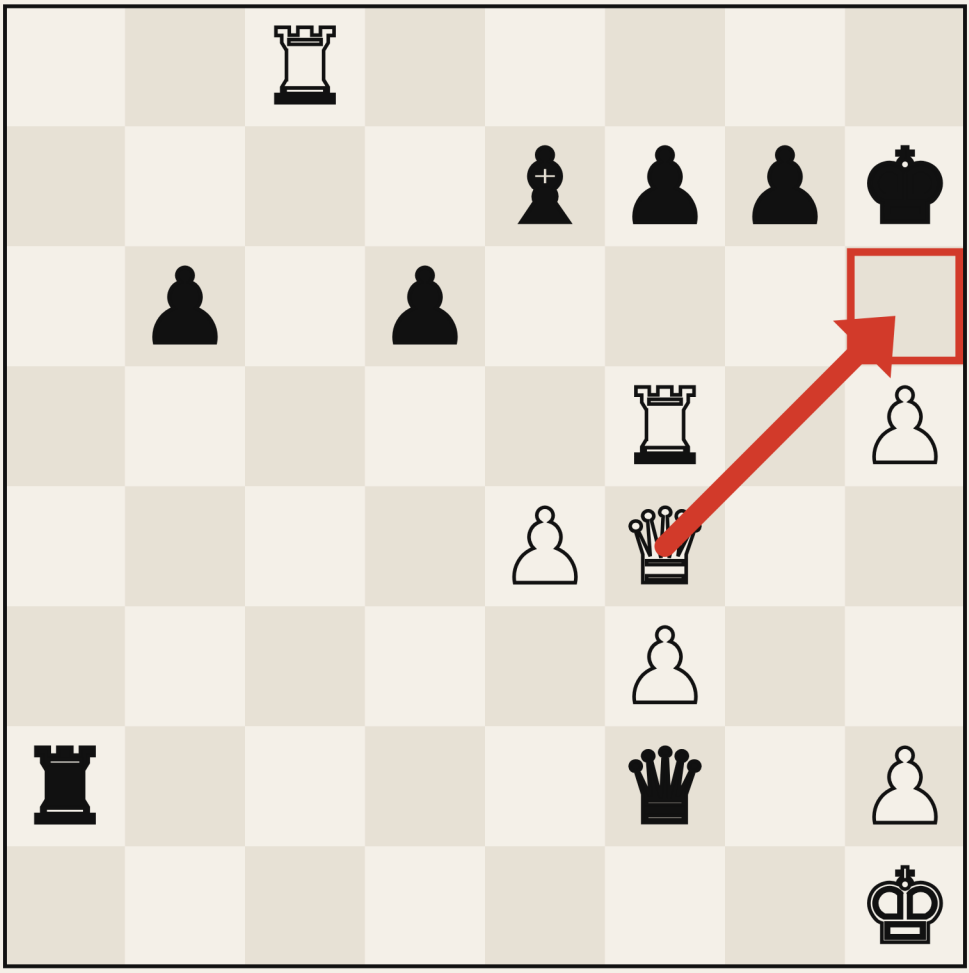
CARLSEN

64 combinations



Carlsen – Karjakin, New York 2016 · 50.♕h6+!!

The champion's tactical blows, 2003 to 2026

JOSE SANDE

CARLSEN

64 combinations

Jose Sande

Carlsen. 64 combinations
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Introduction

This book brings together 64 combinations by Magnus Carlsen, from his games as a child prodigy in 2003 to the present day, in chronological order. There are classical, rapid and blitz games, all played over the board, none online.

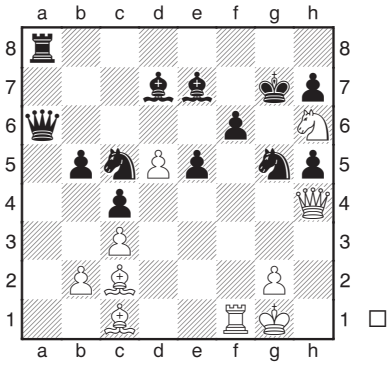
The book is divided into four stages of Carlsen's career; the solutions to each stage appear at the end of its chapter.

Try to solve each position without moving the pieces: look for the key move and think about your opponent's defences. The solutions explain the idea of each combination and give the forcing lines, which stop once the rest is clear.

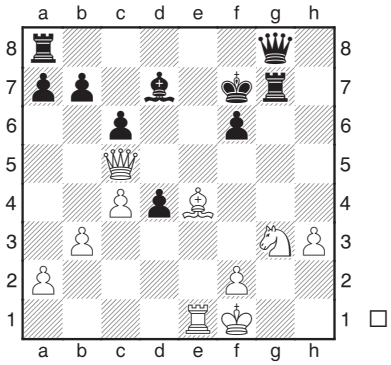
Chapter 1

The child prodigy (2003-2006)

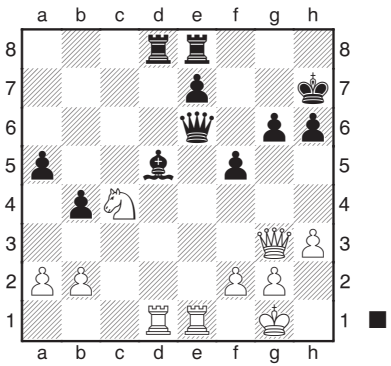
Between the ages of 12 and 15, Magnus went from Norwegian prospect to grandmaster and elite player. These are fresh, daring games in which the sacrifice appears almost by instinct.



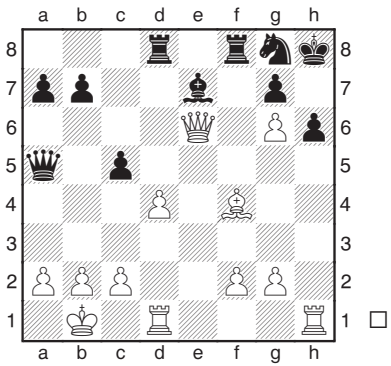
1. Carlsen – Harestad, 2003



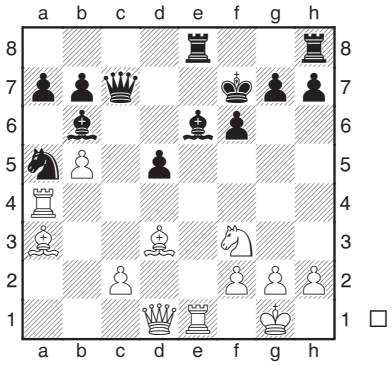
2. Carlsen – Gretarsson, 2003



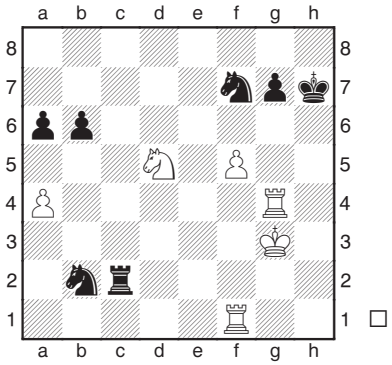
3. Pavlovic – Carlsen, 2004



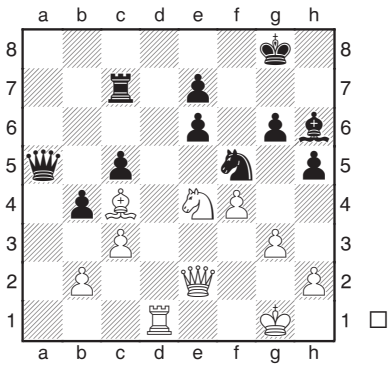
4. Carlsen – Ernst, 2004



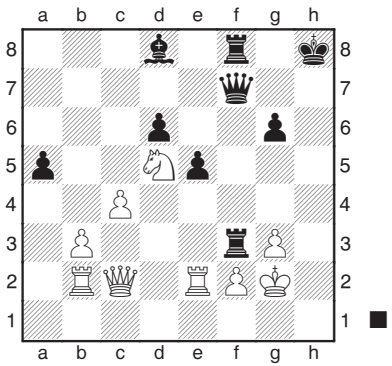
5. Carlsen – Nikolic, 2005



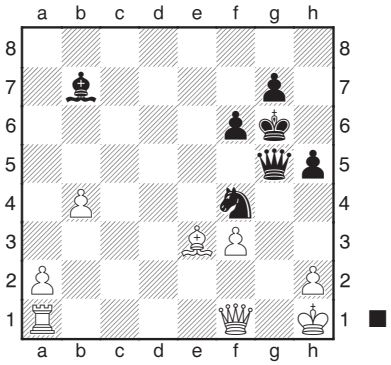
6. Carlsen – Vachier-Lagrave, 2005



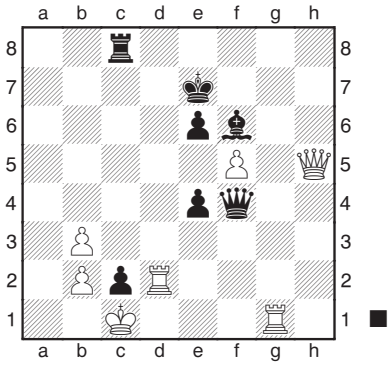
7. Carlsen – Azmaiparashvili, 2005



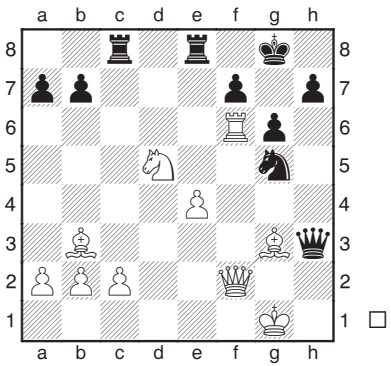
8. Smeets – Carlsen, 2006



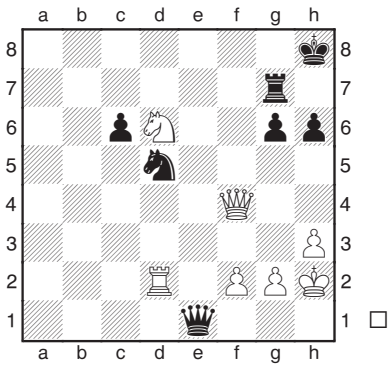
9. Naiditsch – Carlsen, 2006



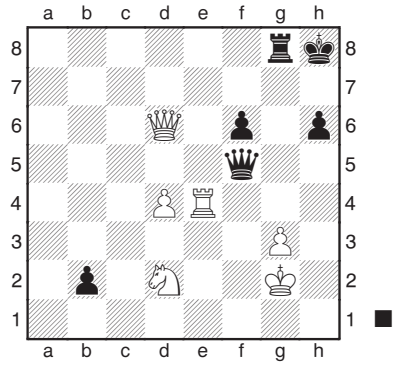
10. Predojevic – Carlsen, 2006



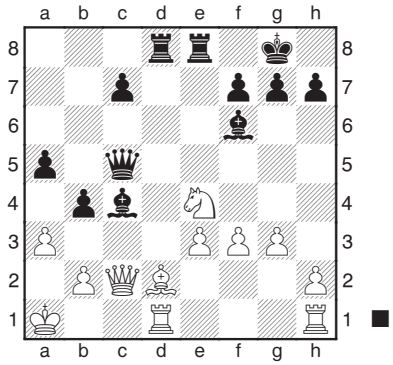
11. Carlsen – Lie, 2006



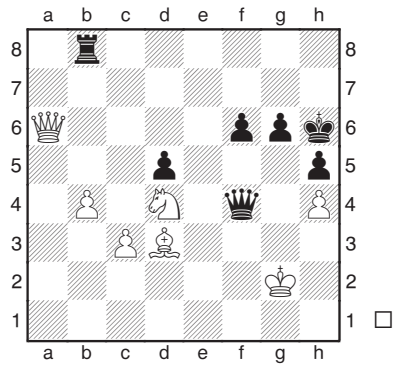
12. Carlsen – Morozevich, 2006



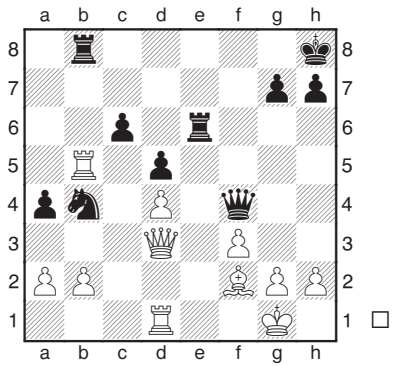
13. Yusupov – Carlsen, 2006



14. Agdestein – Carlsen, 2006



15. Carlsen – Vachier-Lagrave, 2006

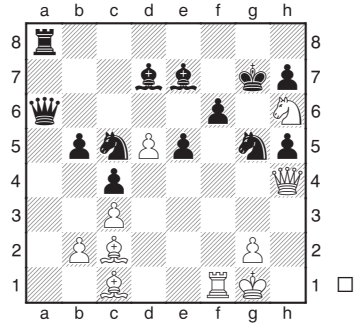


16. Carlsen – Fressinet, 2006

Solutions to chapter 1

1. Carlsen – Harestad

Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 2003 · classical



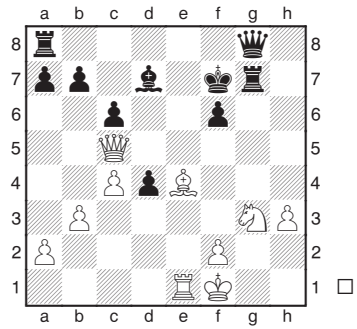
36.Qxg5+!

A queen sacrifice to open the f-file and bring the rook to the seventh rank: the black king is trapped between the rook and the knight on h6.

· 36...fxg5 37. Rf7+ Kxh6 38. Rxh7#

2. Carlsen – Gretarsson

European Club Cup, Rethymnon 2003 · classical



32.Bg6+!

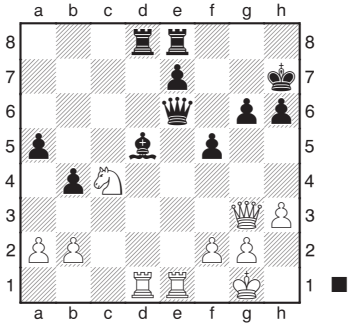
The bishop is offered on g6 to deflect the rook or decoy the king: either way the white queen mates from e7 or h5.

· 32...Rxg6 33. Qe7#

· 32...Kxg6 33. Qh5#

3. Pavlovic – Carlsen

Corus C, Wijk aan Zee 2004 · classical



29...Bxc4!

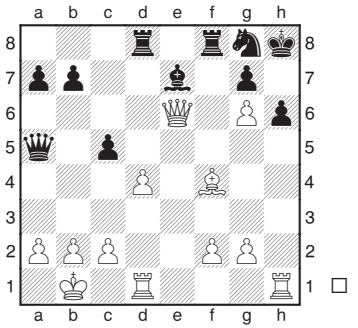
The pin on the d5-bishop along the d-file is only apparent: if 30.Rxd8 Qxe1+, and if 30.Rxe6 Rxd1+. Black wins the knight.

· 30. Rxd8 Qxe1+

· 30. Rxe6 Rxd1+ 31. Kh2 Bxe6

4. Carlsen – Ernst

Corus C, Wijk aan Zee 2004 · classical



21.Bxh6!

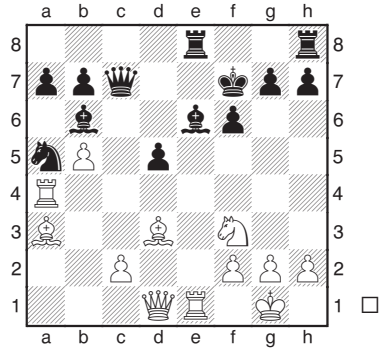
A blow against the black castled position: the bishop is given up on h6 to open the h-file for the rook. It also threatens Bxg7+ and Rh7 mate.

· 21...gxh6 22. Rxh6+ Nxh6 23. Qxe7 Nf7 24. gxf7

· 21...Bh4 22. Bg5

5. Carlsen – Nikolic

Corus B, Wijk aan Zee 2005 · classical



20.Ng5+!

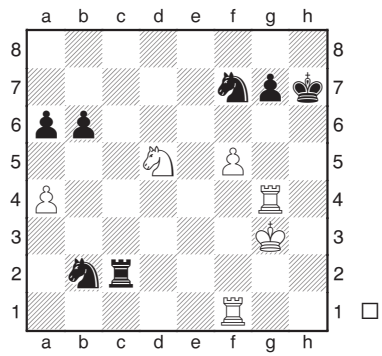
The knight is offered on g5 with check to deflect the f-pawn and clear the way for the queen and rook against the e6-bishop and the black king.

· 20...fxg5 21. Qf3+ Kg8 22. Rxe6

· 20...Kg8 21. Nxe6

6. Carlsen – Vachier-Lagrave

Young Masters, Lausanne 2005 · classical



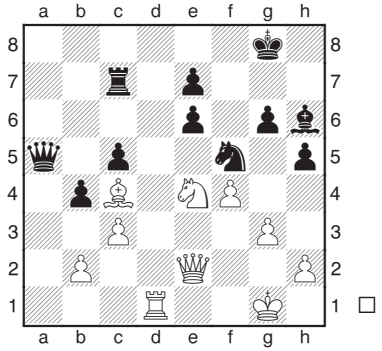
33.Nf6+!

The knight is sacrificed to open the g-file and the king's diagonal: after the capture, the two white rooks weave a mating net.

· 33...gxf6 34. Rh1+ Nh6 35. Rg6

7. Carlsen – Azmaiparashvili

World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005 · classical



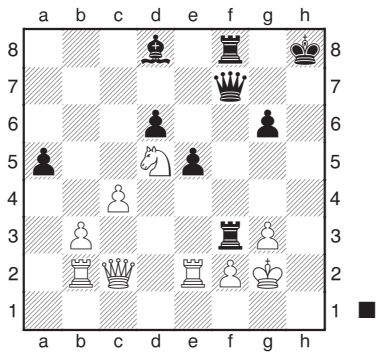
32.Nf6+!

The knight lands on f6 with check to open the e6-square: if it is taken, the queen and the d1-rook mate on the eighth rank.

· 32...exf6 33. Qxe6+ Kf8 34. Qxf6+ Ke8 35. Rd8#

8. Smeets – Carlsen

Corus B, Wijk aan Zee 2006 · classical



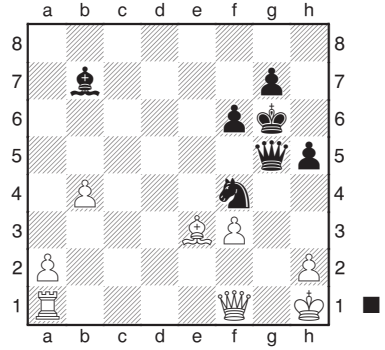
35...Rxg3+!

A rook sacrifice on g3 to strip the white king: the queen comes in via f1 and the black king joins the attack.

· 36. fxg3 Qf1+ 37. Kh2 Kg7

9. Naiditsch – Carlsen

Corus B, Wijk aan Zee 2006 · classical



33...Qg4!

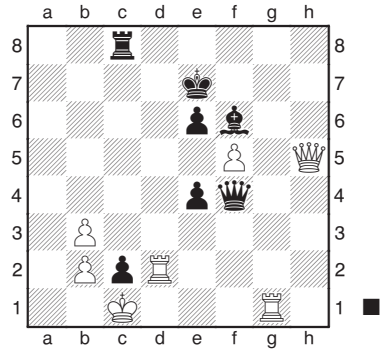
A quiet move: the queen goes to g4 and threatens Bxf3+ with a knight mate on e2. White has to give up material.

· 34. Bxf4 Bxf3+ 35. Qxf3 Qxf3+ 36. Kg1 Qxf4

· 34. h3 Qg3

10. Predojevic – Carlsen

Bosna, Sarajevo 2006 · classical



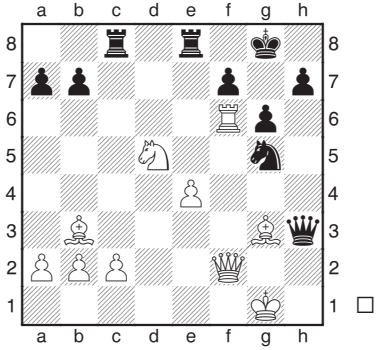
40...Bxb2+!

The bishop is given up on b2 to clear the way for the c2-pawn, which promotes with check: the black rook ends up delivering mate.

· 41. Kxb2 c1=Q+ 42. Rxc1 Qxd2+ 43. Rc2 Rxc2+ 44. Kb1 Rc1#

11. Carlsen – Lie

Norwegian Championship, Moss 2006 · classical



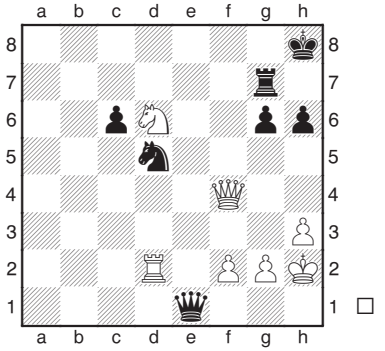
24.Rxf7!

The rook takes on f7, a pawn pinned by the b3-bishop. If 24...Nxf7, the knight forks on f6 and wins the e8-rook; then the queen comes in on f7.

· 24...Nxf7 25. Nf6+ Kg7 26. Nxe8+ Rxe8 27. Qxf7+

12. Carlsen – Morozevich

Biel 2006 · classical



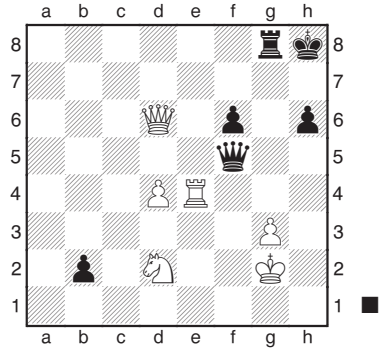
40.Rxd5!

An exchange sacrifice to eliminate the knight that guards f6 and e7: after the recapture, the queen enters on f8 and the knight on e8 threatens mate on g7.

· 40...cxd5 41. Qf8+ Kh7 42. Ne8!

13. Yusupov – Carlsen

NH Hotels, Amsterdam 2006 · classical



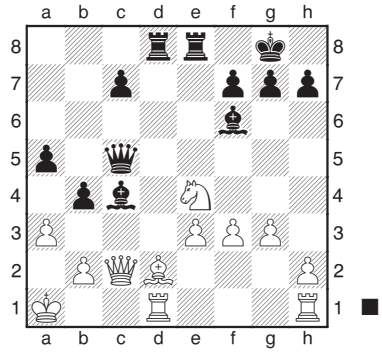
47...b1=Q!

The pawn promotes even though the new queen is lost: the d2-knight is deflected and the f5-queen takes the e4-rook with check.

· 48. Nxb1 Qxe4+ 49. Kh2 Qxb1

14. Agdestein – Carlsen

Norwegian Championship play-off, Oslo 2006 · classical



26...Rxe4!

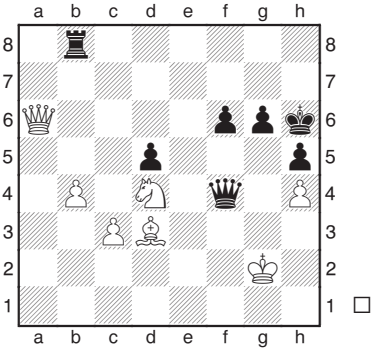
The rook eliminates the e4-knight, the key piece in White's defence. If 27.fxe4 b3! hits the queen and the f6-bishop wins the queen on c3; if 27.Qxe4 Qb5 and the attack on the a1-king is decisive.

· 27. fxe4 b3 28. Qc3 Bxc3

· 27. Qxe4 Qb5

15. Carlsen – Vachier-Lagrave

Cap d'Agde 2006 · rapid



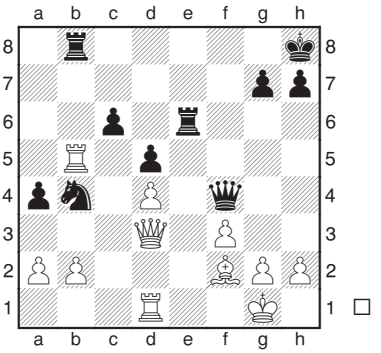
38.Nf5+!

The knight is given up with check on f5. If 38...Qxf5 39.Bxf5 the queen falls for the knight; if 38...gxf5 the queen takes on f6 and the bishop checks on f5.

· 38...gxf5 39. Qxf6+ Kh7 40. Bxf5+

16. Carlsen – Fressinet

Cap d'Agde 2006 · rapid



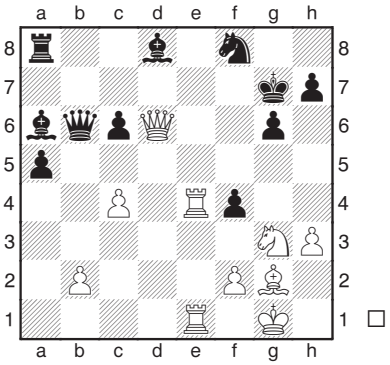
27.Qf5!

The queen is offered on f5, attacking both the f4-queen and the e6-rook. It cannot be taken: 27...Qxf5? 28.Rxb8+ Re8 29.Rxe8+ Qf8 30.Rxf8#. Black loses material.

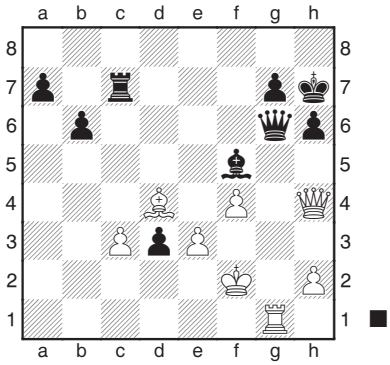
Chapter 2

The rise (2007-2012)

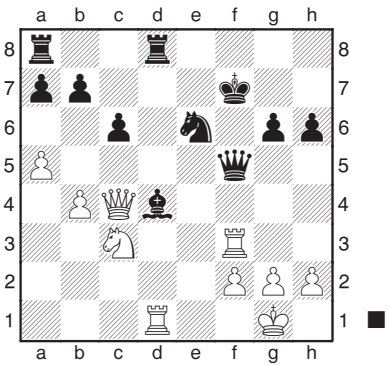
Now among the best in the world, Carlsen learns to beat everyone: Topalov, Aronian, Gelfand, Radjabov… He reaches number one on the rating list in 2010 and his combinations become more precise.



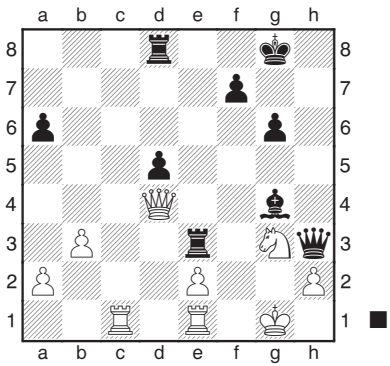
17. Carlsen – Radjabov, 2007



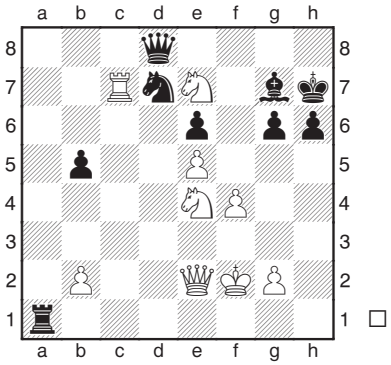
18. Onischuk – Carlsen, 2007



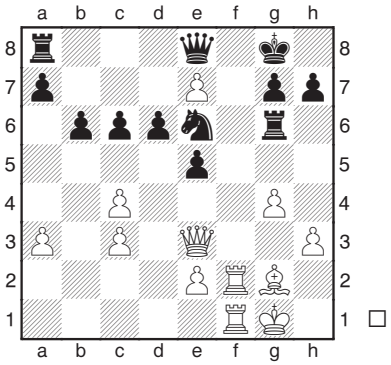
19. Stefansson – Carlsen, 2007



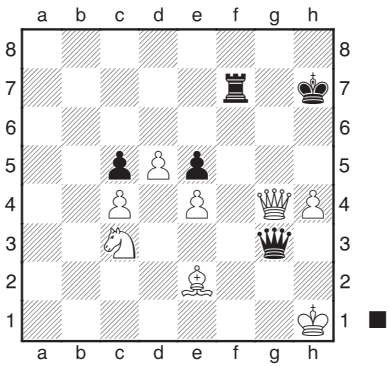
20. Pelletier – Carlsen, 2008



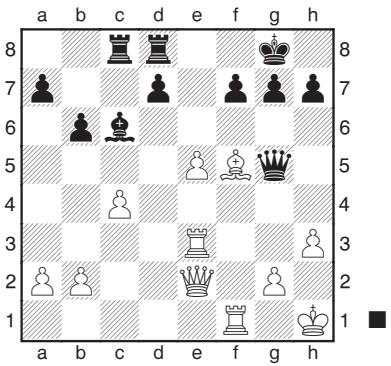
21. Carlsen – Topalov, 2009



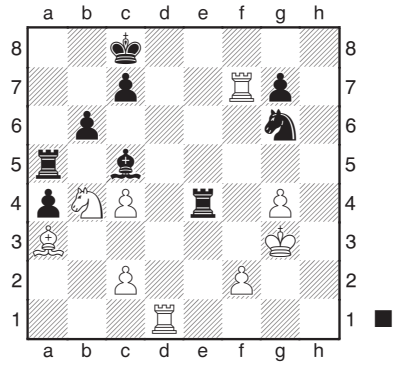
22. Carlsen – Morozevich, 2009



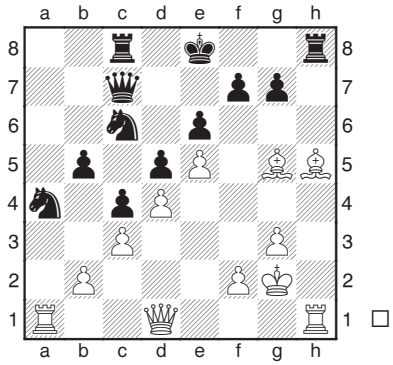
23. Gelfand – Carlsen, 2010



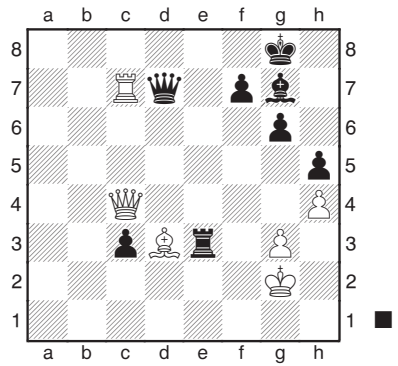
24. Aronian – Carlsen, 2010



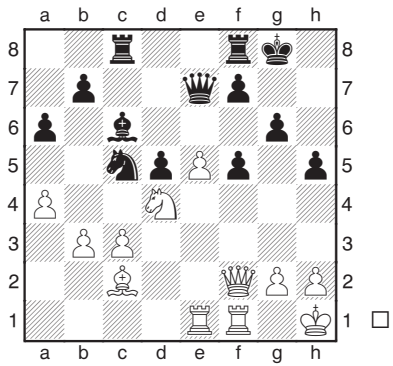
25. Smeets – Carlsen, 2011



26. Carlsen – Wang Hao, 2011



27. Shirov – Carlsen, 2011

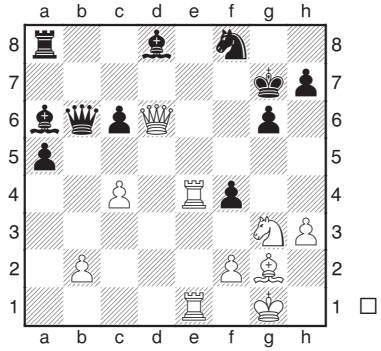


28. Carlsen – Radjabov, 2012

Solutions to chapter 2

17. Carlsen – Radjabov

Biel 2007 · classical



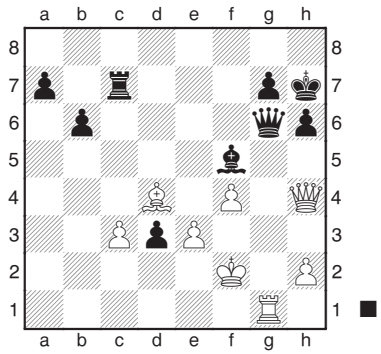
28.Re7+!

A rook sacrifice on e7 to deflect the d8-bishop: the other rook enters the seventh with check and the queen reaches e5 with a decisive attack.

· 28...Bxe7 29. Rxe7+ Kg8 30. Qe5

18. Onischuk – Carlsen

Biel tiebreak 2007 · blitz



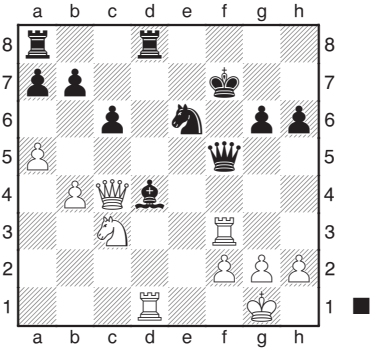
40...Qxg1+!

A queen sacrifice on g1 to promote the d3-pawn: the f5-bishop controls the queening square and the white queen arrives too late.

· 41. Kxg1 d2 42. Qh5 Bc2

19. Stefansson – Carlsen

European Team Championship, Crete 2007 · classical



22...Qxf3!

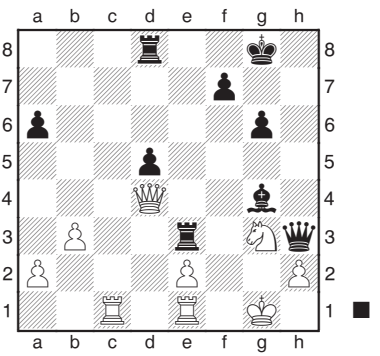
The queen takes the f3-rook. If 23.gxf3 Bxc3, Black has rook and two pieces for the queen and the white king is weak; if 23.Rxd4 Rxd4 24.Qxd4 Nxd4 25.gxf3, the ending a piece up is winning.

· 23. gxf3 Bxc3

· 23. Rxd4 Rxd4 24. Qxd4 Nxd4 25. gxf3

20. Pelletier – Carlsen

Biel 2008 · classical



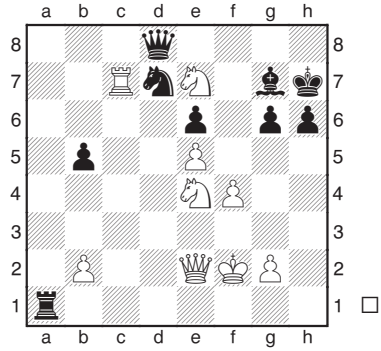
38...Rxg3+!

A rook sacrifice on g3 to open the king: the queen enters g3 with check and the bishop joins via f5 and g4.

· 39. hxg3 Qxg3+ 40. Kh1 Bf5 41. e4 Bg4! 42. Rc3 Qxe1+ 43. Kg2 Qxe4+

21. Carlsen – Topalov

M-Tel Masters, Sofia 2009 · classical



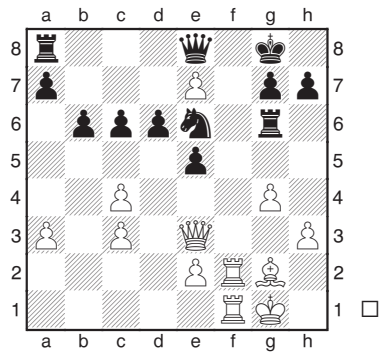
33.Qd3!

A quiet move: the queen threatens Ng5+ and Qxg6. If 33...Qxe7, 34.Nf6+ forces the d7-knight to capture, freeing the seventh rank, and the c7-rook wins the queen.

· 33...Qxe7 34. Nf6+

22. Carlsen – Morozevich

World Blitz Championship, Moscow 2009



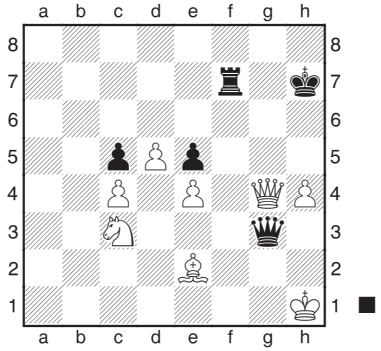
26.Rf8+!

The rooks are given up on f8 so that the e7-pawn promotes. After the exchanges White has queen and bishop against two rooks.

· 26...Nxf8 27. Rxf8+ Qxf8 28. exf8=Q+ Rxf8 29. Bxc6

23. Gelfand – Carlsen

Amber, Nice 2010 · rapid



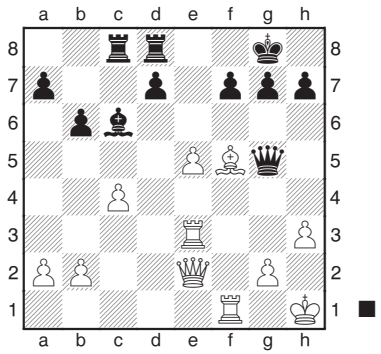
48...Rf1+!

The rook is given up with check to deflect the e2-bishop, which was defending the queen on g4.

· 49. Bxf1 Qxg4

24. Aronian – Carlsen

World Blitz Championship, Moscow 2010

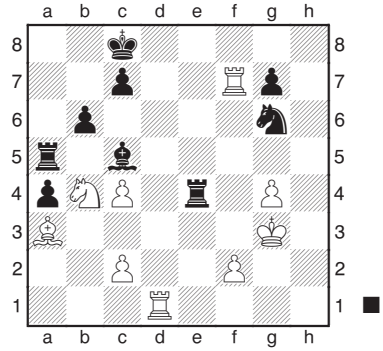


25...Bxg2+!

The bishop is given up on g2 with check to deflect the white queen, which stops protecting the e3-rook.

· 26. Qxg2 Qxe3

25. Smeets – Carlsen
Tata Steel, Wijk aan Zee 2011 · classical

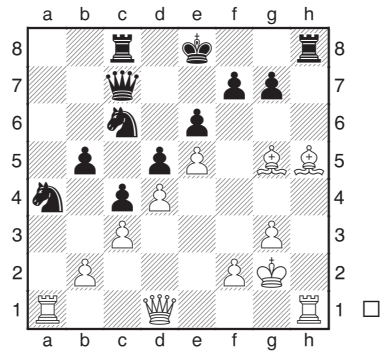


31...Rxg4+!

The rook is given up on g4 with check to decoy the king: the knight forks on e5 and wins the f7-rook.

· 32. Kxg4 Ne5+

26. Carlsen – Wang Hao
Tata Steel, Wijk aan Zee 2011 · classical

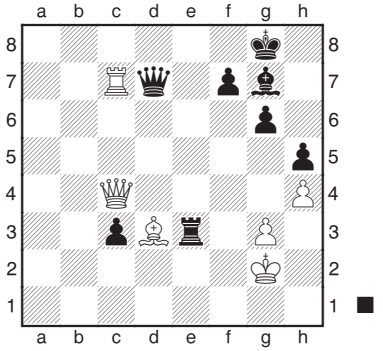


24.Bxf7+!

The bishop is given up on f7 to open the h-file: the queen comes to f3 with check and the h1-rook exchanges on h8 with a decisive attack.

· 24...Kxf7 25. Qf3+ Kg8 26. Rxh8+ Kxh8 27. Rh1+ Kg8 28. Qh5

27. Shirov – Carlsen
Biel 2011 · classical



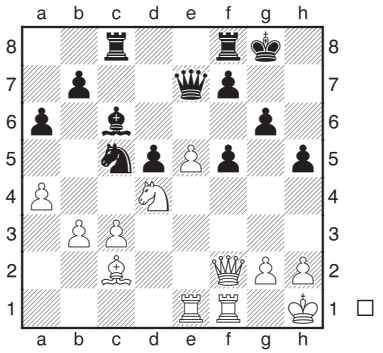
56...Rxg3+!

The rook is given up on g3 to decoy the king onto the bishop's diagonal: 57...Be5+ is a fork that wins the c7-rook. If 57.Kh2 Qh3#.

· 57. Kxg3 Be5+ 58. Kf3 Bxc7

· 57. Kh2 Qh3#

28. Carlsen – Radjabov
Tal Memorial (blitz), Moscow 2012



27.Nxf5!

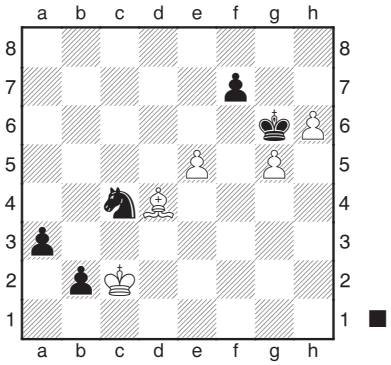
The knight takes on f5. If 27...gxf5 28.Qxf5 and the black king is exposed to the queen and the c2-bishop; if Black does not take, Nxe7+ wins the queen.

· 27...gxf5 28. Qxf5

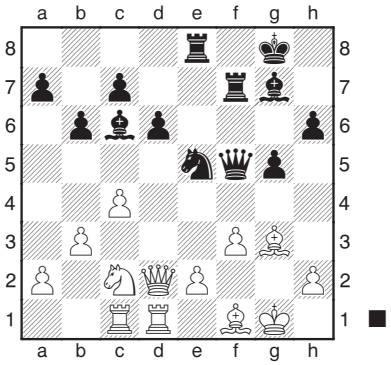
Chapter 3

World champion (2013-2022)

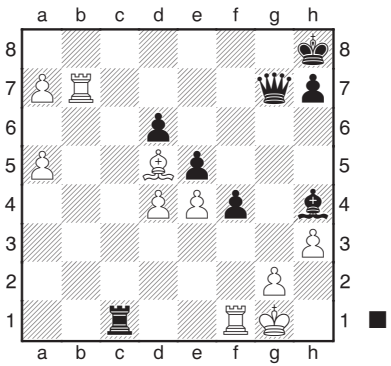
In 2013 he defeats Anand and becomes world champion. He defends the title against Anand, Karjakin, Caruana and Nepomniachtchi, and also wins the world rapid and blitz titles. Tactics now grow out of constant positional pressure.



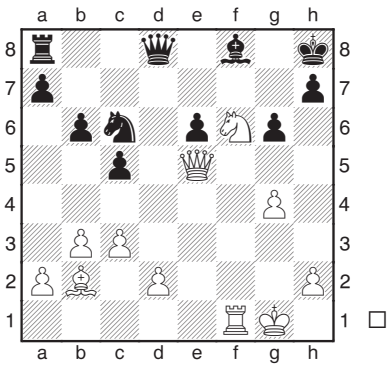
29. Gelfand – Carlsen, 2013



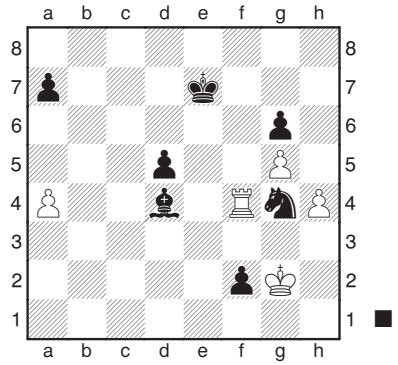
30. Hammer – Carlsen, 2013



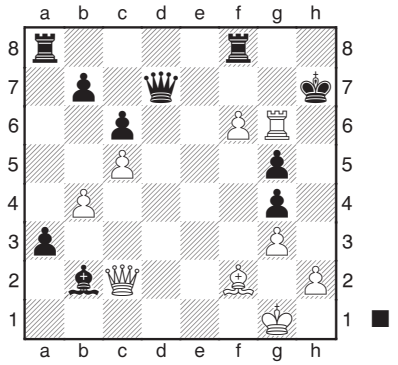
31. Caruana – Carlsen, 2013



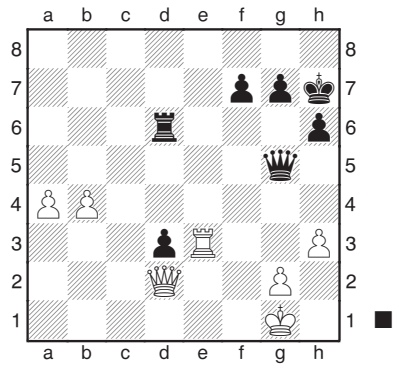
32. Carlsen – Anand, 2014



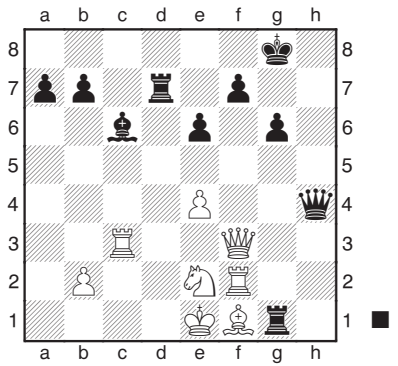
33. Van Wely – Carlsen, 2015



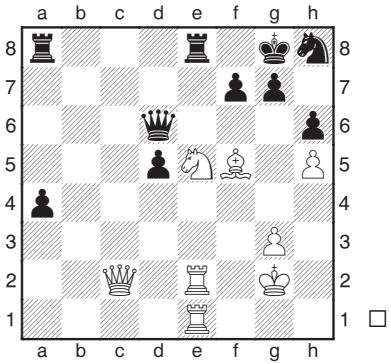
34. Anand – Carlsen, 2015



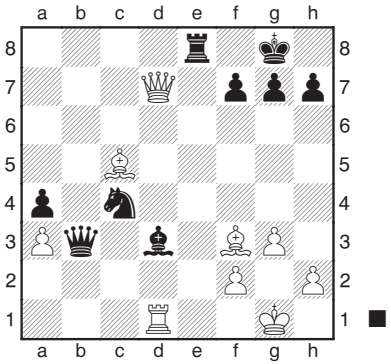
35. Zhigalko – Carlsen, 2015



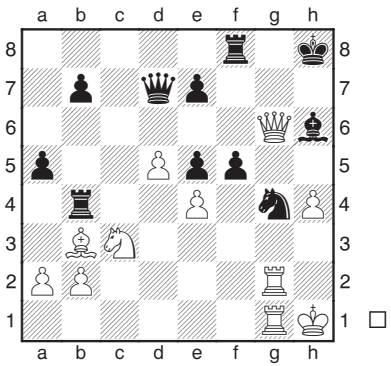
36. Van Wely – Carlsen, 2016



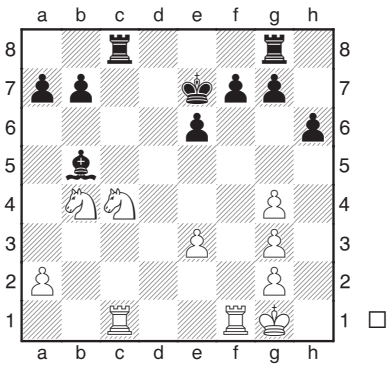
37. Carlsen – Harikrishna, 2016



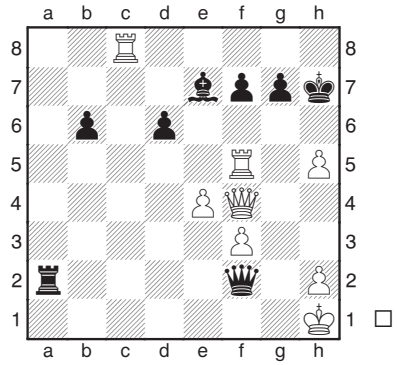
38. So – Carlsen, 2016



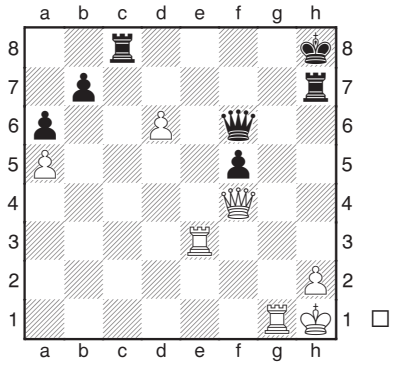
39. Carlsen – Karjakin, 2016



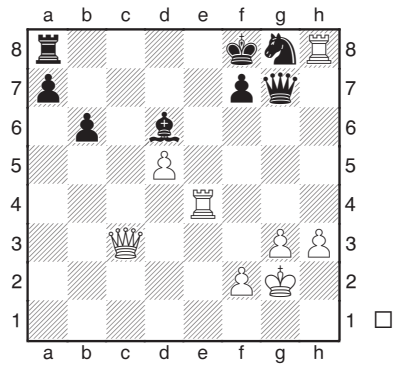
40. Carlsen – Ghaem Maghami, 2016



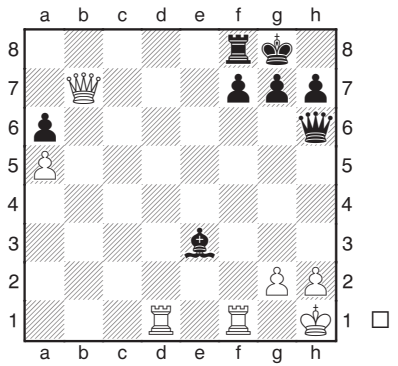
41. Carlsen – Karjakin, 2016



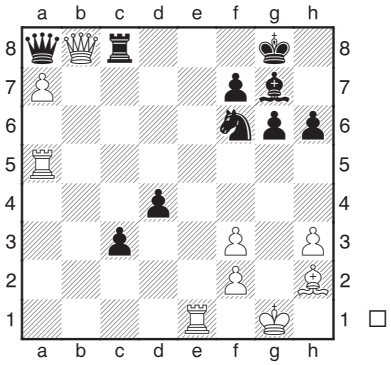
42. Carlsen – Vidit, 2016



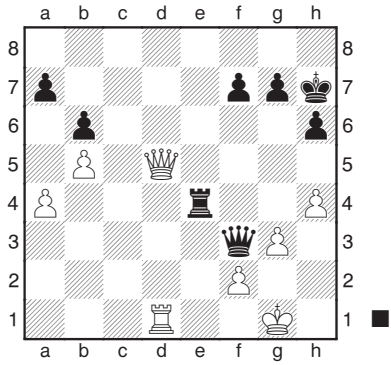
43. Carlsen – Karjakin, 2017



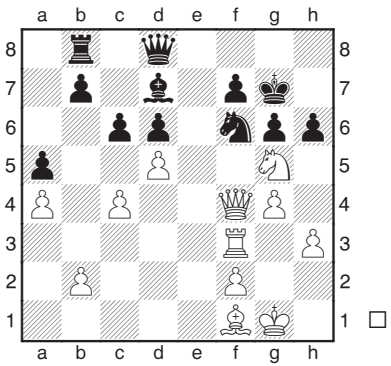
44. Carlsen – Nepomniachtchi, 2017



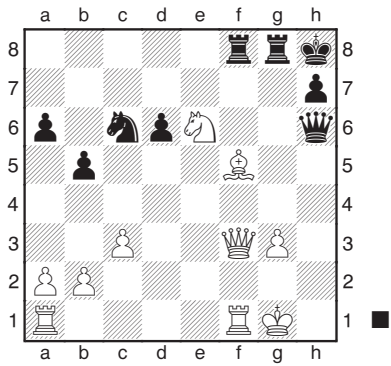
45. Carlsen – Akobian, 2017



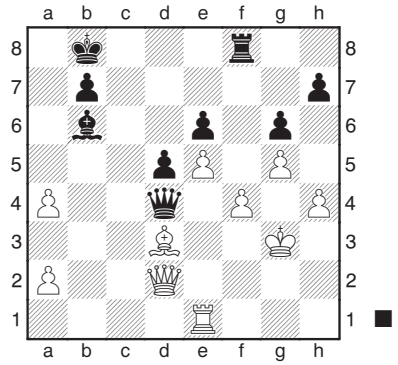
46. Mamedyarov – Carlsen, 2017



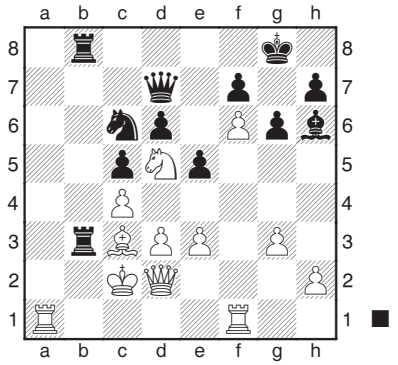
47. Carlsen – Aronian, 2018



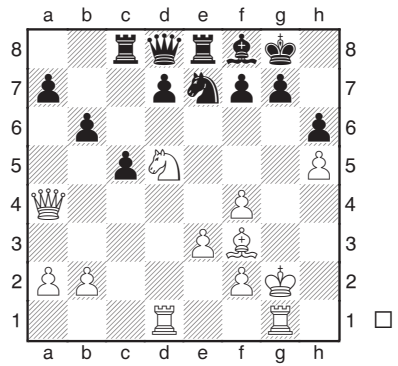
48. Topalov – Carlsen, 2019



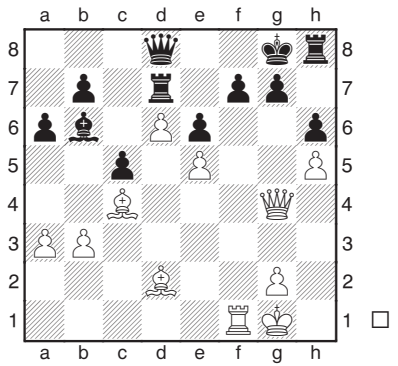
49. Anand – Carlsen, 2019



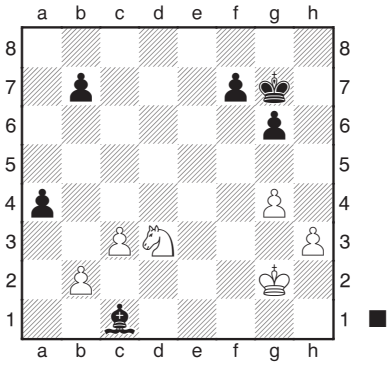
50. Aronian – Carlsen, 2019



51. Carlsen – Socko, 2019



52. Carlsen – Fedoseev, 2021

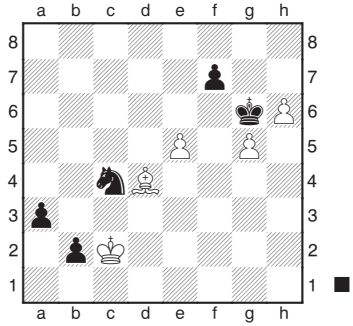


53. Shimanov – Carlsen, 2022

Solutions to chapter 3

29. Gelfand – Carlsen

Candidates Tournament, London 2013 · classical

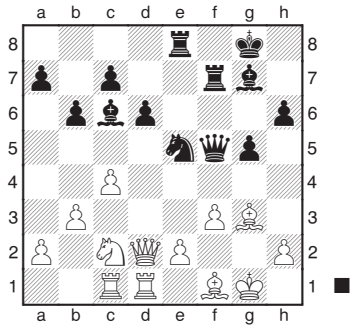


57...Nd2!

The knight blocks the d2-square. If 58.Kxd2 b1=Q, and if 58.Bxb2 axb2 59.Kxb2 Nc4+ the knight wins the e5-pawn and the ending is won.

30. Hammer – Carlsen

Norway Chess (blitz), Stavanger 2013



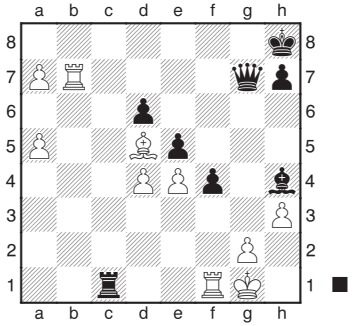
26...Qxf3!

A queen sacrifice on f3 to destroy the castled position: 27.exf3 Nxf3+ checks the king and attacks the d2-queen, and the c6-bishop joins along the long diagonal. It also threatened Qh1 mate.

· 27. exf3 Nxf3+ 28. Kh1 Nxd2+

31. Caruana – Carlsen

Tal Memorial (blitz), Moscow 2013



42...Bf2+!

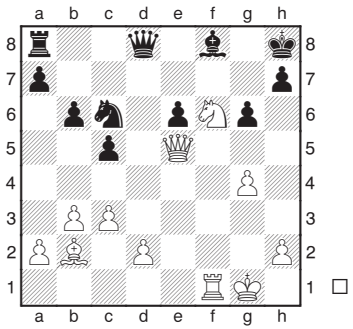
The bishop is given up on f2 with check to deflect the king or open the first rank: the c1-rook and the queen deliver mate.

· 43. Kxf2 Rc2+ 44. Ke1 Qg3+ 45. Rf2 Rc1+ 46. Kd2 Qe3#

· 43. Kh2 Qg3+ 44. Kh1 Rxf1#

32. Carlsen – Anand

Zurich (blitz) 2014



21.Ne8+!

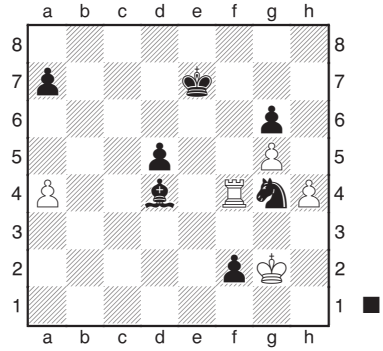
The knight leaves f6 with a discovered check from the e5-queen and lands on e8, cutting Black's defence of f6 and g7: mate is unavoidable.

· 21...Kg8 22. Qxe6+ Kh8 23. Rxf8#

· 21...Qf6 22. Qxf6+ Bg7 23. Qxg7#

33. Van Wely – Carlsen

Tata Steel, Wijk aan Zee 2015 · classical

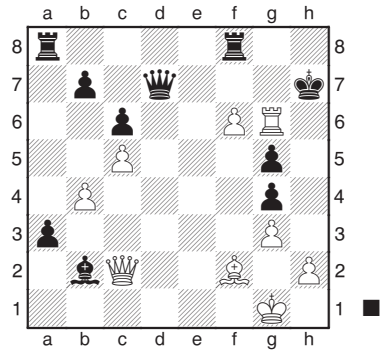


44...Nh2!

The knight goes to h2, controlling f1 and f3: the f2-pawn threatens to promote with check. If 45.Rxf2 Bxf2 46.Kxf2 Ng4+ and the knight-versus-pawns ending is winning.

34. Anand – Carlsen

GRENKE Chess Classic, Baden-Baden 2015 · classical



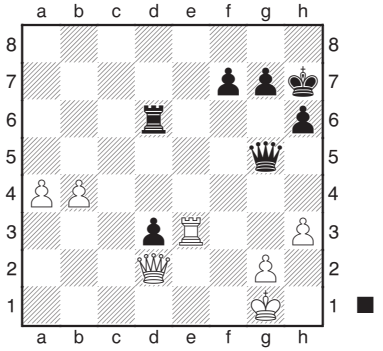
33...Qd1+!

The queen is given up on d1 with check to deflect the c2-queen, which was defending the g6-rook along the c2-g6 diagonal. The black king takes the rook and the a3-pawn decides.

· 34. Qxd1 Kxg6 35. Qd3+ Kh6 36. h4 gxh3 37. Qd7 Bxf6

35. Zhigalko – Carlsen

World Rapid Championship, Berlin 2015



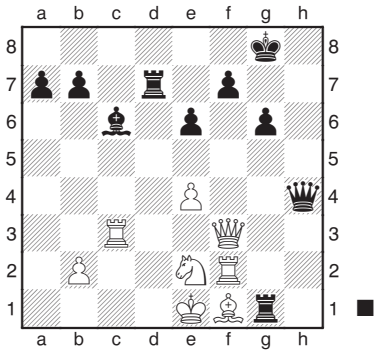
42...Qxe3+!

The queen is given up on e3 to remove the rook that was stopping the d3-pawn. The pawn reaches d2 defended by the d6-rook and the white queen cannot prevent promotion.

· 43. Qxe3 d2 44. Qe4+ g6

36. Van Wely – Carlsen

Tata Steel, Wijk aan Zee 2016 · classical



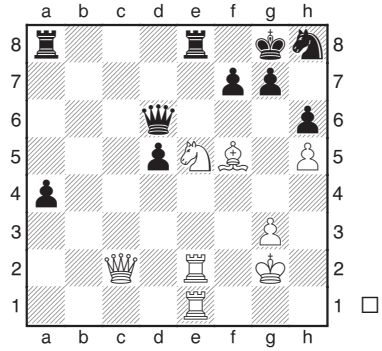
37...Rxf1+!

The rook takes the f1-bishop with check to deflect the king; the other rook enters d1 and the bishop takes on e4, pinning the f3-queen against the king.

· 38. Kxf1 Rd1+ 39. Kg2 Bxe4

37. Carlsen – Harikrishna

Norway Chess, Stavanger 2016 · classical



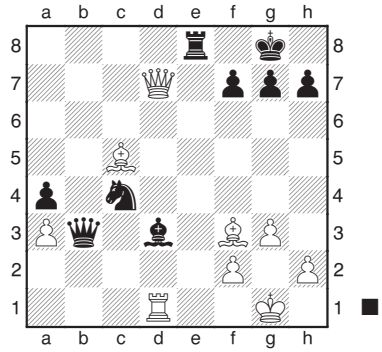
37.Bh7+!

The bishop is given up on h7 with check. If 37...Kxh7, Nxf7+ is a discovered check from the c2-queen and wins the d6-queen; after 37...Kf8 the knight and queen carry the attack to mate.

· 37...Kf8 38. Nd7+ Qxd7 39. Qc5+

38. So – Carlsen

Grand Chess Tour (blitz), Paris 2016



28...Qxd1+!

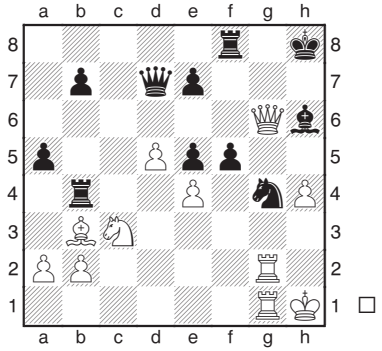
A queen sacrifice on d1: the e8-rook enters e1 with check and the white king is caught in a mating net.

· 29. Bxd1 Re1+ 30. Kg2 Bf1+ 31. Kf3

· 29. Kg2 Qf1#

39. Carlsen – Karjakin

Masters Final, Bilbao 2016 · classical



40.Rxg4!

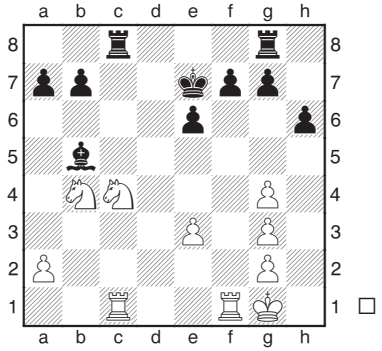
An exchange sacrifice: the rook eliminates the g4-knight. If 40...fxg4 41.Qxh6+ Kg8 42.d6+ is a discovered check from the b3-bishop. It also threatens Qxh6 mate.

· 40...fxg4 41. Qxh6+ Kg8 42. d6+

· 40...Qd6 41. exf5

40. Carlsen – Ghaem Maghami

Olympiad, Baku 2016 · classical



25.Rxf7+!

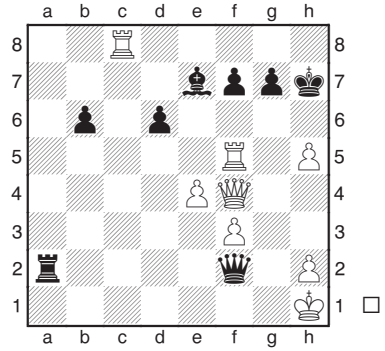
The rook is given up on f7 to decoy the king: the knight checks on d6 and wins the c8-rook.

· 25...Kxf7 26. Nd6+ Kf6 27. Nxc8

· 25...Ke8 26. Nd6+ Kd8 27. Rxc8#

41. Carlsen – Karjakin

World Championship, rapid tiebreak, New York 2016



50.Qh6+!

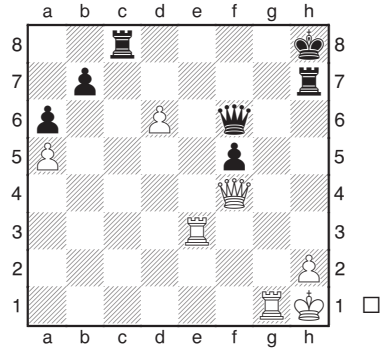
A queen sacrifice on h6: if the king takes, the rook mates on h8; if the pawn takes, the rook mates on f7.

· 50...Kxh6 51. Rh8#

· 50...gxh6 51. Rxf7#

42. Carlsen – Vidit

World Rapid Championship, Doha 2016



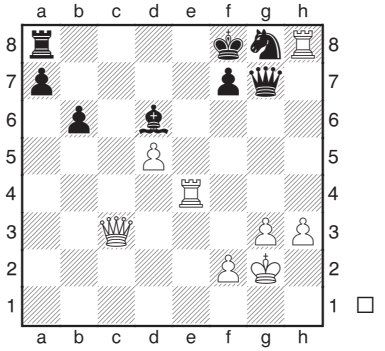
43.Re6!

The rook enters e6 attacking the queen, which has no good squares, and Black cannot cover the queen, the eighth rank and the advance of the d6-pawn at the same time.

· 43...Qc3 44. d7 Rf8 45. Rh6

43. Carlsen – Karjakin

Norway Chess, Stavanger 2017 · classical



44.Rxg8+!

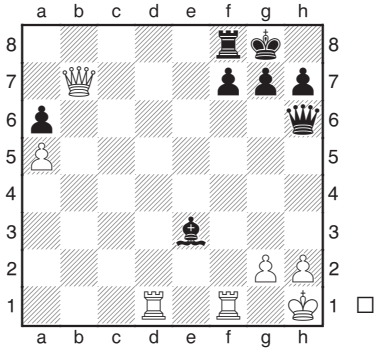
The rook takes the g8-knight and the other rook goes to g4, pinning the black queen against the king.

· 44...Kxg8 45. Rg4

· 44...Qxg8 45. Qf6 Bc5 46. Rg4

44. Carlsen – Nepomniachtchi

Grand Chess Tour (blitz), Leuven 2017



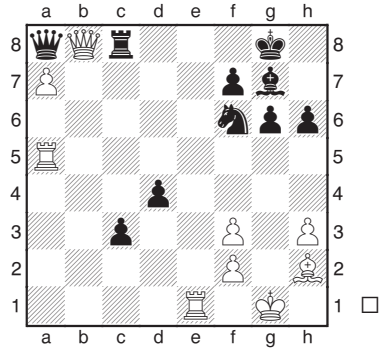
34.Qxf7+!

A queen sacrifice on f7: the d1-rook enters d8 and the two rooks mate on the eighth rank.

· 34...Rxf7 35. Rd8+ Rf8 36. Rfxf8#

· 34...Kh8 35. Qxf8#

45. Carlsen – Akobian
World Blitz Championship, Riyadh 2017

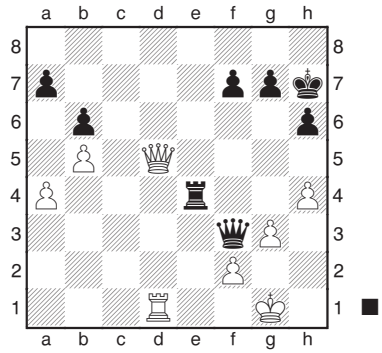


34.Qxc8+!

The queen is given up on c8 to eliminate the rook that controlled the eighth rank: the a7-pawn promotes and, after the exchanges, White is a rook up.

· 34...Qxc8 35. a8=Q Qxa8 36. Rxa8+

46. Mamedyarov – Carlsen
World Blitz Championship, Riyadh 2017

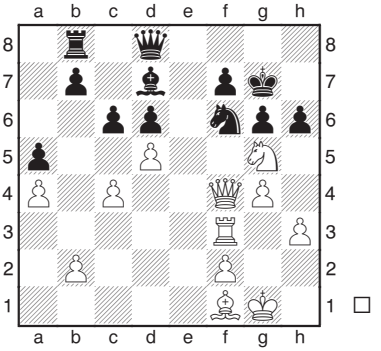


38...Re1+!

The rook is given up with check on e1 to deflect the d1-rook, which was defending the queen on d5.

· 39. Rxe1 Qxd5

47. Carlsen – Aronian
Norway Chess, Stavanger 2018 · classical

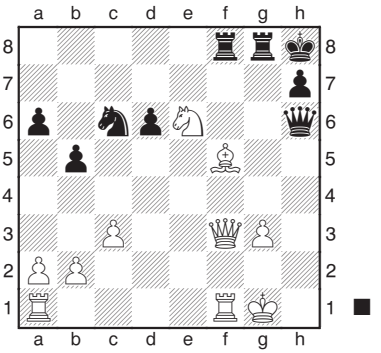


29.Ne4!

The knight is offered on e4 to deflect the f6-knight, which guards f7. If 29...Nxe4, the queen enters f7 with check backed by the f3-rook and then takes on g6.

· 29...Nxe4 30. Qxf7+ Kh8 31. Qxg6

48. Topalov – Carlsen
Grand Chess Tour (blitz), Abidjan 2019



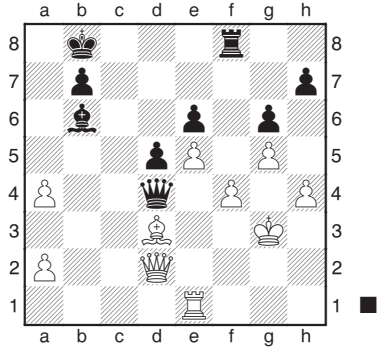
27...Rxf5!

The rook is given up on f5 so that the other rook enters g3 with check and the queen mates on e3.

· 28. Qxf5 Rxg3+ 29. Kf2 Qe3#

49. Anand – Carlsen

Norway Chess (blitz), Stavanger 2019



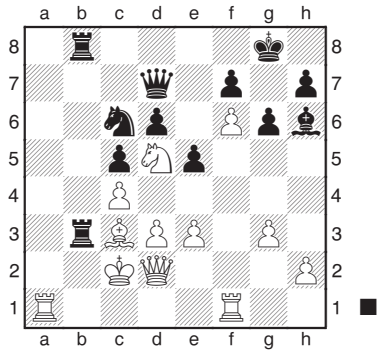
41...Ba5!

The bishop attacks the d2-queen, which was the piece defending the d3-bishop and the e1-rook. If 42.Qxa5 Qxd3+.

· 42. Qxa5 Qxd3+

50. Aronian – Carlsen

Tata Steel India (blitz), Kolkata 2019



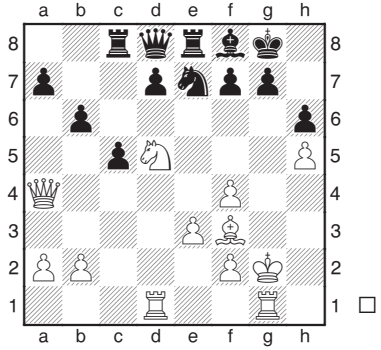
24...Nd4+!

The knight is given up with check on d4 to open the c-file and the h6-bishop's diagonal against e3 and d2: then ...e4 opens even more lines against the white king.

· 25. Bxd4 cxd4 26. Ra2 e4!

51. Carlsen – Socko

World Blitz Championship, Moscow 2019



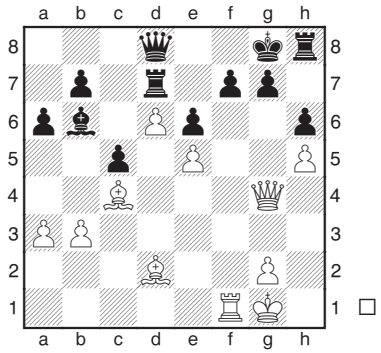
21.Nf6+!

The knight lands on f6 with check to deflect the g7-pawn and win the unprotected d7-bishop.

· 21...gxf6 22. Rxd7

52. Carlsen – Fedoseev

World Cup, Sochi 2021 · classical



36.Rxf7!

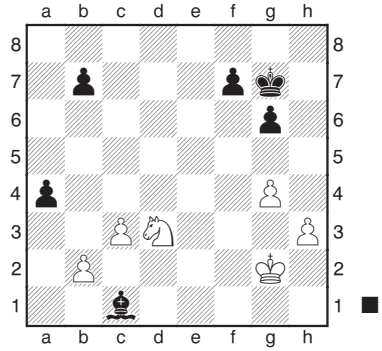
The rook takes on f7 to open the black king; it also threatens Qxg7 mate. If 36...Kxf7, the bishop enters e6 with check, and if 36... Rxf7, 37.Qxe6 and the d6-pawn advances.

· 36...Rxf7 37. Qxe6 Qf8 38. d7 Bc7 39. Qe8

· 36...Kxf7 37. Bxe6+ Ke8 38. Qg6+ Kf8 39. Bxd7 Qxd7 40. e6

53. Shimanov – Carlsen

World Blitz Championship, Almaty 2022



42...Bxb2!

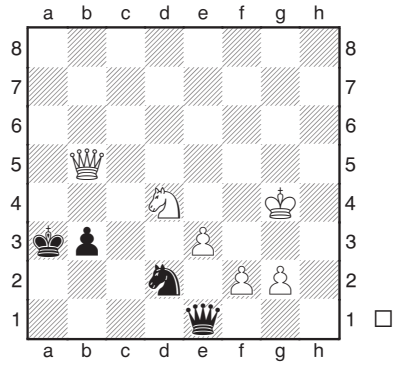
The bishop is given up on b2 so that the a4-pawn promotes: the knight arrives too late.

· 43. Nxb2 a3

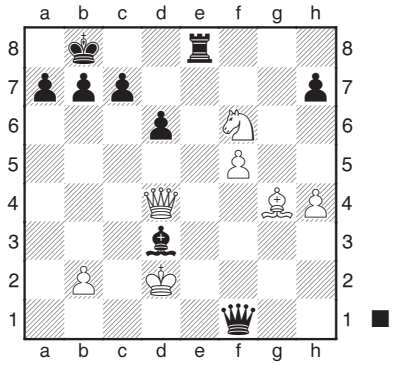
Chapter 4

After the crown (2023-2026)

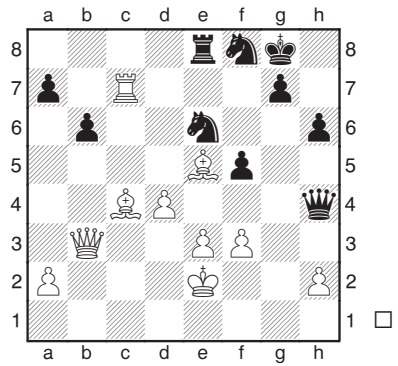
In 2022 he announces that he will not defend the title, and in 2023 he is no longer world champion, though he remains number one. Free from the pressure of the championship, he plays with the joy of his early years, in classical, rapid and team events.



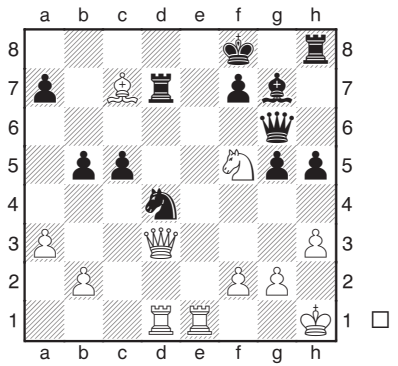
54. Carlsen – So, 2023



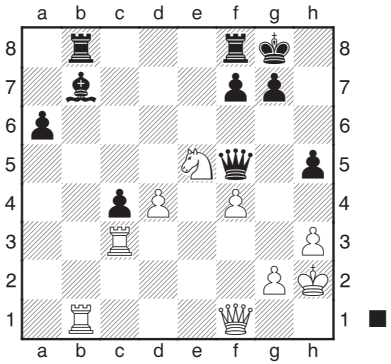
55. Nakamura – Carlsen, 2023



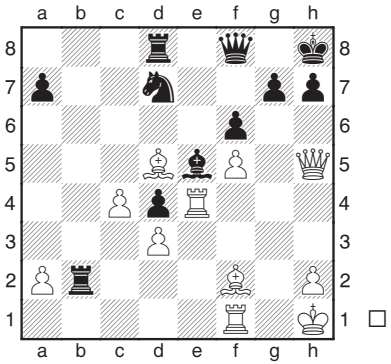
56. Carlsen – Gukesh, 2023



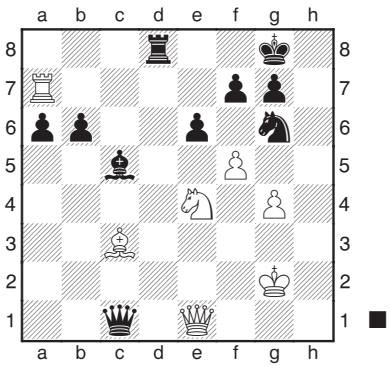
57. Carlsen – Pantsulaia, 2023



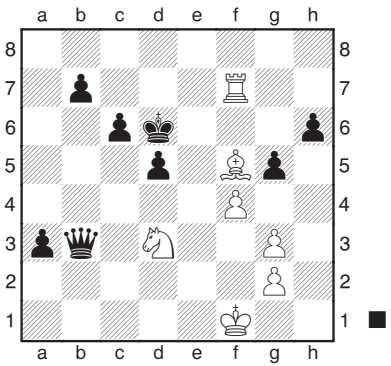
58. Indjic – Carlsen, 2023



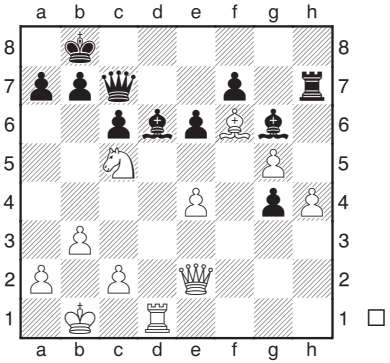
59. Carlsen – Ding Liren, 2024



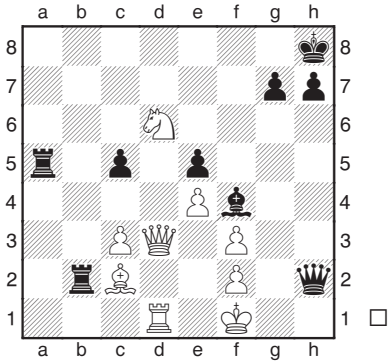
60. García Pantoja – Carlsen, 2024



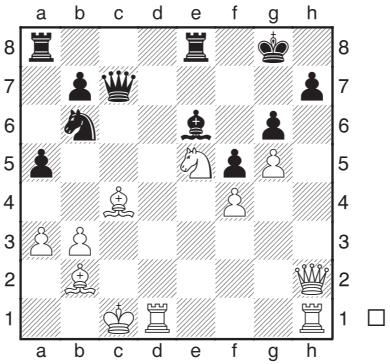
61. Le Quang Liem – Carlsen, 2024



62. Carlsen – Praggnanandhaa, 2024



63. Carlsen – Pranav Anand, 2025

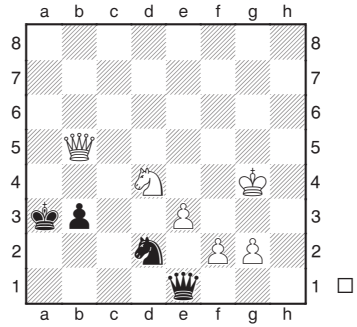


64. Carlsen – Megaranto, 2026

Solutions to chapter 4

54. Carlsen – So

Superbet (blitz), Warsaw 2023



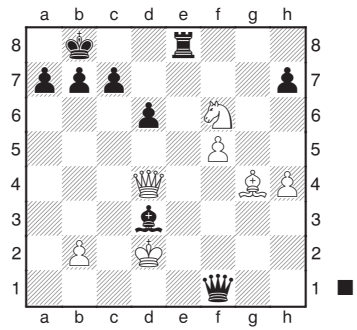
55.Qxb3+!

The queen is given up on b3 so that the knight forks on c2 and wins the e1-queen. The knight ending three pawns up is winning.

· 55...Nxb3 56. Nc2+ Kb2 57. Nxe1

55. Nakamura – Carlsen

Norway Chess, Stavanger 2023 · Armageddon



40...Re2+!

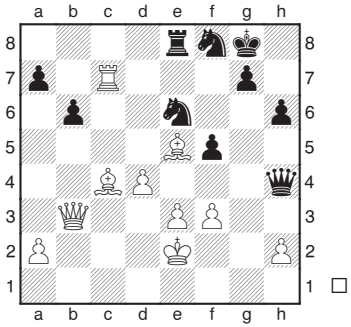
The rook is given up on e2 with check: the queen gives a series of checks and the c7-pawn advances with check to win the queen on d4.

· 41. Kxd3 Qd1+ 42. Kc3 Qc2+ 43. Kb4 c5+ 44. Ka3 cxd4

· 41. Bxe2 Qxe2+ 42. Kc3 Qc2+ 43. Kb4 c5+ 44. Ka3 cxd4

56. Carlsen – Gukesh

SuperUnited (blitz), Zagreb 2023



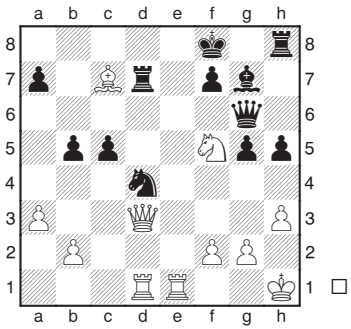
40.Rxg7+!

The rook is given up on g7 with check to open the long diagonal for the e5-bishop: with the queen and the c4-bishop the attack ends in mate.

· 40...Kh8 41. Re7+ Qf6 42. Bxf6+ Ng7 43. Bxg7+

57. Carlsen – Pantsulaia

World Cup, Baku 2023 · classical



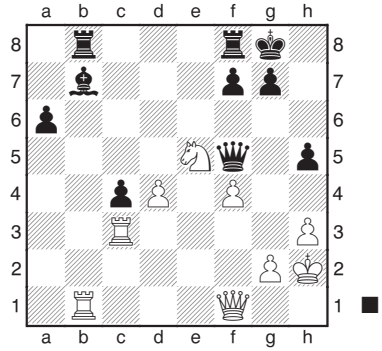
29.Re8+!

The rook is given up on e8 with check to decoy the king: the queen enters e4 and a8 with checks and mate comes on the eighth rank.

· 29...Kxe8 30. Qe4+ Ne6 31. Qa8+ Nd8 32. Qxd8+ Rxd8 33. Rxd8#

58. Indjic – Carlsen

World Blitz Championship, Samarkand 2023



30...Bxg2!

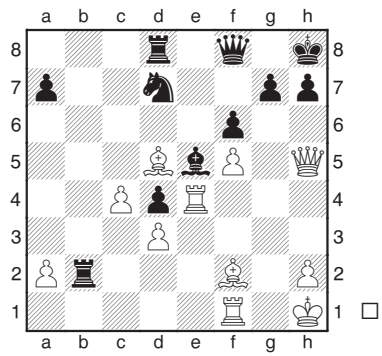
The bishop is given up on g2, opening the b-file for the b8-rook; at the same time it attacks the f1-queen, which was defending the b1-rook. Black wins a rook.

· 31. Kxg2 Rxb1 32. Qxc4 Qxf4

· 31. Qxg2 Rxb1

59. Carlsen – Ding Liren

Norway Chess, Stavanger 2024 · classical



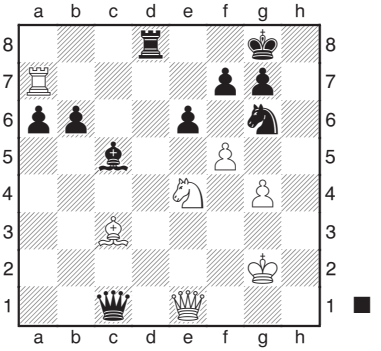
30.Qxh7+!

A queen sacrifice on h7: the king must take and the rook mates on h4.

· 30...Kxh7 31. Rh4#

60. García Pantoja – Carlsen

Olympiad, Budapest 2024 · classical



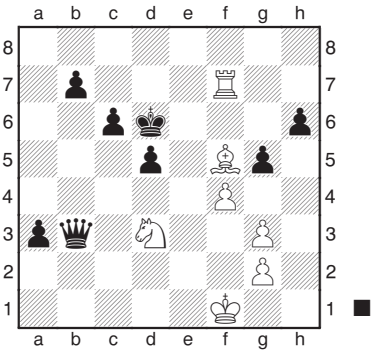
37...Nh4+!

The knight is given up on h4 with check to deflect the white queen: the black queen enters g1 and the rook d3 with mate.

· 38. Qxh4 Qg1+ 39. Kf3 Rd3+ 40. Ke2 Qd1#

61. Le Quang Liem – Carlsen

Olympiad, Budapest 2024 · classical



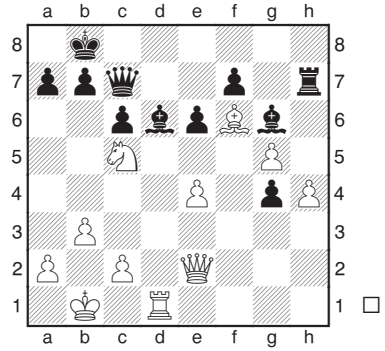
42...Qxd3+!

The queen is given up on d3 to eliminate the knight that controlled b2 and c1: the light-squared bishop cannot stop the a3-pawn, which promotes on a1.

· 43. Bxd3 a2

62. Carlsen – Praggnanandhaa

Tata Steel India (blitz), Kolkata 2024



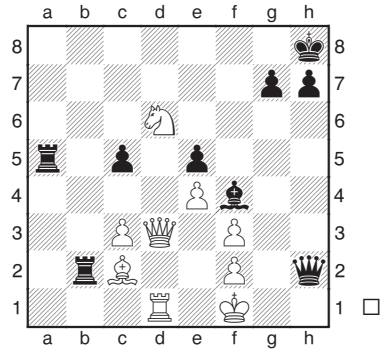
26.Rxd6!

The rook eliminates the d6-bishop. If 26... Qxd6, 27.Be5! deflects the queen to e5, where the knight wins it with a fork on d7.

· 26...Qxd6 27. Be5 Qxe5 28. Nd7+

63. Carlsen – Pranav Anand

World Blitz Championship, Doha 2025



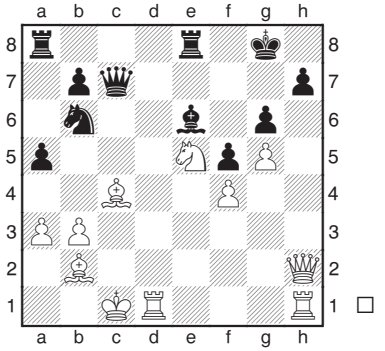
32.Nf7+!

The knight is given up on f7 with check to decoy the king: the queen and rook deliver mate.

· 32...Kg8 33. Qd8+ Kxf7 34. Qd7+ Kf8 35. Qf5+ Ke7 36. Rd7+ Ke8 37. Qf7#

64. Carlsen – Megaranto

World Blitz Team Championship, Hong Kong 2026



28.Rd7!

The rook goes to d7, cutting the seventh rank: the c7-queen no longer defends h7 and White threatens Qxh7+ and Nxg6 mate.

· 28...Qxd7 29. Nxd7

· 28...Re7 29. Rxe7 Qxe7 30. Bxe6+

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