



INTERMEDIATE

**CHESS
PUZZLES**



— **500** —

**Practice Exercises to
Take Your Game
to the Next Level**



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INTRODUCTION

So you want to take your chess skills to the next level?

Whether you are ready to move on from the basics, seeking to improve your online rating, or preparing for a club tournament, playing chess at an intermediate level requires some commitment and practice. But you can do it, and *Intermediate Chess Puzzles* is here to help!

Packed with five hundred puzzles and insights to help you hone your game, this book will guide you as you learn and practice:

- **Difficult checkmate patterns**—for example, discovered checkmate and double checkmate.
- **Advanced tactics**—including trapping pieces, interference, and intermediate checks and moves.
- **Combinations**—how to put together multiple tactical motifs to gain a material advantage. Combinations are the most complex and beautiful tactics.
- **Defense**—how to react when multiple pieces are attacked, how to defend against checkmate threats, and how to avoid your opponent's tactics.
- **Checkmate combinations**—how to weave together tactical motifs and checkmate patterns to force spectacular checkmates.
- And more!

Each of the twelve lessons that follow includes three intermediate motifs or patterns, along with eight puzzles to help you practice each skill. At the end of each lesson is a workout section with sixteen puzzles that can include any of the motifs and patterns you've learned so far in the book. By solving the workout puzzles without knowing what to look for in advance, you can learn to spot these motifs on your own and will be ready to find them in your own games too!

As you progress through the book, the motifs and patterns you learn in later lessons build upon and expand those you learned earlier, deepening your understanding and application of chess tactics.

With the essential knowledge and practice provided in this book, you can work your way up to combining more complex tactical motifs and checkmate patterns to execute spectacular checkmates. Let's get started!

Decoy Into Pins and Skewers

Sacrifice a piece to force an opponent's piece to a square where it can be attacked with a pin or skewer.

In the previous lesson, you sacrificed material to lure a piece into a fork. This time, you will sacrifice to lure a piece into a pin or a skewer.

The following diagrams illustrate the most common situations for decoys into pins and skewers:

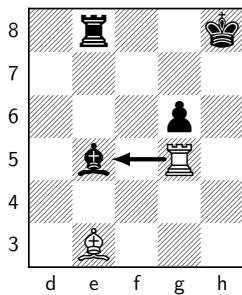


Diagram 1

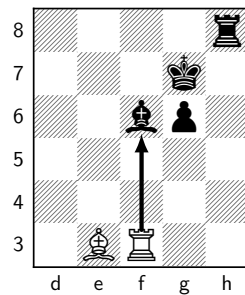


Diagram 2

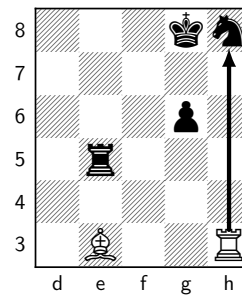


Diagram 3

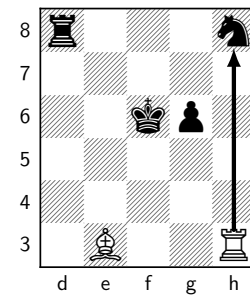


Diagram 4

In the first diagram, White can lure the rook into a pin with the decoy indicated by the arrow: **1.Rxe5! Rxe5 2.Bd4**, winning the rook.

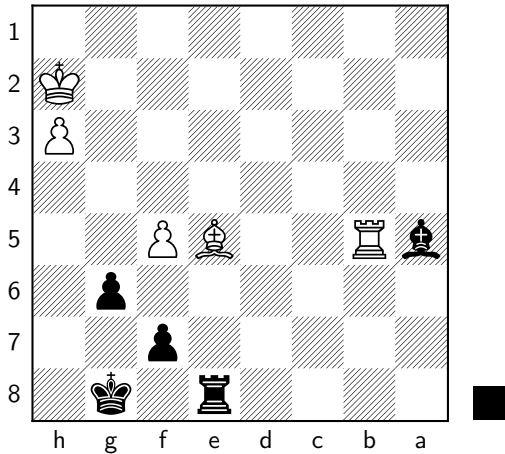
In the second diagram, White can lure the king into a skewer with the indicated decoy: **1.Rxf6 Kxf6 2.Bd4+ Kf7 3.Bxh8**.

Sometimes you can decoy the rear piece instead of the front piece. In the third diagram, White can lure the king into the rear of a pin with the decoy indicated by the arrow: **1.Rxh8+! Kxh8 2.Bd4**, winning the rook.

And in the fourth diagram, White can lure the rook into the rear of a skewer with the indicated decoy: **1.Rxh8! Rxh8 2.Bd4+ Kf7 3.Bxh8**.

Use the following puzzles to practice decoying into pins and skewers.

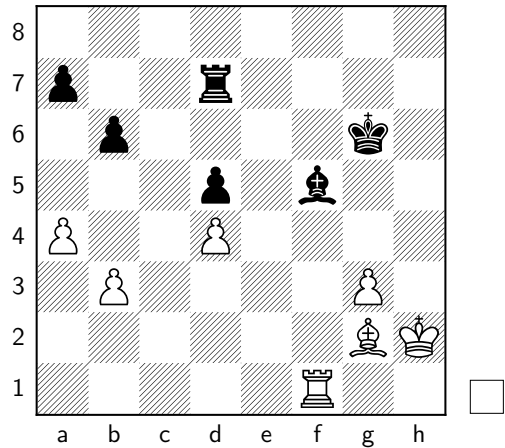
Puzzle 409



Black to win

Abbas—Eggleston, Reykjavik 2019

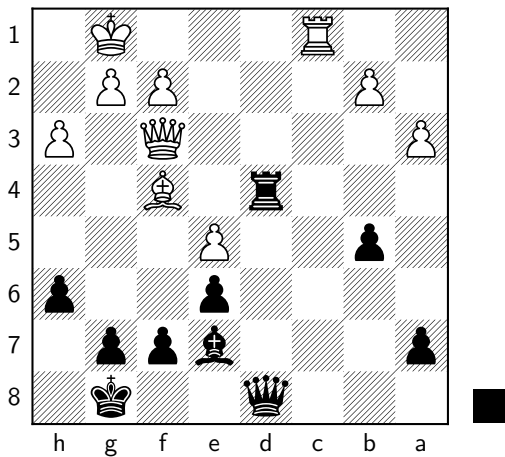
Puzzle 410



White to win

Zia—Jahan, Dhaka, 2021

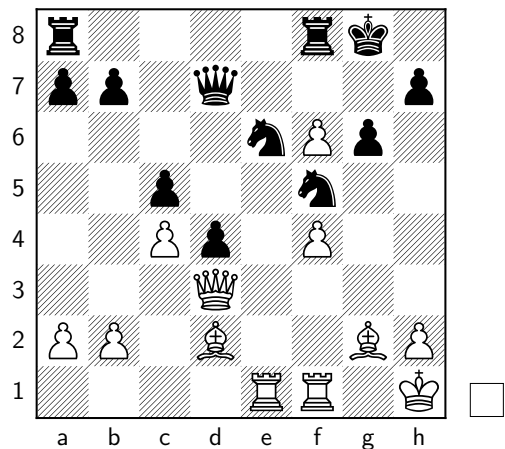
Puzzle 411



Black to win

Adiyaman—Holle, Magdeburg 2014

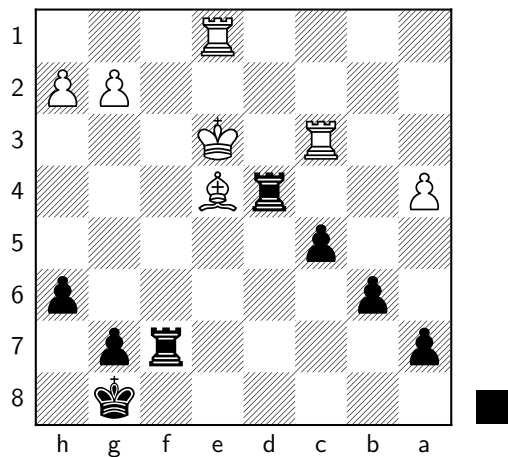
Puzzle 412



White to win

Kriebel—Bagaturov, European
Championship, Batumi 2018

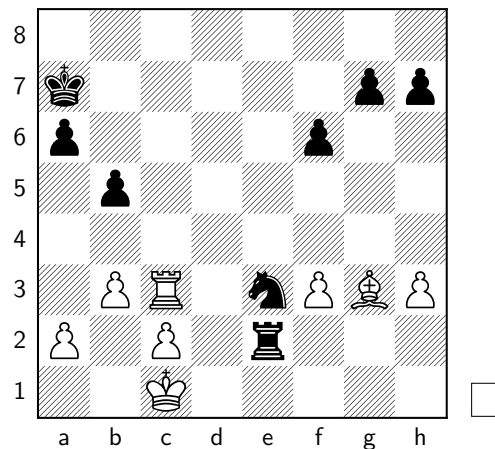
Puzzle 413



Black to win

Aleksandrov—Starcevic, Obrenovac 2005

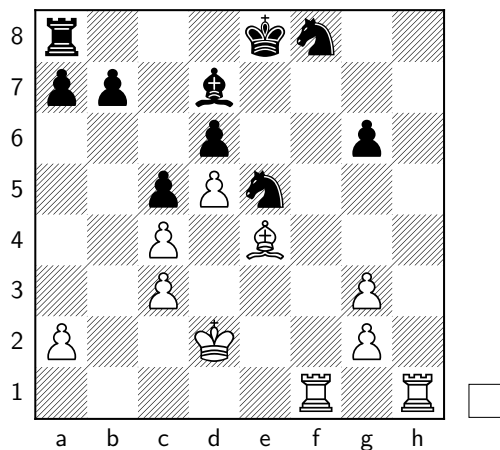
Puzzle 414



White to win

Seul—Kumala, Titled Tuesday 2020

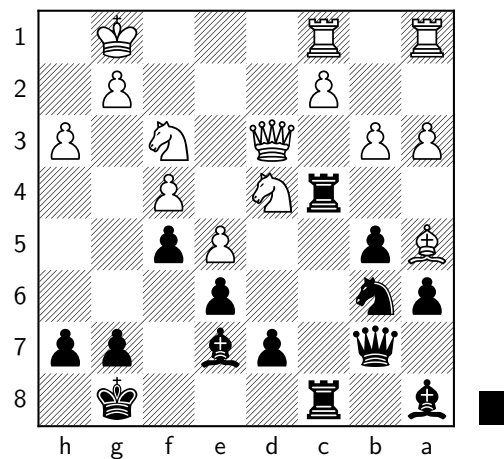
Puzzle 415



White to win

Vasconcellos—Oliveira, Florianópolis 2020

Puzzle 416



Black to win

Savchenko—Struck, Willingen 2022

Puzzle 405: Black can win with the double check **1...Nd2++**. Both pieces giving check are hanging, but the king must move: **2.Ka1** (or **2.Kc1**) **Nb3#**.

Puzzle 406: White can force checkmate with the discovered check **1.Ne6+!**, blocking the attack by the bishop on c8 on White's queen and also attacking g7 with the knight: **1...Kh7 2.Qxg7#**.

Black could also sacrifice the queen with **1...Qg5**, but that wouldn't change anything, as the same mate would follow anyway after **2.Qxg5+ Kh7 Qxg7#**.

Puzzle 407: Black can force checkmate with the discovered check **1...Re3+**, blocking the attack by the white rook on Black's queen. After **2.Qg2**, the queen is pinned and no longer defends the rook, so **2...Rxe1#** is back-rank mate.

Puzzle 408: White can win with the double check **1.Rg5++!!**, preventing the king's escape via g7 and decoying the king into **1...Kxg5 2.h4#**.

Puzzle 409: Black can win by decoying the rook into a pin: **1...Rxe5! 2.Rxe5 Bc7**.

Puzzle 410: White can win by decoying the king into a skewer: **1.Rxf5! Kxf5 2.Bh3+**.

Puzzle 411: Black can win by decoying the queen into a skewer: **1...Rxf4! 2.Qxf4 Bg5**, and the queen has no safe square to keep the rook protected (**Qf1** is impossible, because the pawn on f2 is in the way, and c4 is guarded by the pawn on b5).

Puzzle 412: White can temporarily sacrifice the exchange with **1.Rxe6!** Recapturing lures the queen to e6, where it can be pinned: **1...Qxe6 2.Bd5**.

Puzzle 413: Black can lure the king into a skewer with the decoy **1...Rxe4+! 2.Kxe4 Re7+**.

Puzzle 414: The rook on e2 is protecting the knight on e3 and the square f2. It is overloaded, and White can win with **1.Rxe3!**, combining decoy and deflection. When the rook recaptures with **1...Rxe3**, it is deflected away from protecting f2 and also decoyed to e3. White can then win the rook back with the pin **2.Bf2**, having won a knight in the process.

Puzzle 415: White can exploit the weakness of the back rank with the decoy **1.Rxf8+! Kxf8 2.Rh8+ Ke7 3.Rxa8**.

Puzzle 416: Black can win with **1...Rxd4!**, because both recaptures lose. If **2.Nxd4**, the diagonal is opened for **2...Qxg2#**, and if **2.Qxd4**, the queen is decoyed into a skewer with **2...Bc5**.

Puzzle 417: White can win with the deflection **1.Qg8+!** Black can't capture with the king, because the knight on h6 is protecting the queen. Therefore, Black is forced to play **1...Rxc8**, blocking the king's last escape square on g8. The rook is now deflected away from guarding f7, and White can win with the smothered mate **2.Nf7#**. This queen sacrifice is the most common way to achieve smothered mate.

Puzzle 418: Black's last move, **f7-f6?**, was a blunder, and White can now checkmate with **1.Bg6+! hxc6 2.Qxg6#** (fool's mate).

Puzzle 419: This is the same combination as in the previous puzzle (418), but with the queen in front: **1.Qg6+! hxc6 2.Bxc6#**. This type of queen sacrifice is a very common method to deliver fool's mate.

Puzzle 420: Black can force smothered mate with **1...Qg1+!** The queen is protected by the bishop on e3, forcing the rook to capture, block g1, and give up the defense of f2: **2.Rxc1 Nf2#**.

This is the second most common way to achieve smothered mate. (The most common way uses a knight instead of a bishop to protect the queen, as in Puzzle 417.)

Puzzle 421: White can exploit the weakened diagonal e8-h5 with the deflection **1.Qxh5+! Rxh5 2.Bg6#**.

Puzzle 422: White can force smothered mate by deflecting the black queen with **1.Qxh7+! Qxh7 2.Nf7#**.

Puzzle 423: Black can force checkmate with **1...Bh3!** Black threatens checkmate with **Qxg2**, and if **2.gxh3**, then **Qxf3#** is fool's mate.

Puzzle 424: Black can win with **1...Qc2+!!**, because **2.Bxc2** blocks the c2 square and deflects the bishop away from protecting a2, so **2...Nxa2#** is mate. The alternative, **2.Nxc2**, also blocks the c2 square, and it deflects the knight away from protecting d3, so **2...Nd3#** is checkmate.