

## The Book of Checks

### *The Force Be With You!*

Chess leaves little room for error. The quickest way to pressure an opponent towards a mistake is to use force. In life, force is the most uncomfortable to those being forced. So it is in chess. Force in chess has many levels. But the most common and effective is one that makes your opponent follow the rules of the game. For instance a pawn cannot go three squares. A force of the rules is at work here. It prevents a piece from doing something because the rules won't allow it. A force of the rules in life is known as the law. You know you can't break the law. The chess law prevents a pawn from taking a pawn or piece directly in front of it. The law forces a Knight to only move in an "L". Bishops, Rooks and Queens can only move in straight lines and so on.

### **Check! The ultimate law:**

The King cannot be captured. It is forced by law to escape check or the game ends with that King's side losing.

Because of this we will examine the many types of checks and the levels of force they exert.

Each check has a category rating like tornados.

1. The Long Range Check
2. The Knight Check
3. The Discovered Check
4. The In Your Face Check
5. The Double Check

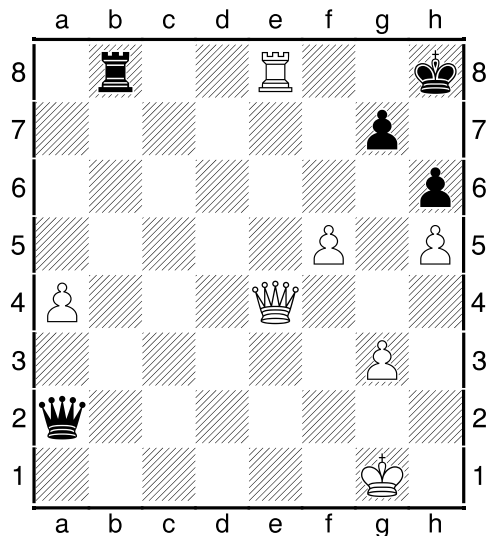
#### **1. The Long Range Check**

This is a category 1 check. It is the only check where the King alone is under attack and has all three options to escape check.

- A. Attack
- B. Block
- C. Chicken run away!

This check is always performed by a Bishop, Rook or Queen. Pawns and Knights cannot perform this type of

check because they are too close.



The White Rook just moved to e8. He sees the Black King on h7 therefore it is check. Since there is more than one square between them it is a Long Range Check. The Black King has all three options.

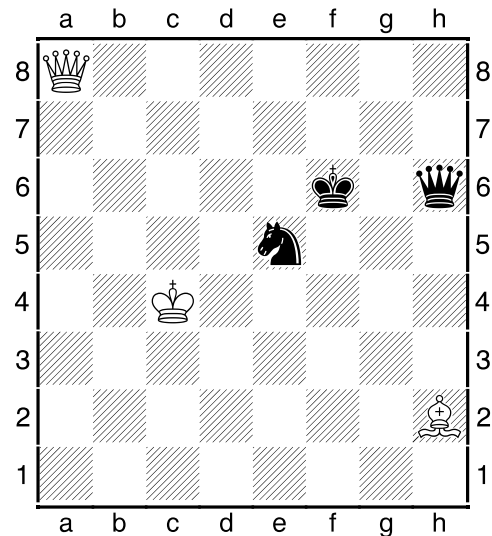
- A. Attack Rxe8!
- B. Block Qg8??
- C. Chicken run away to Kh7??

Only 1...Rxe8 makes sense.  
1...Qg8 loses the Queen to 2. Rxg8 and 1...Kh7 loses to 2. f6+ and mate in one.

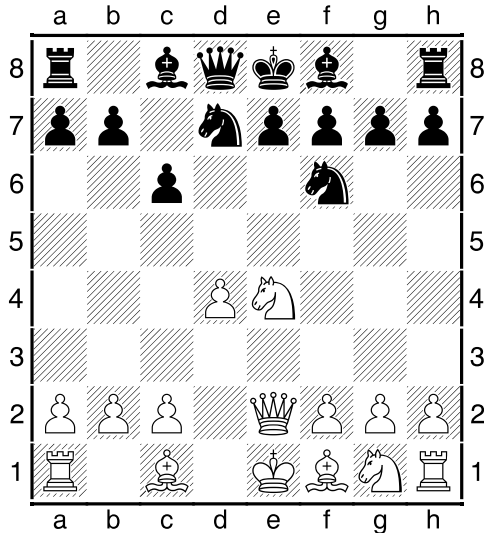
## 2. The Knight Check

This is a category 2 check.  
The reason this check usually

is bad is because of the nature of how a Knight moves and the simple fact that a Knight check cannot be blocked. They can only be attacked or run away from.



Black's Knight moved to e5 which is an "L" shape away from the White King, check. White can capture the Knight with his Bishop or run away to any square except d3. The White Queen is helpless. Knights are notorious forkers. Because of this they can fly in and devastate the material count in a single blow. Knights also spring some beautiful discovered checks.



This is a very famous mate in one problem from an actual game. Grandmaster Paul Keres of Estonia sprung this one on move 6 in a game he played in 1952. I'll respectfully leave out his victim's name. Keres moved his Knight to d6! Wham! The poor Black King is mated. It is called a Smothered Mate. He is surrounded by his own pieces and only the pawn on e7 is in a position to capture on d6. However the poor guy is pinned to his King by the White Queen on e2. The White Knight discovered the x-ray attack by the Queen when he moved to d6. An X-ray attack is when a piece is looking at another piece that

is behind one or more pieces which are blocking the view. In this case the Queen is looking through the White Knight on e4 and the Black pawn on e7 right at the Black King.

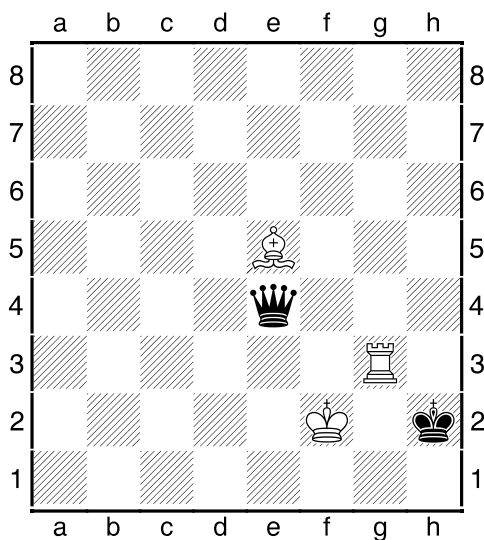
### 3. The Discovered Check

This is a category 3 check.

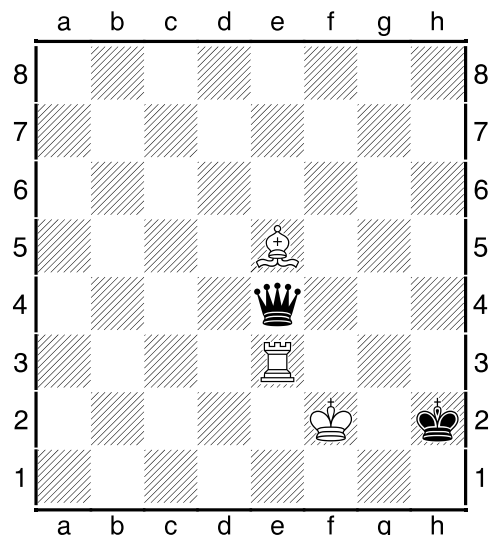
Any piece can cause a discovered check but only a Bishop, Rook or Queen can actually deliver the check. Confusing? You bet!

Definition: Discovered Check. When a piece moves and by doing so, opens up a line allowing the piece behind it to see and check the enemy King. All discovered checks involve an X-ray attack. The moving piece usually moves off to attack something very valuable since the enemy King will now be busy getting out of check. I call this tactic the airplane-bomb trick or Dive Bomber Chess! The moving piece is the airplane and the checking piece is the bomb. The poor King is in check and he has to get out of check. The airplane has flown off to

inflict damage on a more valuable piece. Remember the check is only the diversion albeit a forced diversion while you go off and attack another piece.



Look carefully at the White pieces. A Bishop is trying to check the Black King but the Rook is in the way. When the Rook moves the Black King will now be in check and have to get out of check. The Rook then has a wonderful opportunity. Move to the best possible square and attack something big. The bigger the better. In this position Black's Queen is the likely target. Is this attack going to work? Let's see how the discovered check is delivered.



The rook moves to e3!!  
Attacking the Black Queen and the Black King is discovered to be in check by the White Bishop. Black's King has all three options. All are bad.

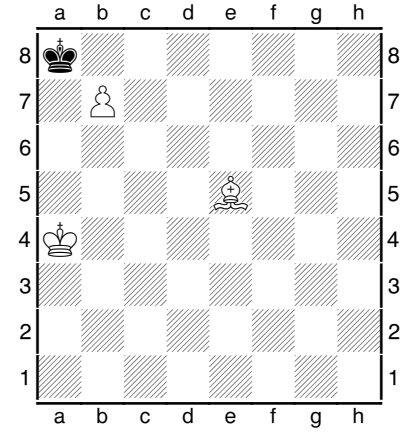
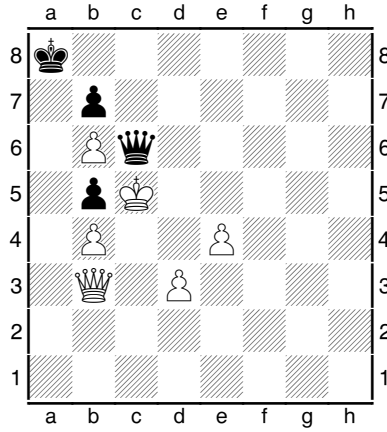
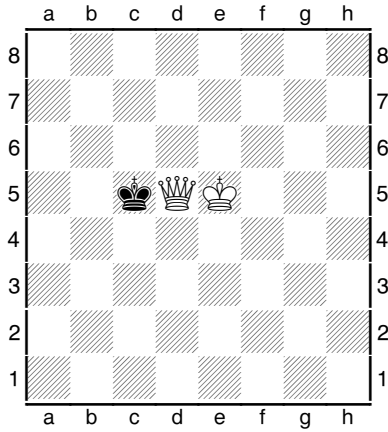
- a. Attack 1...Qxe5
- b. Block 1...Qf4
- c. Chicken 1...Kh1

- A. 1...Qe5  
2. RxQ
- B. 1...Qf4  
2. BxQ
- C. 1...Kh1 (The best hope.)  
2. Rh3#  
If White takes the Queen?? Stalemate!

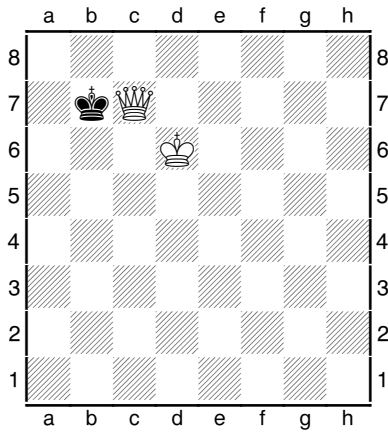


# In Your Face Checks!

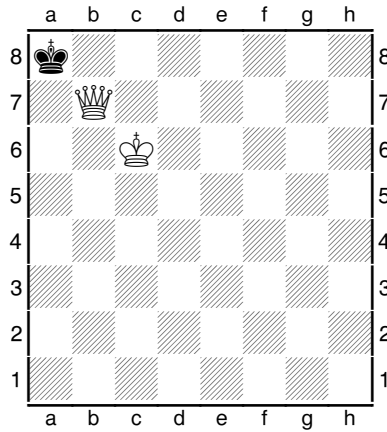
Examples:



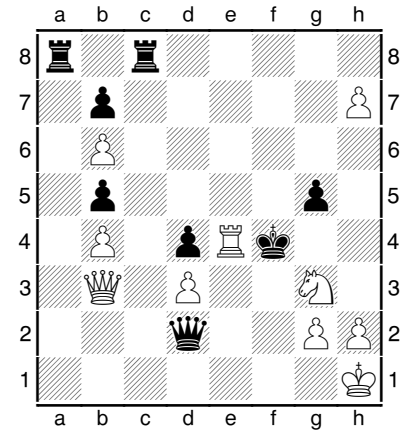
### The Classical Check



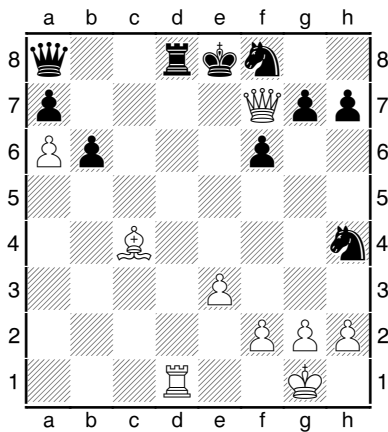
### The Classical Check



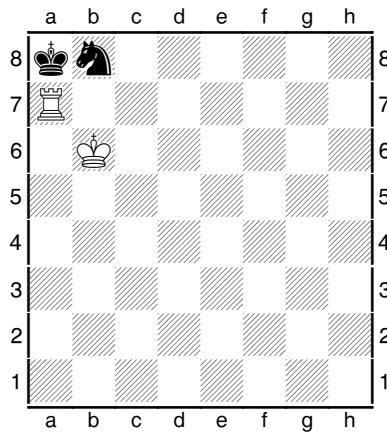
### Pawn Kiss on the check.



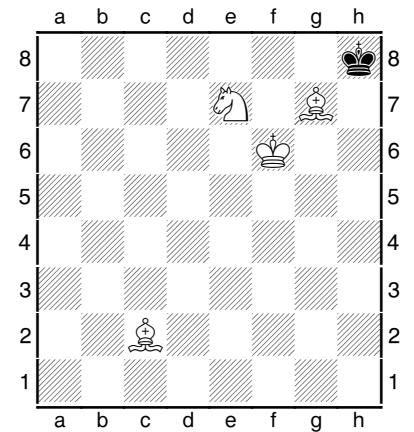
### The Classical Check



### The Cornered Mate



### The Brick in the Face



### The Peck on the Cheek

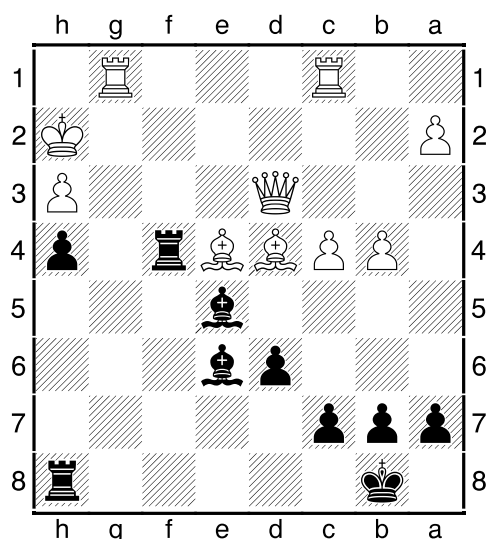
### The Brick in the Face

### The Pope's Blessing

The in your face check can be quite painful and in many cases is used simply to herd the King to a more unfavorable square.

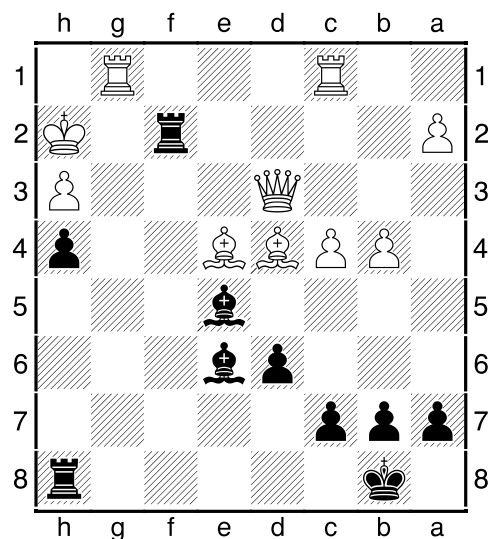
### 5. The Double Check

This is a category 5 check. Finally we come upon the rarest and most powerful of checks. The thing that makes this check more deadly than all the others is the fact that the opposing King will have only one way to get out. He must use Chicken Run Away. There is no time to Attack one check because of the other check. And blocking also fails for the same reason.



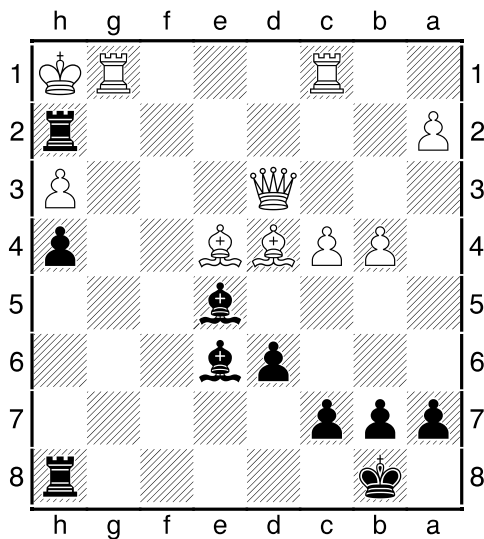
This position shows Black ready to let lose a powerful category 5 check. Notice the

Bishop on e5 aiming at the White King. In the way is his Rook. We know this allows a discovered check and the Rook is free to attack whom ever he wants. For instance Rook f3 would win the White Queen. But is the Queen all you want? Look at the White King. Poor guy is in check and winning the Queen loses both a Rook and Bishop for the Queen. But if the Rook goes just one square further to f2 then the powerful storm begins.



Wham! The White King has to absorb two checks at once. His only legal move is Kh1. White can't take out the Rook with his Bishop on d4 because the Black Bishop would still be

checking the White King. White, for the same reason, cannot block the Black Rook with his own Rook. He cannot take the Black Bishop on e5 either because the Black Rook is checking his King. So White moves Kh1. And the Black Rook slides over to checkmate.



You now have seen the power of the double check. There is an old saying in chess. "Always check it might be mate." This basically means before you move look further at the checks you have just in case you have a chance to end the game right away. In the above problem Black did just that. He chose not to attack the White Queen but deliver a

second check on the Black King to deliver a mate.

### Practice problems:

There are 48 problems for each type of check. Find the best move that puts the opposing king in check.

001-048 Long Range Checks

049-096 Knight Checks

097-144 Discovered Checks

145-192 In Your Face Checks

193-240 Double Checks

241-300 Assorted Checks

### Problem Rules:

As in all my diagrams I will always orientate the board by whose move it is. If it is White to move then a1 will be in the lower left corner and you will be looking from White's side of the board. If it is Black to move then h8 will be in the lower left corner and you will be looking from Black's side of the board.

### Problem Hints:

Just remember, "Always check it might be mate".