



THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

Jeff Coakley

PROOF GAMES: Getting Here From There

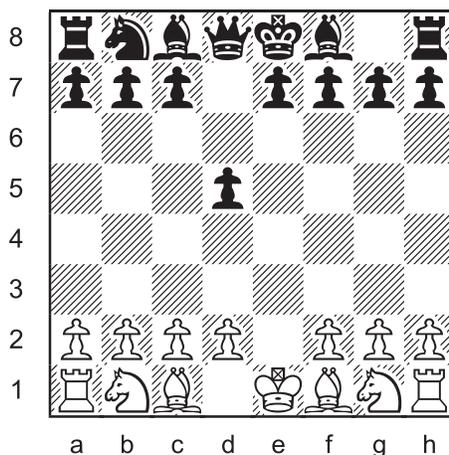
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The task in a *proof game* is to show how a given position can be reached in a legal game. The puzzles in this column have a *move stipulation*. The position must be reached in a precise number of moves, no more and no less. The first two problems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

The positions may be weird, and strategy has disappeared, but the moves are legal.

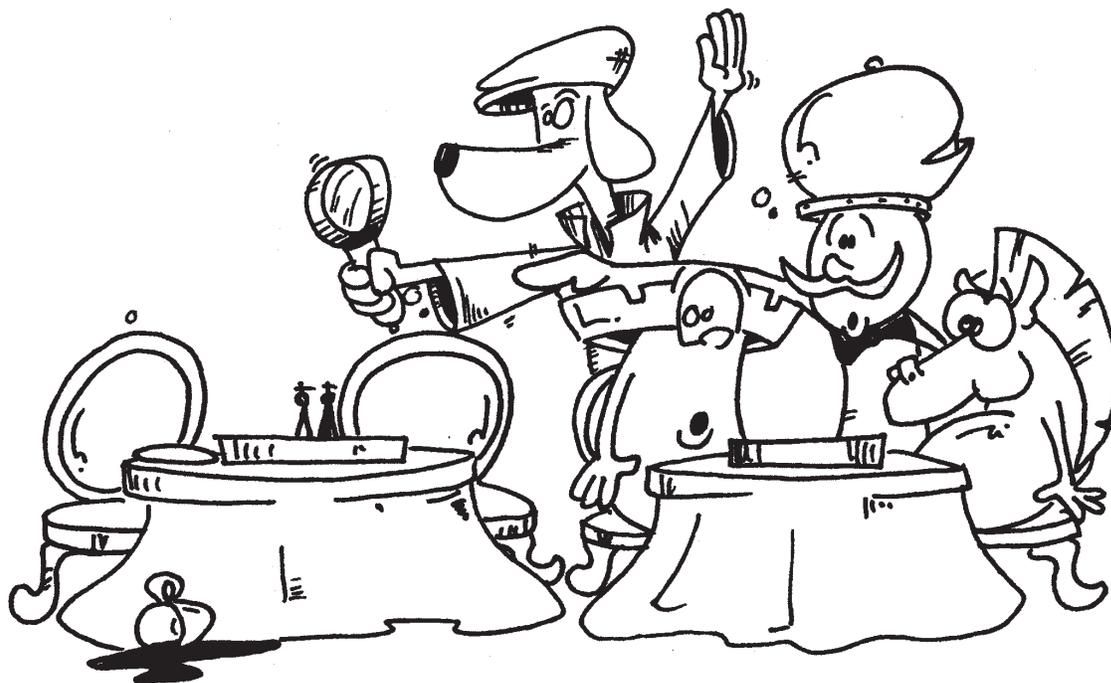
Proof Game 61



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

Proof game 61 caused quite a stir at the Chess Cafe. Especially when two patrons, a queen and a knight, went missing while trying to solve it. Strangely enough, a queen and a knight were also missing from the puzzle diagram. Was it a coincidence?

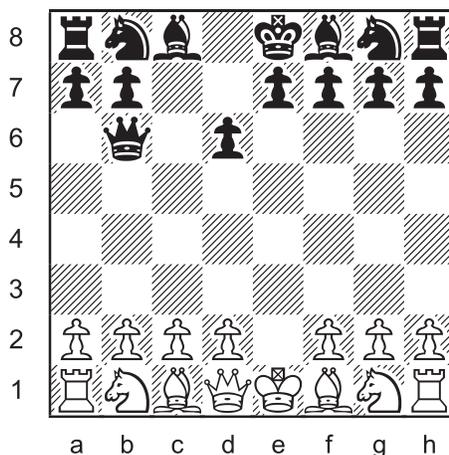
Maurice, headwaiter at the cafe, did not hesitate to call in his friend, master detective Harmonius Hound.



The hound strode in confidently and immediately took control of the situation. “Stand back, folks, please. Let’s not contaminate the scene. One wrong step could wipe out an essential clue.”

And so the folks stepped back, returning to their tables and another round of puzzles.

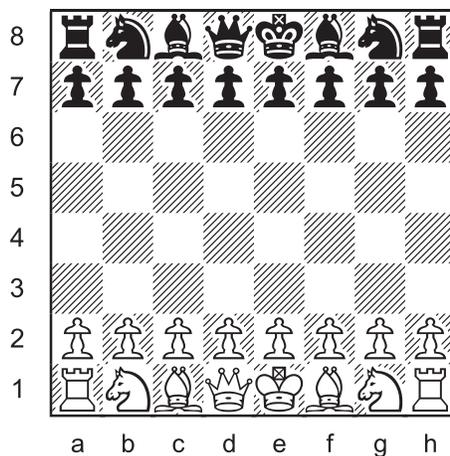
Proof Game 62



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.

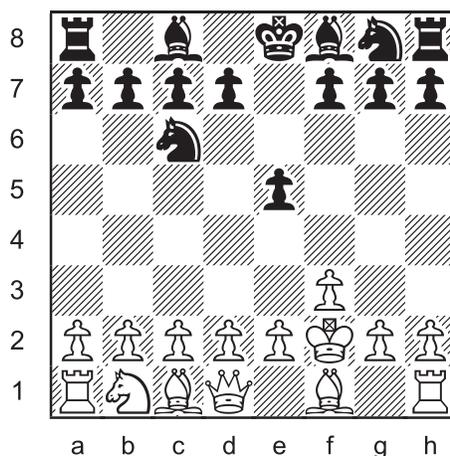
Synthetic Game 27



Compose a game that ends with the move **5...Bf8#**.

The next proof game is length 4.5. It shouldn't slow you down too much, once you eliminate the obvious.

Longer Proof Game 26 (4.5 moves)

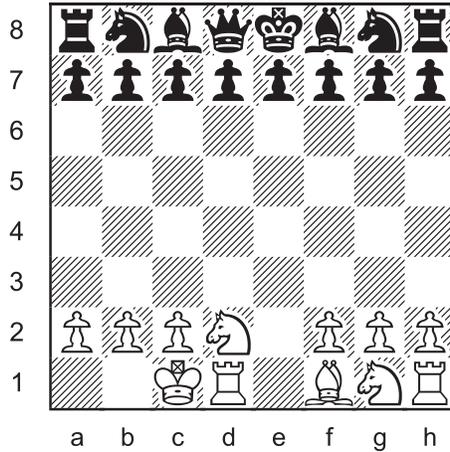


This position was reached after White's fifth turn. What were the moves?

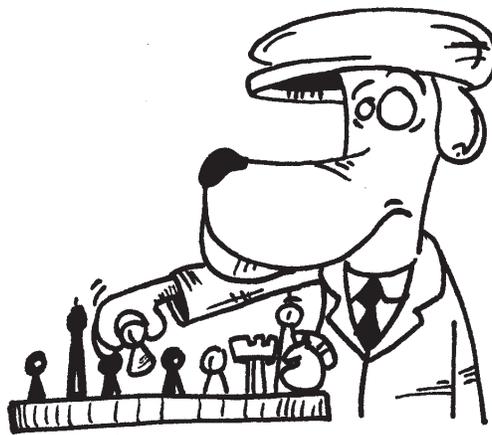
The final problem is a daunting 6.5 moves. But don't let that deter you. There are features in the position which enhance its solvability. Specifically, all sixteen black pieces are on their starting squares. My name for this type of proof game is "knight marauder".

For a clue or two, see the text below the diagram and drawing.

Longer Proof Game 27 (6.5 moves)



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



Spoiler. Black has necessarily made six knight moves. White is missing four pieces. The first and last moves by Black could not be captures. Therefore, every other move by Black must be a capture.

If you're wondering what happened with Harmonius Hound, he is just now on the verge of completing his investigation.

"Maurice, could I have another glass of lemonade? I think I figured this puzzle out."

"Sure thing, Harmonius. But what about my customers, the queen and knight?"

"Oh, I thought you knew. They're outside having a smoke. I saw them when I came in."

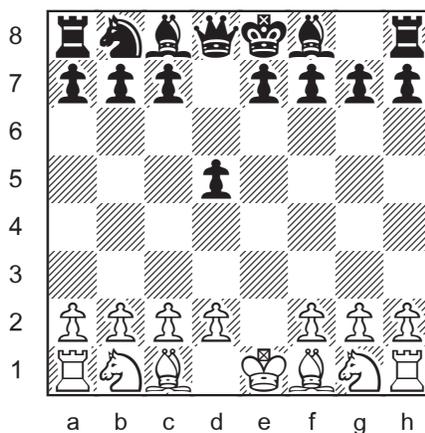
SOLUTIONS

All problems by J. Coakley, *Puzzling Side of Chess* (2016).

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. Other columns with similar problems can be found in the Puzzling Side archives.

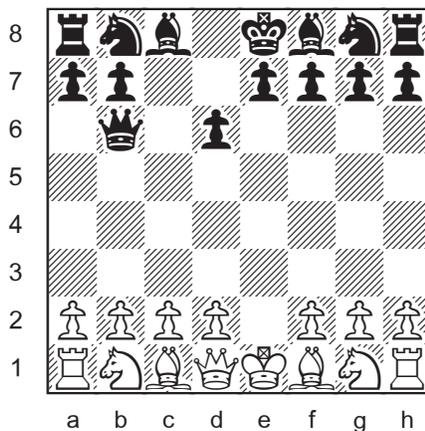
Proof Game 61



1.e4 Nf6 2.Qg4 Nd5 3.Qe6 dxe6 4.exd5 exd5

An unconventional black d-pawn.

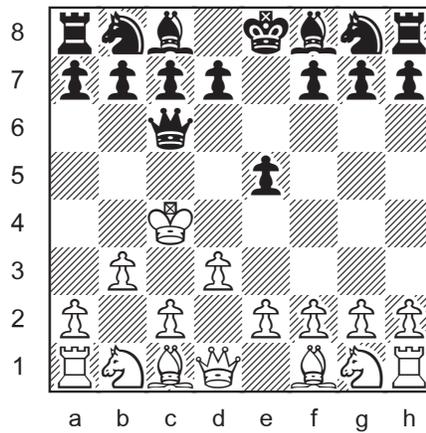
Proof Game 62



1.e3 d5 2.e4 Qd6 3.exd5 Qb6 4.d6 cxd6

Tempo moves by the black queen and white e-pawn.

Synthetic Game 27

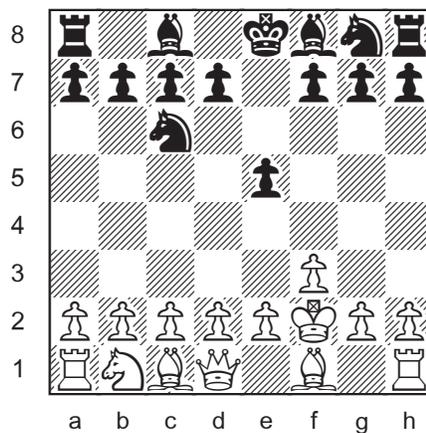


1.d3 e5 2.b3 Bc5 3.Kd2 Qf6 4.Kc3 Qc6 5.Kc4 **Bf8#**

The moves can be played in different orders.



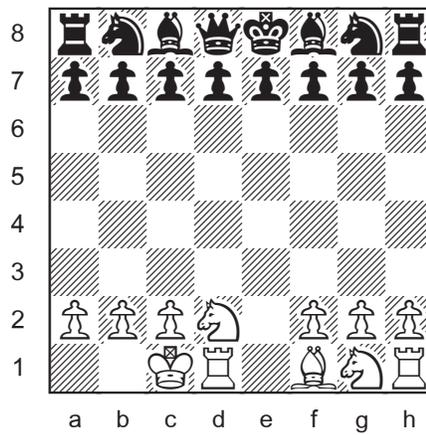
Longer Proof Game 26 (4.5 moves)



1.Nf3 e5 2.Nd4 Qf6 3.f3 Qc6 4.Nxc6 Nxc6 5.Kf2

Both captures on c6. None on f2.

Longer Proof Game 27 (6.5 moves)



1.d4 Nf6 2.d5 Nxd5 3.e3 Nxe3 4.Qg4 Nxb4
5.Bh6 Nxb6 6.Nd2 Ng8 7.0-0-0

A marauding black knight returns home to g8.
White castles for the fun of it.

Until next time!

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