## PROOF GAMES: WHO TOOK WHAT WHERE?

number 29   March 23, 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.

From a strategic point of view, these games are quite absurd. But the moves are legal.
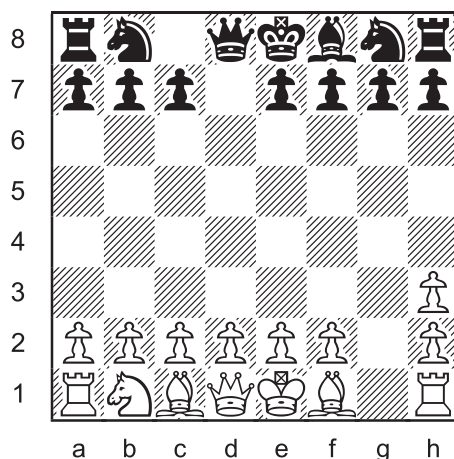
Proof Game 16
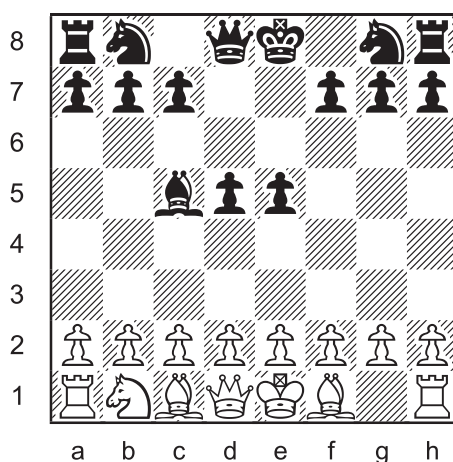
The diagrammed position, with White to play, was reached in a game after each player made exactly four moves. Can you figure out how?

For problems 1-15 and more information on proof games, see columns 3, 8, 14, and 22 in the archives.

When solving a proof game, it is usually obvious how most of the pieces got to where they are. It is the missing pieces that are hardest to explain. The chess detective's job is to figure out "who took what where".
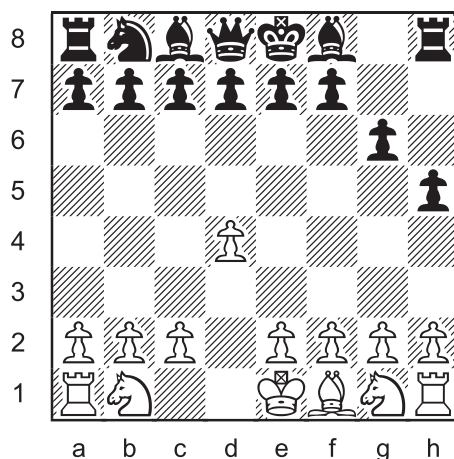
Proof Game 17

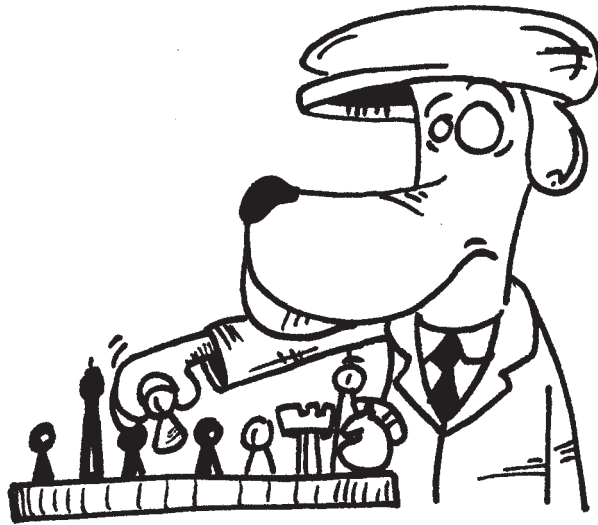This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?

Our next mystery is known as the "Case of the Misleading Ladykiller".

Proof Game 18

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 brilliant 4.Qxf7#!

The following synthetic game, published in 1866 by Sam Loyd, has a "semi-unique" solution.

Synthetic Game 03
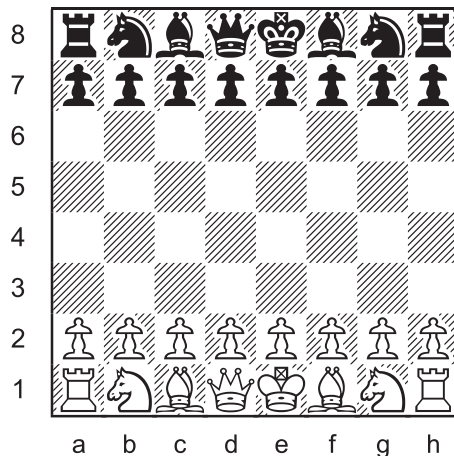
Compose a game that ends with the move **4...d6#**.

For synthetic games 1-2, see columns 14 and 22.

Have you thought about entering the *Chess Cafe Puzzlers Cup*?

SOLUTIONS

All proof games, except number 18, by J. Coakley. Problem 16 is a *ChessCafe.com* original (2013). Problem 17 is from *Scholar's Mate 113* (2012).

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.
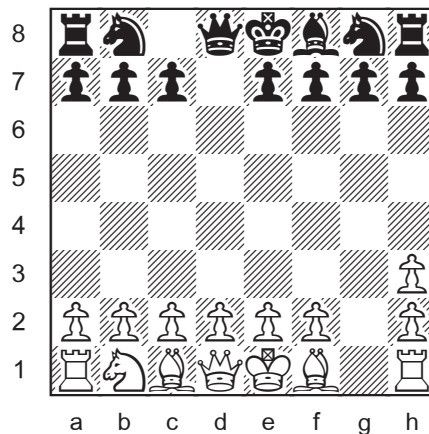
Proof Game 16
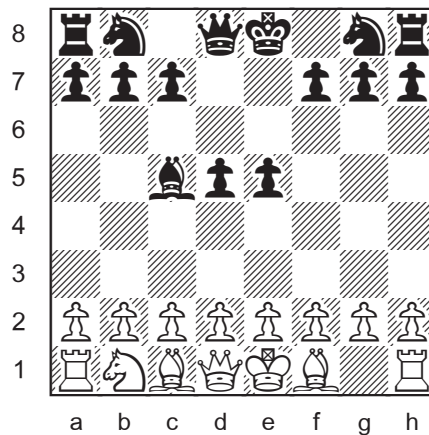
1.Nf3 d5 2.Ne5 Bd7 3.Nxd7 e5 4.Nc5 Bxc5

There are no obvious clues that the missing minor pieces were captured on d7 and c5.
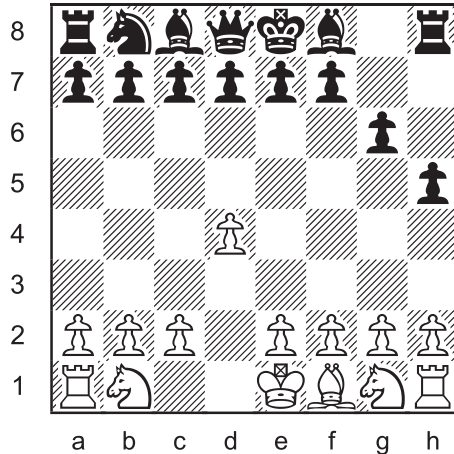
Proof Game 17

1.Nh3 d5 2.Nf4 Bh3 3.Nxd5 Qxd5 4.gxh3 Qd8

It's elementary to deduce that the black bishop was captured on h3, but the fate of the white knight is well concealed by the *switchback* of the black queen.
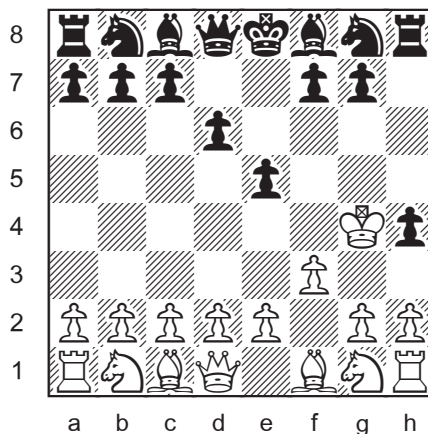
Proof Game 18

Leo Mano   1999

1.d4 Nh6 2.Bxh6 gxh6 3.Qd3 h5 4.Qg6 hxg6

Unravelling the deceptive movement of the black kingside pawns is the key to solving this tough case.

Synthetic Game 03

Sam Loyd   1866
Le Sphinx

1.f3 e5 2.Kf2 h5 3.Kg3 h4+ 4.Kg4 **d6#**

The first two black moves may be interchanged:
1.f3 h5 2.Kf2 e5 3.Kg3 h4+ 4.Kg4 **d6#**

Another way to pose this puzzle is "Compose the shortest game possible that ends with checkmate by a discovered check." In that case, the move **4...d5#** would also work.

Until next time!