



THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

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PROOF GAMES: Elusive Tempi

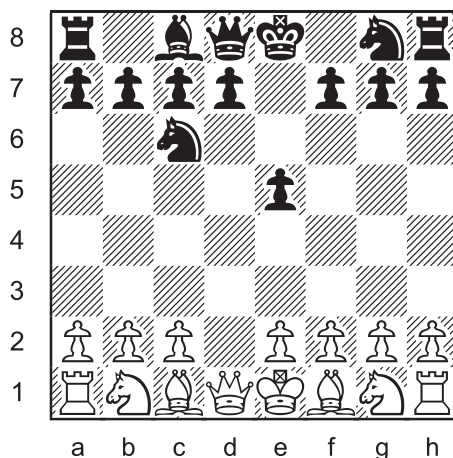
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The task in a *proof game* is to show how a given position can be reached in a legal game. The puzzles in this column have a *move stipulation*. The position must be reached in a precise number of moves, no more and no less. The first two problems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

The positions may be outlandish, strategy may be banished, but the moves are legal.

Proof Game 67

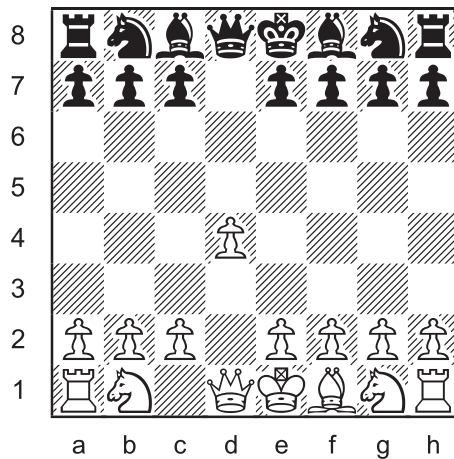


This position, with White to play, was reached in a game after each player made exactly four moves. What were the moves?



Dogged Persistence in the Pursuit of Truth

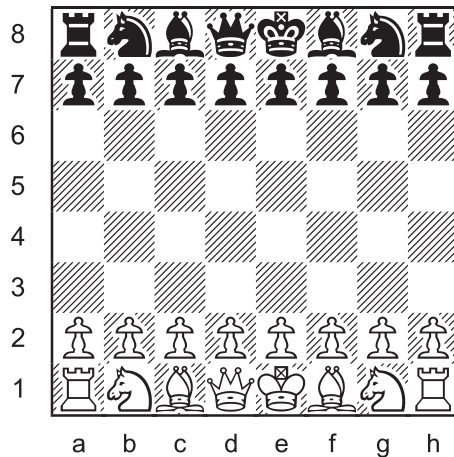
Proof Game 68



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 31

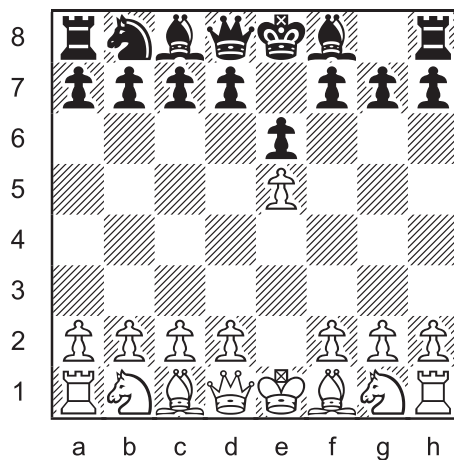


Compose a game that ends with the move **4...Nc5#**.



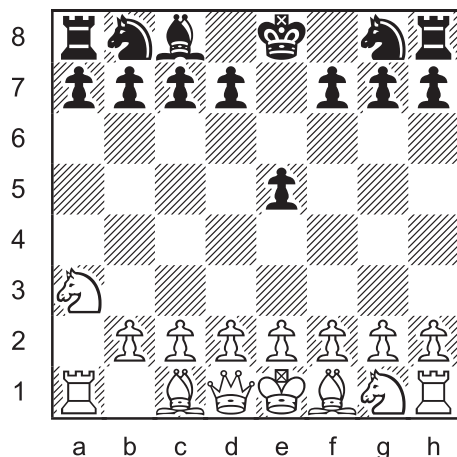
The next two “longer” games are length 4.5 and 5.0. Perhaps it’s a needless reminder, but the positions must be reached in the stipulated number of moves, not sooner.

Longer Proof Game 33 (4.5 moves)



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

Longer Proof Game 34 (5.0 moves)

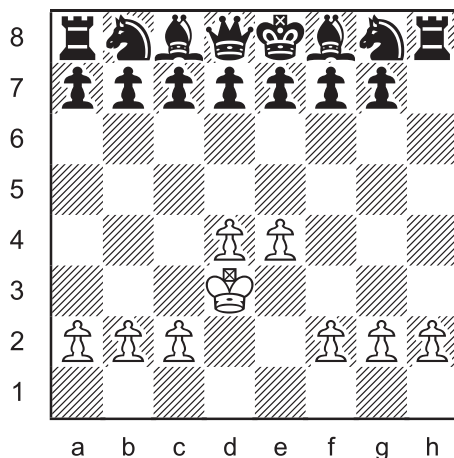


This position was reached after Black's fifth turn. What were the moves?

The final proof game transcends the normal limits of solvability for most chess detectives. It is included here as a sort of "PG Showcase", showing the compositional possibilities in this type of retro problem.

Nevertheless, if you are inclined to give it a go, note that Black has captured seven pieces in nine turns. If you'd like an additional hint and can read upside down, then see the clue at the bottom of the page.

Longer Proof Game 35 (9.5 moves)



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

The Case of the Abandoned Monarch

Clue: All moves by Black were made with the h-pawn.

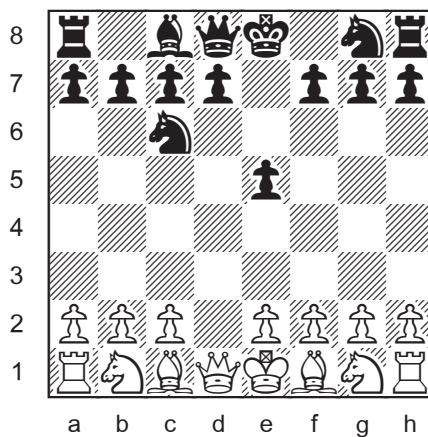
SOLUTIONS

All proof games by J. Coakley, *Puzzling Side of Chess* (2017).

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.

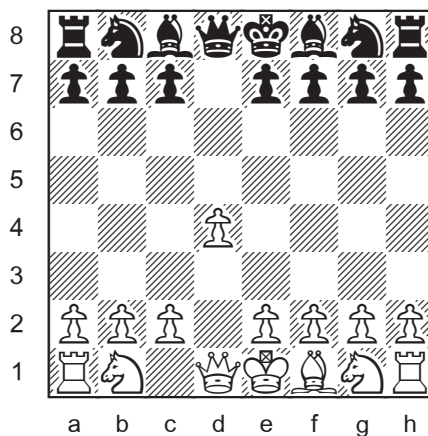
Proof Game 67



1.d3 e6 2.d4 Bc5 3.dxc5 e5 4.c6 Nxc6

Tempo moves by pawns on each side.

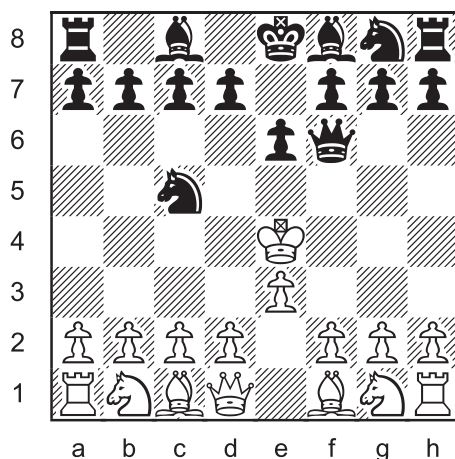
Proof Game 68



1.d3 d6 2.Bf4 Qd7 3.Bxd6 Qxd6 4.d4 Qd8

Tempi by the white pawn and black queen, plus a switchback on d8.

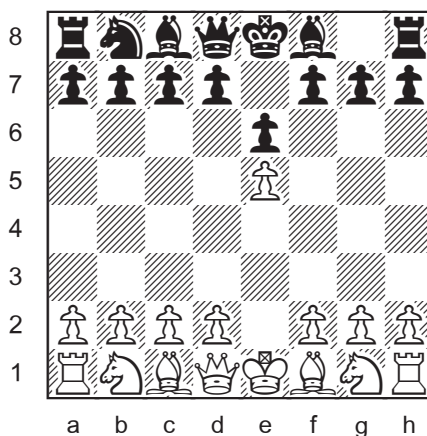
Synthetic Game 31



1.e3 e6 2.Ke2 Na6 3.Kd3 Qf6 4.Ke4 **Nc5#**

The black moves can be played in different orders. White can also play 3.Kf3.

Longer Proof Game 33 (4.5 moves)

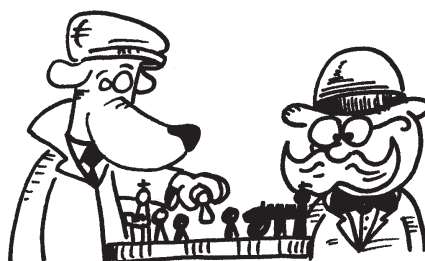


1.e3 Nf6 2.e4 Nd5 3.e5 Nc3 4.Nxc3 e6 5.Nb1

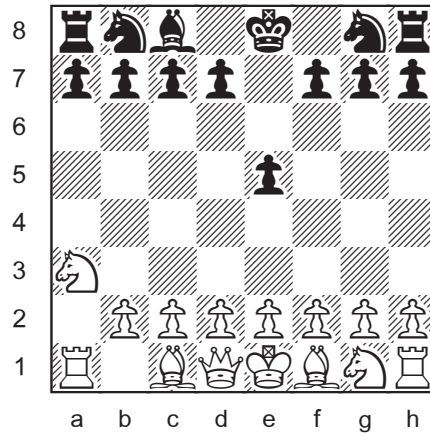
Tempo move by the white e-pawn and a knight switchback to b1, but the real challenge is seeing that the black knight was not captured on g4 or h5 by the white queen. At least not in 4.5 moves!

The position can be reached in 3.5 moves this way:

1.e4 Nf6 (or 1...Nh6) 2.e5 Ng4 (or 2...Nh5 3.Qxh5) 3.Qxg4 e6 4.Qd1



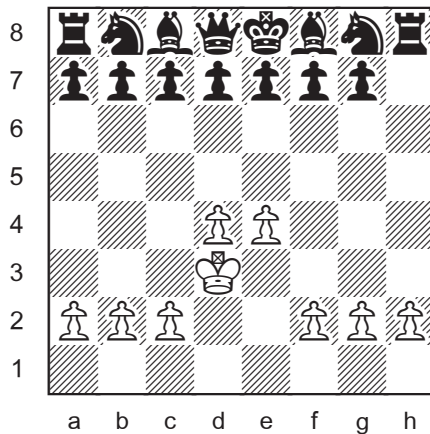
Longer Proof Game 34 (5.0 moves)



1.a3 e6 2.Ra2 Ba3 3.Rxa3 Qe7 4.Ra1 Qa3 5.Nxa3 e5

Maybe the most elusive tempo of them all: 2.Ra2!

Longer Proof Game 35 (9.5 moves)



1.e4 h5 2.Qg4 hxg4 3.Nf3 gxf3 4.Be2 fxe2 5.Rf1 exf1=R+!
6.Ke2 Rxc1 7.Nc3 Rxa1 8.Nd1 Rxd1 9.d4 Rd3 10.Kxd3

A Herculean effort by the black h-pawn.

Until next time!

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