



THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

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SMORGASBORD XVI: UNBITRIUM

number 123

September 3, 2016

Column 123! A lucky number and a good side theme for today's smorgasbord. The featured puzzles are a loyd, whammy, goof, and maze.



Blasts From the Past

Before getting to the problems, here is an announcement concerning future columns.

The Puzzling Side of Chess will continue to be updated every Saturday. But for the next year, there will only be two new columns each month. On other weeks, previously unarchived material will be posted.

There are two reasons for this change.

- a) Several book projects require more of my time.
- b) The archive of past columns will be completed sooner.

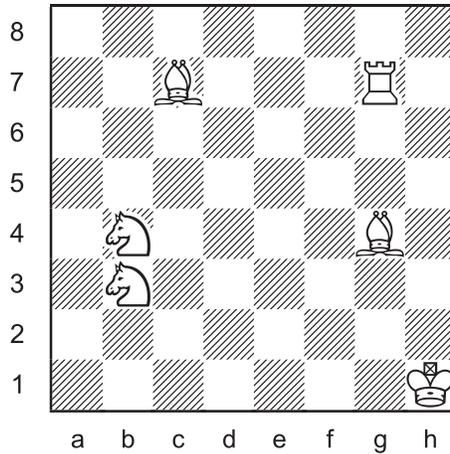
Minutes into hours, hours into days.

Time slips away.

A moment here and a moment there.

In ever endless ways.

Triple Loyd 60



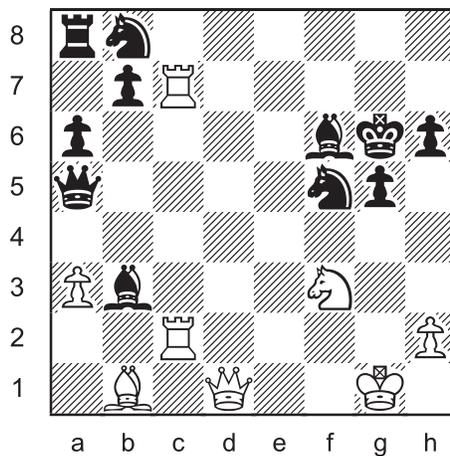
Place the black king on the board so that:

- A. Black is in checkmate.
- B. Black is in stalemate.
- C. White has a mate in 1.



The number 123 is not prime. It can be divided by 3 and 41.

Double Whammy 66



White plays two moves
in a row to mate Black.

See explanation on next page.

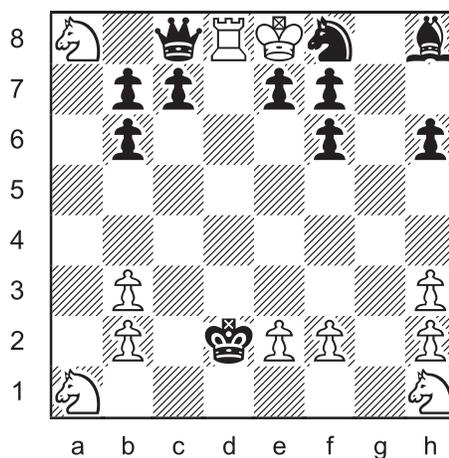
Special instructions for *double whammies*.

- a) White plays two moves in a row to mate Black.
- b) The first move may not be check.
- c) Either move may be a capture.
- d) Both moves may be with the same piece.
- e) Black does not get a turn.
- f) White may not place their own king in check on the first move, even if they get out of check with the second move.



123 is the atomic number of Unbitrium, a chemical element that does not appear on the standard *periodic table*, which ends at 118. Scientists hypothesize its existence but the element has never been discovered or “synthesized”. A missing piece of the universal puzzle.

Who's the Goof? 34



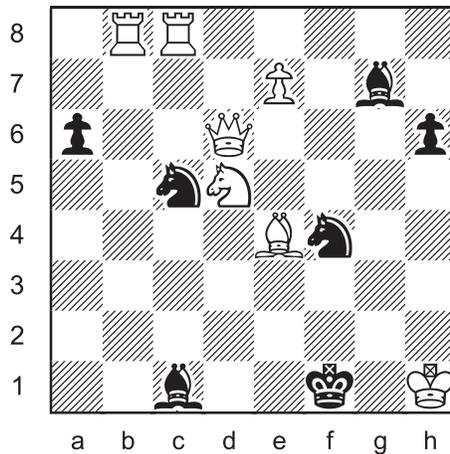
Why is this position illegal?



Missouri Highway 123, from Weableau to Willard.

The next puzzle is a *Toronto style* chess maze. Captures are not allowed. For more details, see the instructions below (and column 69).

Chess Maze 17

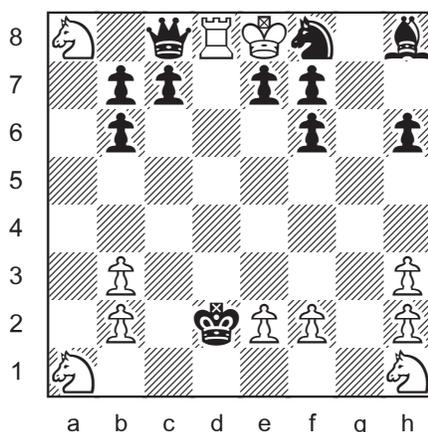


Pawn Maze

Which kind of promoted piece gets through the maze fastest?
Rook, bishop, or knight?

Only the white pawn moves. When it reaches the last rank, it may become a rook, bishop, or knight. But not a queen. After the promotion, only the promoted piece moves. Find the shortest path to capture the black king, without taking any pieces or moving to a square attacked by a black piece. It is possible to go through the maze with a rook, bishop, or knight. Figure out which piece has the shortest path, and which the longest.

Who's the Goof? 34

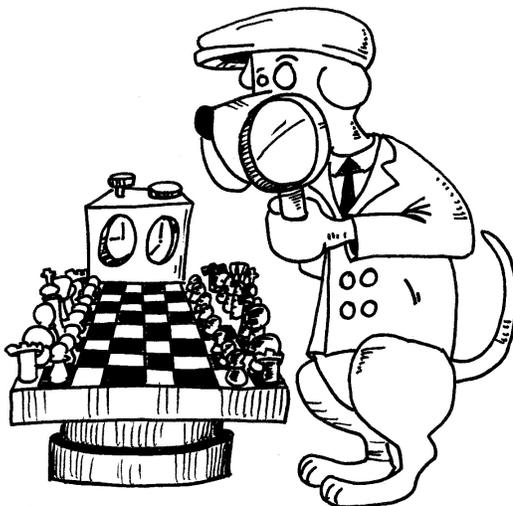


The position is illegal because the black king cannot be on d2.

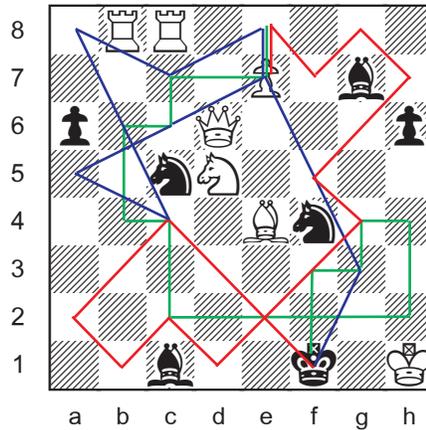
The white pawn formation is an impenetrable “box”. There is no possible sequence of previous moves by the white pawns that would have allowed the black king to enter the box and reach d2. All squares on the third rank have been under constant attack.

Other features in the position are legal.

- a) The last move was the underpromotion d7-d8=R+. White would have been in check from the black queen on c8, so the preceding move by Black was the capture ...Qb8xc8+.
- b) One of the three white knights is a promoted pawn.
- c) The white king reached e8 via h6 and g7. For example, Black plays ...gxf6 (and ...d5) and clears the 8th rank. The white king proceeds to h6 followed by Kg7-f8-e8. The black bishop returns to h8 before ...h6 is played.



Chess Maze 17



A knight is the rabbit. 11 moves.

e8=N-c7-a8-b6-c4-a5-c6-e7-f5-g3xf1



A bishop is the "tweener". 12 moves.

e8=B-f7-g8-h7-f5-g4-d1-c2-b1-a2-c4xf1



A rook is the turtle. 14 moves.

e8=R-e7-c7-c6-b6-b4-c4-c2-h2-h4-g4-g3-f3xf1

(A queen only needs 6 moves.

For example, e8=Q-f7-f5-g4-d1xf1)

Until next time!

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