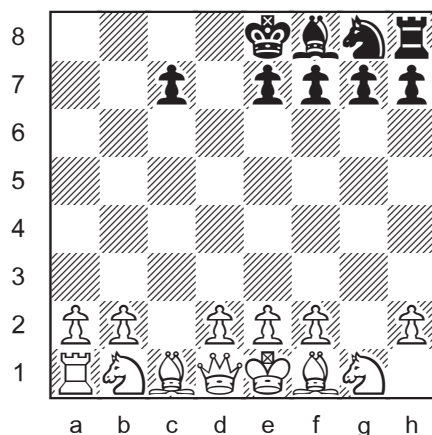
Longer Proof Game 124 (6.0 moves)



1.Nc3 h5 2.Nd5 h4 3.Nxe7 h3
 4.Nxh3 Rxh3 5.Ng6 Rxh2 6.Nh8 Rxh8
 Missing white knights. Mysterious events on the h-file.



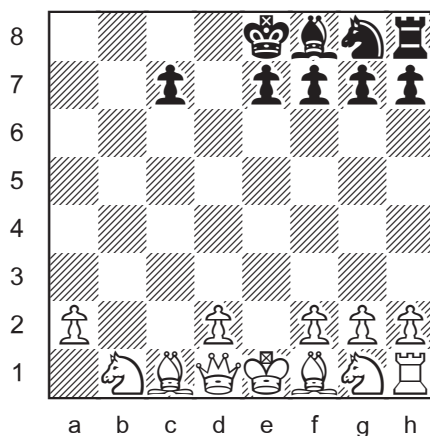
Longer Proof Game 125 (8.5 moves)



1.c4 d5 2.cxd5 Nc6 3.dxc6 Qd5 4.cxb7 Qxg2 5.bxc8=N Qxh1
 6.Nxa7 Qe4 7.Nb5 Ra3 8.Nxa3 Qxb1 9.Nxb1

Solo performance by the white c-pawn. Pronkin white knight.
 An explanation of the *Pronkin theme* is given in columns 62 and 68. For a similar problem with the other white rook missing, see next page.

Longer Proof Game 125b (8.5 moves)



This position was reached
after White's ninth turn.

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nc6 3.dxc6 Qd3 4.cxb7 Qxc2 5.bxc8=N Qxb2
6.Nxa7 Qxa1 7.Nb5 Ra3 8.Nxa3 Qxb1 9.Nxb1



Until next time!

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