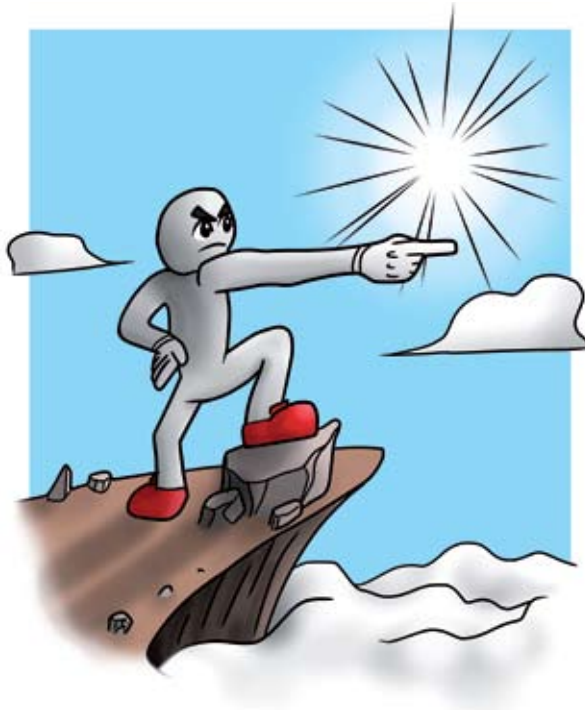


GLENN FLEAR

TACTIMANIA

Find the Winning Combination



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Introduction



Tactimania simply means ‘passion for tactics’.

If you enjoy chess, especially tactical chess, and you would like to improve this aspect of your game, then Tactimania is for you! Indeed, my main intention is to help the reader develop his experience and ‘gut-feeling’ for tactics, by solving chess puzzles.

Chess can be great fun, but also a learning experience and I hope that you find this book of chess puzzles to be both. All players who have already learned the moves and played a few friendly games should be able to benefit. Experienced players will also find some testing material towards the end of each chapter and especially in the latter part of the book, so the book is aimed at just about everybody in the chess world.

The game of chess is full of tactics which can be described as ‘threats, opportunities and short-term ideas that require calculation’. These merit particular attention if one wants to improve. Fortunately tactical themes are a most delightful aspect of the game and one can learn whilst enjoying oneself, that is, if the right sort of material is available.

I have relied on my own chess experiences in my search for less well-known examples. So the vast majority of the positions are from my own games, with the remainder from my wife’s.

In order to give a good idea of the level of difficulty, each puzzle is classified according to one of the following three categories:

Apprentice	★
Advanced student	★★
Expert	★★★

The chapters, especially the early ones, have definite themes, so this may help you focus your thoughts and perhaps give you some clues in order to get going.

So whatever your playing strength, I suggest that you start at the beginning of each chapter and then take it from there!

It is generally accepted that experienced players have a tendency to recognize patterns and themes more readily. This ability then enables them to better navigate positions requiring tactical calculation. So it follows that if you increase your exposure to positions requiring ‘a combination’, you will be better armed to find the move that can make all the difference!

If you are not familiar with the terminology used in the tactical environment, don’t despair, it will become clear as you read through the chapters.

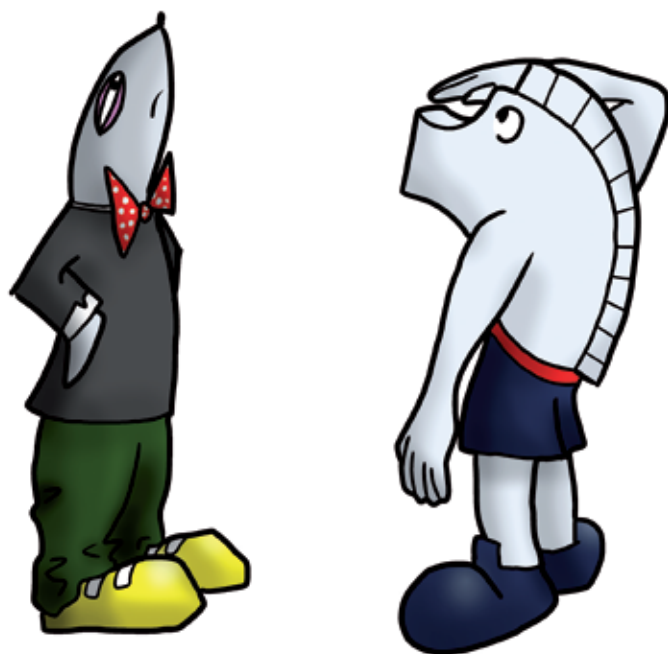
A final point before delving into the exercises. I personally find the use of colour or illustrations in a chess book adds the icing to the cake, so I was enthusiastic about including both of these!

I hope you too appreciate the humour and creativity of the artist, James Flear, my eldest son. In fact the book is a family effort all round, as my wife Christine has helped out with many aspects of the book including the translation in the French edition.

Glenn Flear
Baillargues, France
March 2011

Chapter One

Mate is in the Air!



Checkmate is the principal objective of the game of chess, so it seems like a reasonable place to start.

In this chapter, seeking a possible mate will never be far from our thoughts. So in each of the puzzles that follow below, your aim will be to determine a way to dethrone the opposing monarch. When we sit down at the board we dream of inflicting this ultimate punishment. However, for this to become a reality, we often have to aim for and accumulate lesser advantages before launching into a mating attack.

A player who exclusively aims for mate is not successful very often. In general, it is necessary for him to place his pieces on active, then more aggressive squares, and perhaps win some material along the way before turning his attention to Checkmate. Once the right conditions have been achieved he can start to calculate to see if a direct mate is possible.

It may help to bear in mind that each 'soft spot' in the opposing camp can be a tactical weakness, and these can be fatal when concerning those defences near the king.

In each case you may find it useful to ask yourself the following question: How can I exploit any vulnerability in the opposing team's defences?

You will soon note that each exercise is classified by a number of stars.

The early ones in the chapter have one star (★). These particular puzzles will generally require two or three moves of calculation.

Naturally, those puzzles denoted by (★★) will require rather more attention. Either the combination is longer, or perhaps involves more finesse.

In the more difficult cases, towards the end of the chapter denoted by (★★★), you will often need to weave a web to ensnare the opposing king. This may take longer and will generally involve making a series of threats that ultimately leads to the creation of a mating net.

Before getting down to some serious solving, here are a couple of examples to demonstrate what is expected and also, hopefully, to whet your appetite! Sometimes the mate is forced, as in the first example:

G. Flear – P. Genov
San Sebastian 2006

52. ♖h8† ♔g6 53. ♚xd6† ♔f7 54. ♖f8#

In other cases, with best play, the defender can actually avoid being mated, but nevertheless the threats are sufficiently strong to give the attacking side a winning game.

K. Terrieux – G. Flear
Guingamp 2008

28. ♖c7! ♖xb5

After 28... ♗xc7 29. ♘xc7 mate is a long way off, but Black is obviously in trouble.

Otherwise, 28... ♔d8 resists a little longer: 29. ♖fc1 ♖xb5 (29... ♖xb3 30. ♖c8† ♔e7 31. ♖1c7 ♖b2† 32. ♔f3 ♖b3† 33. ♔g4 and Black is in a mating net) 30. ♖c8† ♔e7 31. axb5 ♖h2† 32. ♔g1 ♖b2 33. ♖1c7 ♗xc7 (to avoid the mate following ♗f6†) 34. ♖xc7 ♔d8, but White is clearly winning.

29. ♗f6†

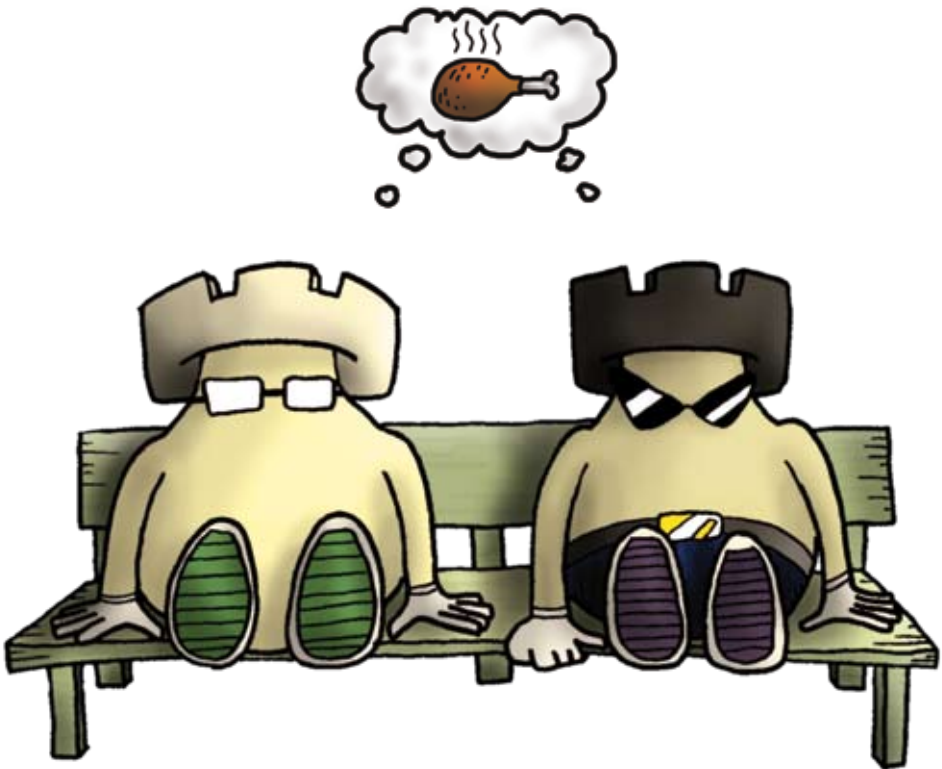
The knight is pinned.

29... ♔e8 30. ♖c8†

And mate next move.

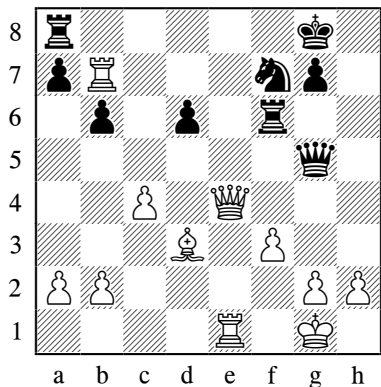
1-0

Are you really ready?

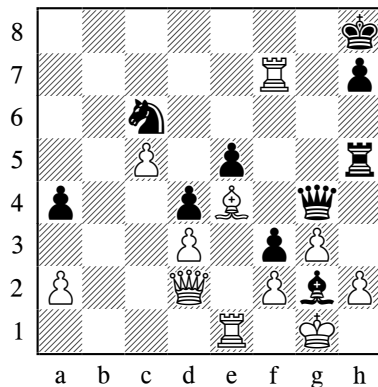


Exercises

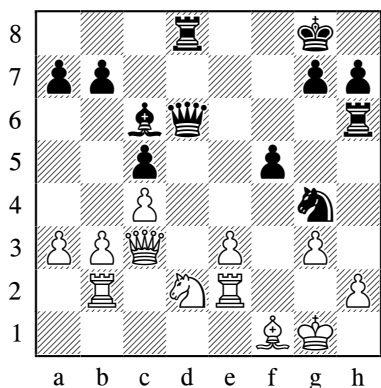
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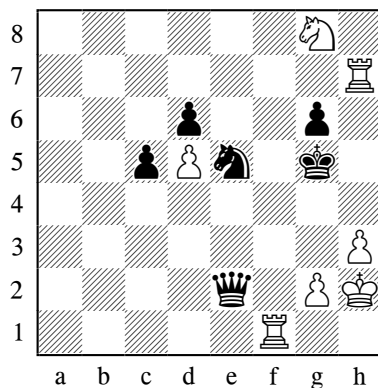
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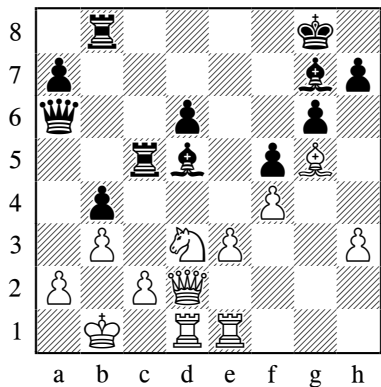
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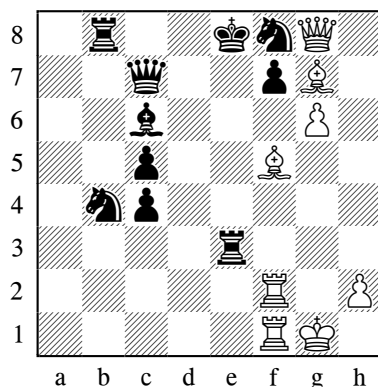
1-5



1-3



1-6



1-1 G. Flear – R. Borchert
Griesbach-im-Rottal 1983

25.♖e8† ♜xe8 26.♞xe8#

1-2 B. Mallet – G. Flear
Avoine 1985

27...♞xg3† 28.hxg3 ♞h1#

1-3 Z. Slapak – G. Flear
Cappelle-la-Grande 1986

22...♞xa2† 23.♙xa2 ♞a5† 24.♙b1 ♞a1#

1-4 M. Burgess – G. Flear
Uppingham 1987

34...♞xh2! 35.♙xf3
Or 35.♙xh2 ♞h3† 36.♙g1 ♞h1#.
35...♞h1† 36.♙xg2 ♞h3#

1-5 G. Flear – A. Jurkovic
Eichgraben 1987

43.h4† ♙g4 44.♙f6#

1-6 G. Forintos – G. Flear
Lille 1985

39...♞g3† 40.hxg3 ♞xg3† 41.♞g2 ♞xg2#

