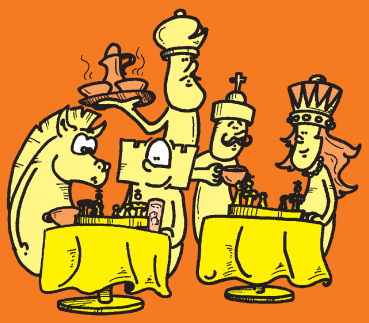


THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

Jeff Coakley

PROOF GAMES: VANISHING QUEENS

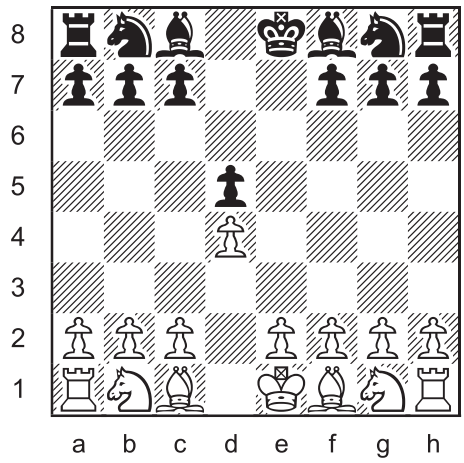
number 22 January 12, 2013

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. They are proof games in 4.0 which means four moves by each side.

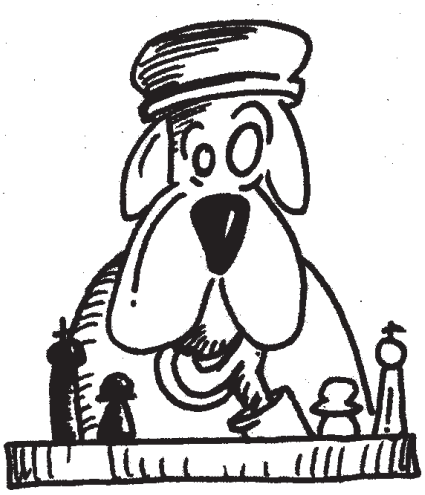
You won't find these lines in the *Encyclopoedia of Chess Openings*. Their lack of strategic content will be obvious. But the moves are legal.

Proof Game 11



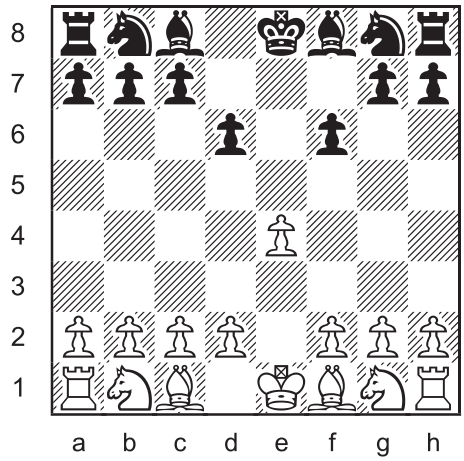
The diagrammed position, with White to play, was reached in a game after each player made exactly four moves. Can you figure out how?

For problems 1-10 and more information on proof games, see columns 3, 8, and 14 in the archives.



For ace chess detectives, like Harmonius Hound, that first puzzle may have been too elementary. As usual, the level of difficulty will increase as the column goes on.

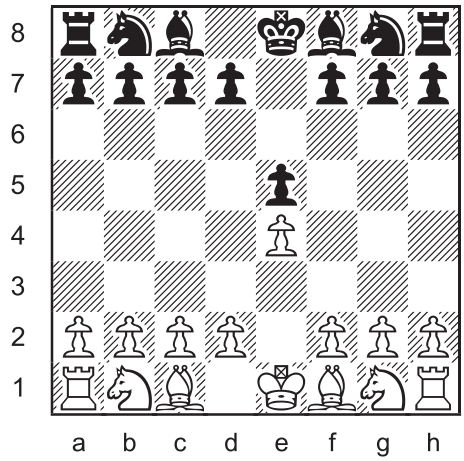
Proof Game 12



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

The "Case of the Vanishing Queens" continues with the following classic position. Is it possible that both players are giving queen odds!?

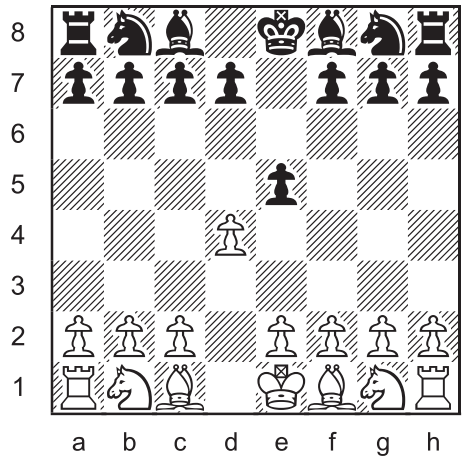
Proof Game 13



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

The next problem has stumped many talented investigators. Consider yourself a pro if you get this one.

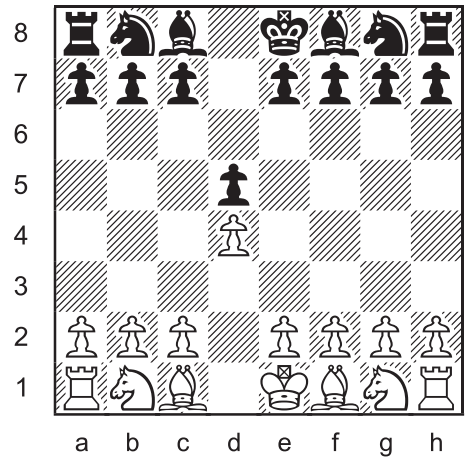
Proof Game 14



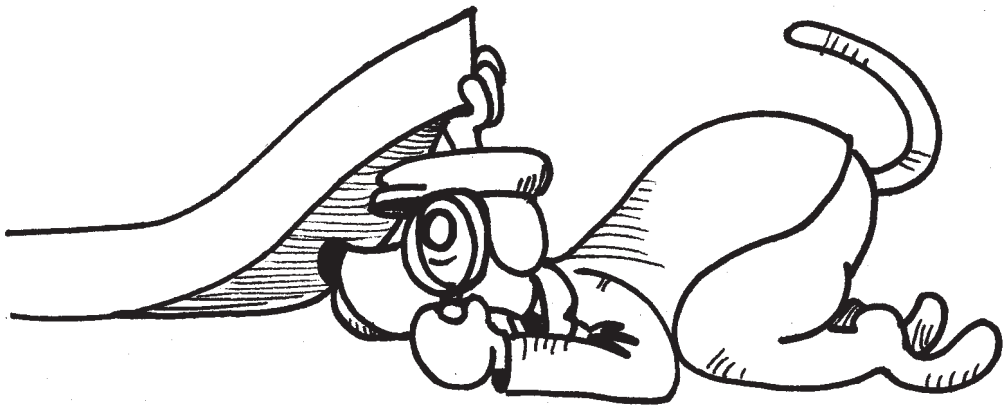
This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?

A proper proof game has a unique sequence of moves. The following puzzle is flawed because there are two solutions. Specifically, on one turn, there is a choice of two moves. However, I decided to include the position anyway because it fits so well with our theme. My apologies to the purists.

Proof Game 15



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



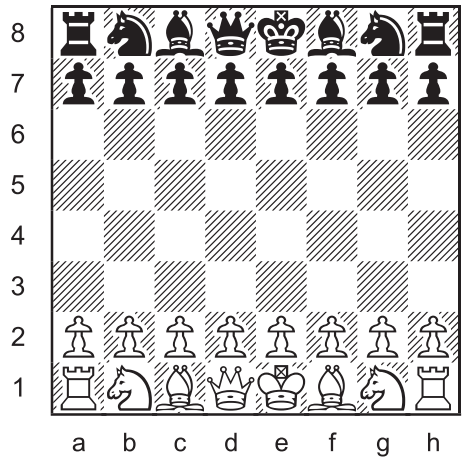
The Puzzling Side of Chess features proof games every two or three months. Each column concludes with a "synthetic game".

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.

A common goal in this kind of puzzle is to mate with a designated piece in the fewest moves. Another goal is to mate with a specific numbered move. Consider **4.Qxf7#**. One possible sequence leading to this mate is 1.e4 e5 2.Qh5 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Qxf7#. Unlike proof games, the move sequence in a synthetic game is usually not unique. There are thousands of possible games that end with the gruesome 4.Qxf7#!

The following synthetic game, discovered in 2004 by François Labelle of Quebec, does have a unique solution.

Synthetic Game 02



Compose a game that ends with the move **4...Qb5#**.

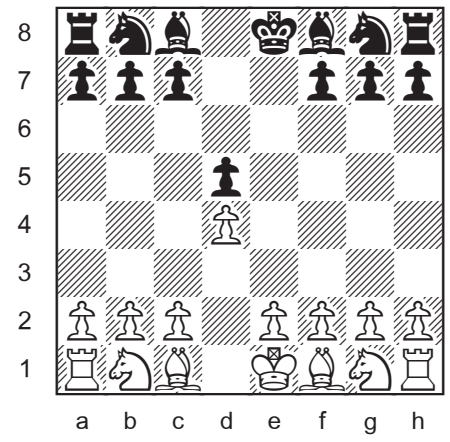
For puzzle 01 and more information on synthetic games, see column 14 in the archives.

SOLUTIONS

All proof games by J. Coakley. Problems 11, 12 are *ChessCafe.com* originals (2013). Problems 13, 14 are from *Scholar's Mate 90* (2007), and 15 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.

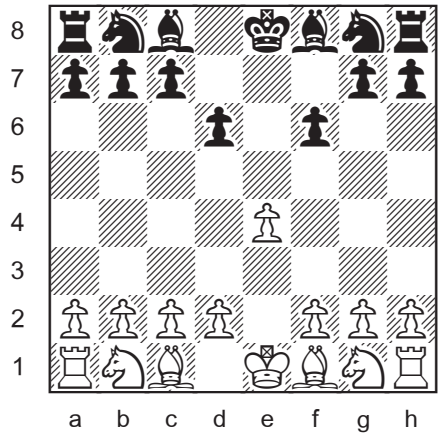
Proof Game 11



1.d4 e6 2.Qd2 Qg5 3.Qxg5 d5 4.Qxd5 exd5

Nothing mysterious in this puzzle. Both sides give away their queen in straightforward fashion.

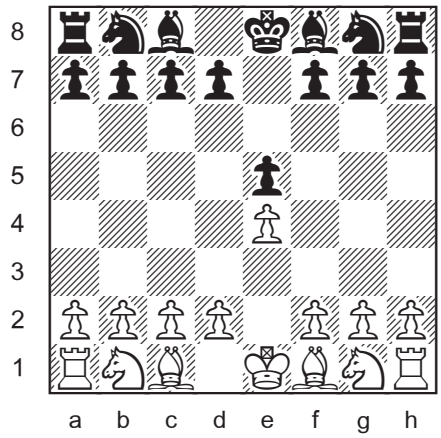
Proof Game 12



1.e4 d5 2.Qh5 Qd6 3.Qxd5 f6 4.Qxd6 exd6

The tricky thing here is figuring out that captures took place on d5 and d6.

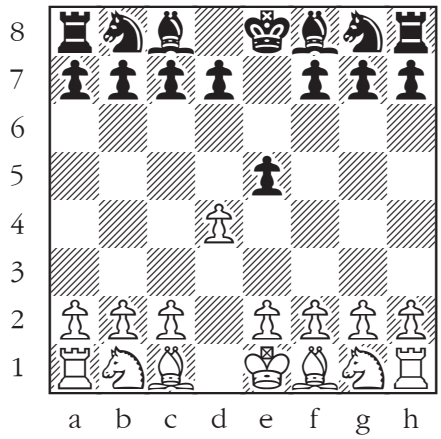
Proof Game 13



1.e3 e5 2.Qf3 Qf6 3.Qxf6 Nxf6 4.e4 Ng8

This proof game employs two standard themes: a *tempo move* by the white e-pawn and a *switchback* of the black knight to g8.

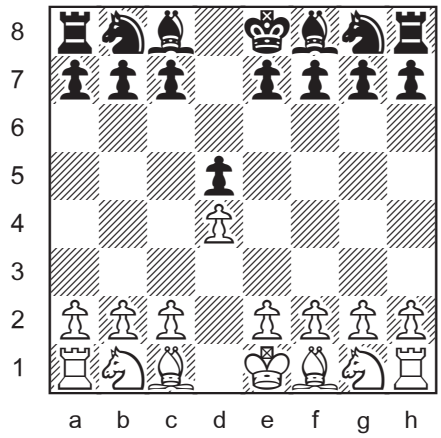
Proof Game 14



1.d4 e6 2.Bh6 Qg5 3.Qc1 Qxc1+ 4.Bxc1 e5

This puzzle also uses a *tempo move* (by the black e-pawn). But the main attraction is the *switchback of a piece* (the white bishop) *making a capture on its original square*. I call this theme the “Orbán effect”, after the Hungarian composer Tibor Orbán (1956-1981). See column 3.

Proof Game 15



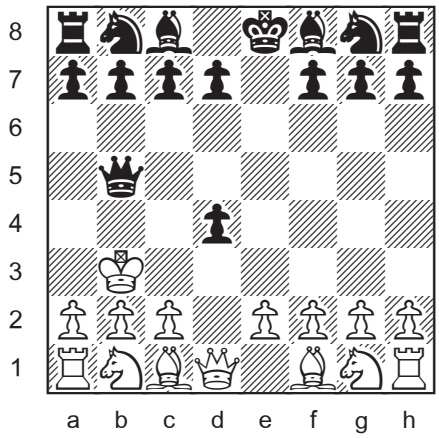
1.d4 d5 2.Qd3 Bg4 (or 2...Bh3) 3.Qf5 Qc8 4.Qxc8+ Bxc8

The *Orbán effect* again, this time by the black bishop.

Synthetic Game 02

François Labelle 2004

Winning Chess Puzzles For Kids Volume 2 (2010)



1.d4 e5 2.Kd2 Qg5+ 3.Kc3 exd4+ 4.Kb3 **Qb5#**

Because the solution is unique, the diagrammed position could be given as a proof game. But it probably wouldn't stump anyone. And we are in the stumping business, right?

Until next time!