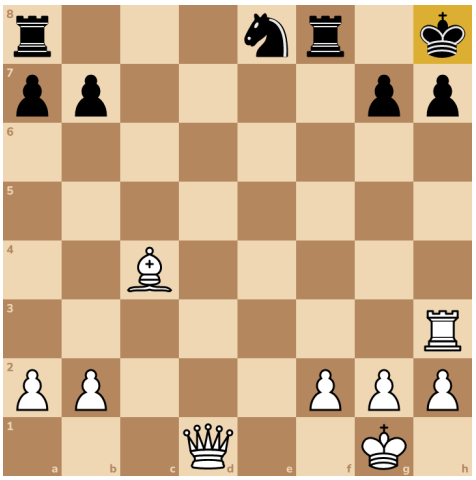
My Chess Family

Give a piece to checkmate: sacrifices for kids

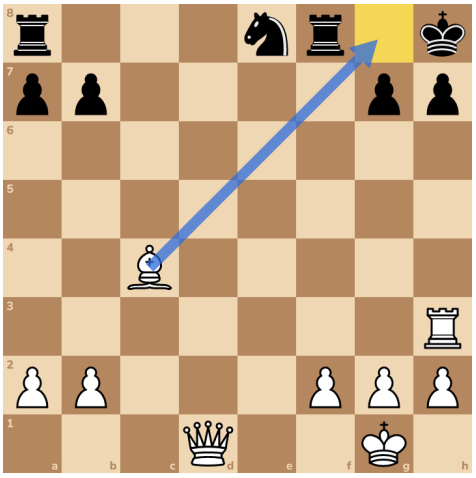
Try each question on a real board, then check the answers at the end of the sheet.

Why give a piece?

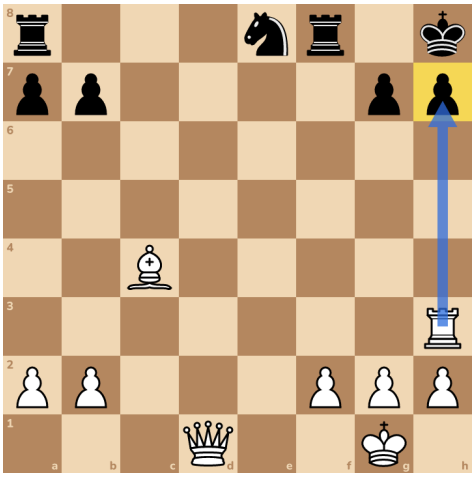
Here's a new position. You have a queen, a rook and a bishop. Black has two rooks and a knight.



Your bishop guards g8, so Black's king can't step there.



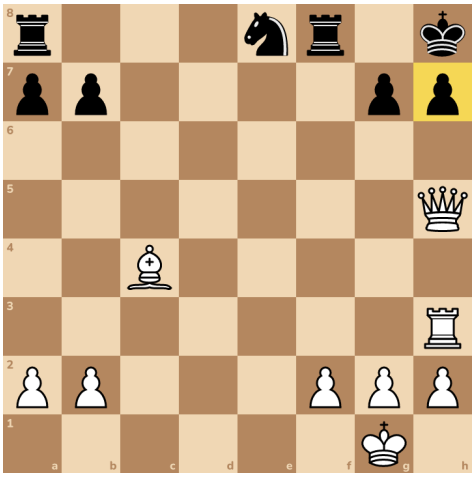
Your rook aims at h7. Only Black's king guards that pawn.



Lots of players would bring the queen to h5. It threatens Qxh7, checkmate.



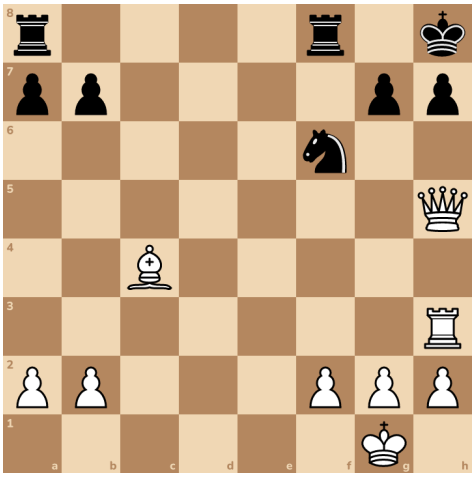
But Qh5 isn't check, so Black gets a move to guard h7.



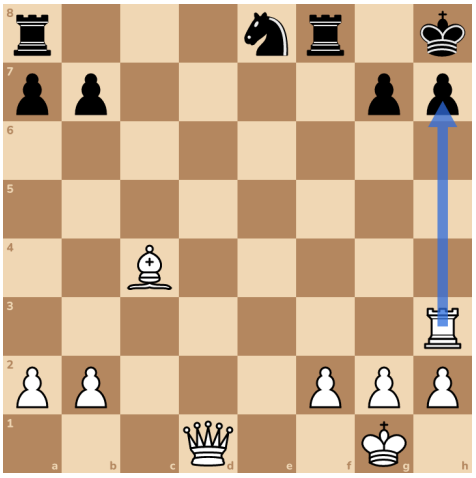
His knight jumps to f6. It guards h7 and attacks your queen.



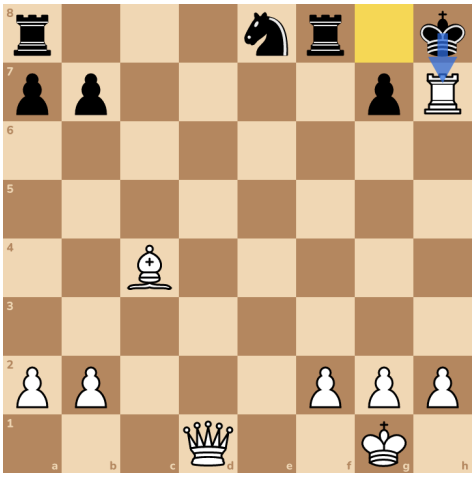
Now there's no checkmate. A check is better, because Black has to answer it. He gets no time to bring a guard.



Here's the start again. Here's a better way. Take h7 with your rook, with check!



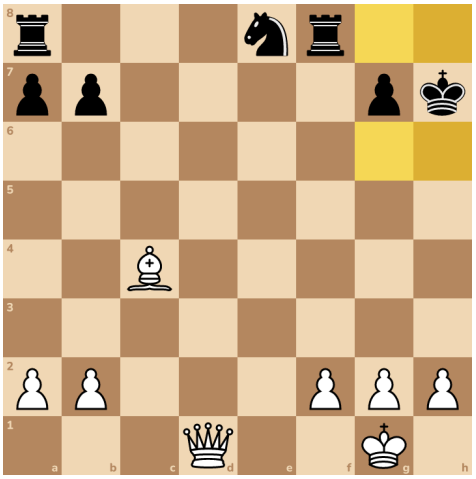
Your bishop guards g8, so his king can't step to g8. He has to take your rook.



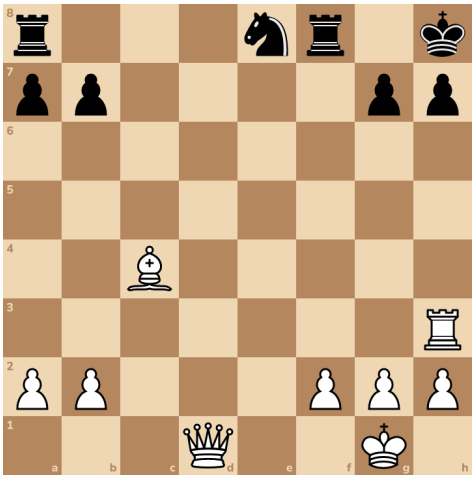
Now bring your queen to h5. If she checks from h5, it's checkmate!



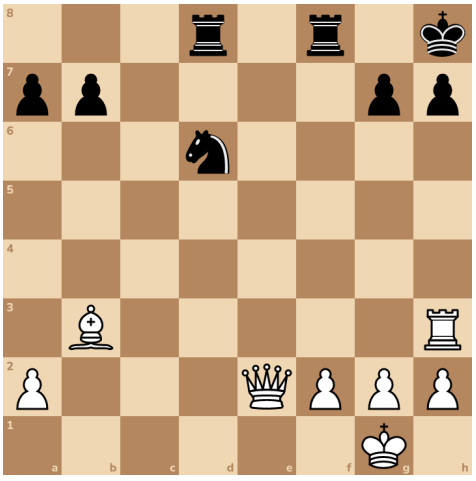
Why? Your bishop still guards g8. Your queen on h5 would guard g6 and h6. And h8 is no escape. From h5, she would check him there too.



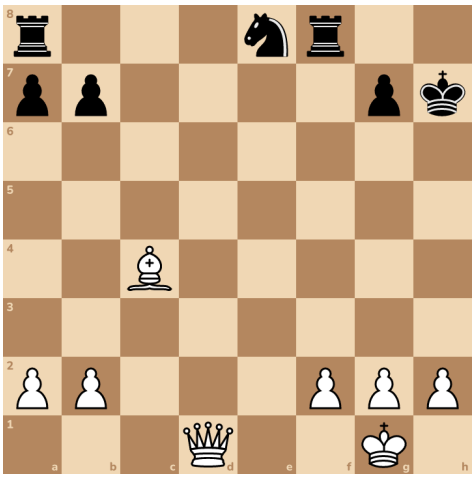
Try it 1. Your turn. Here's the start again. Take h7, with check!



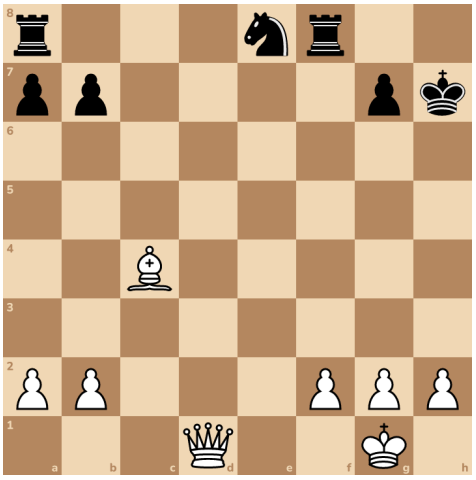
Try it 3. Here's a new position. Find the same sacrifice, then checkmate!



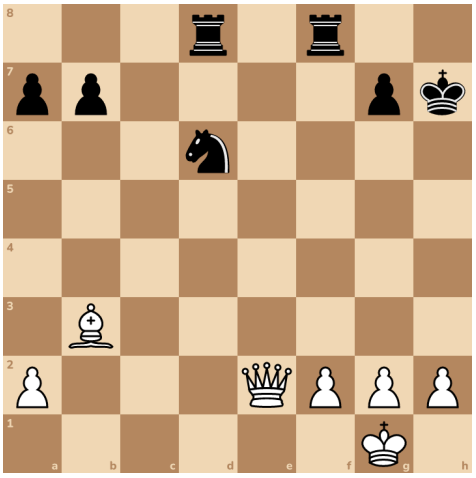
You gave up your rook, which is worth 5 points. But checkmate wins the game! Giving up a piece on purpose is called a sacrifice.



Try it 2. He took your rook. Now checkmate!



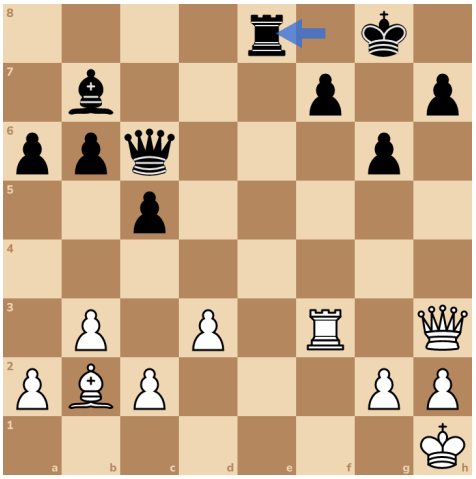
Try it 4. Checkmate!



Every move was check, so Black never had time to guard his king. Before a quiet move, look at your checks first.

Queen on h7, rook on h8

Here's a new position, from Capablanca, a world champion. Black just moved his rook from f8 to e8.



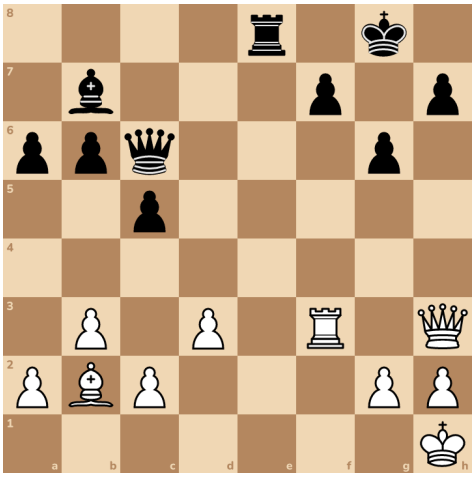
And watch Black's rook on e8. Next, Re1 is check. Your rook would have to block on f1, and Rxf1 is checkmate.



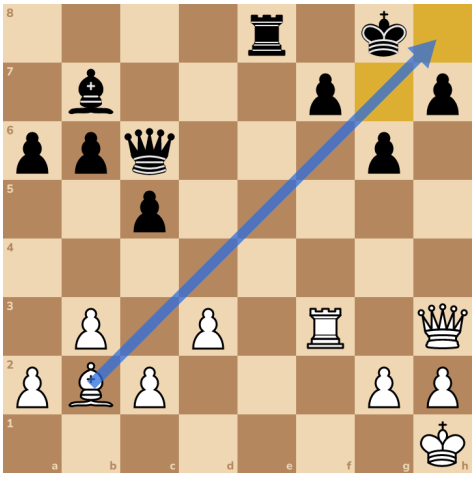
Careful! Black's queen and bishop are lined up at g2. Only your rook on f3 blocks them.



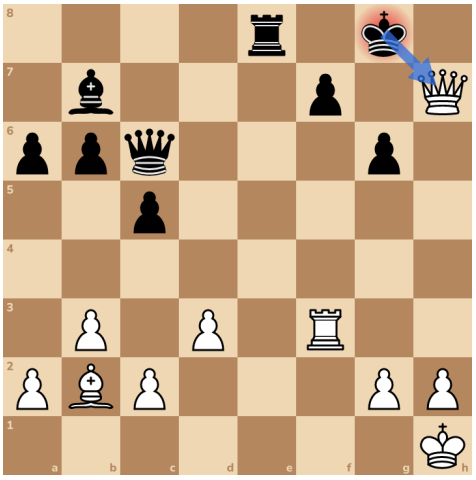
So don't wait. Attack now, with checks, so Black never gets time for that.



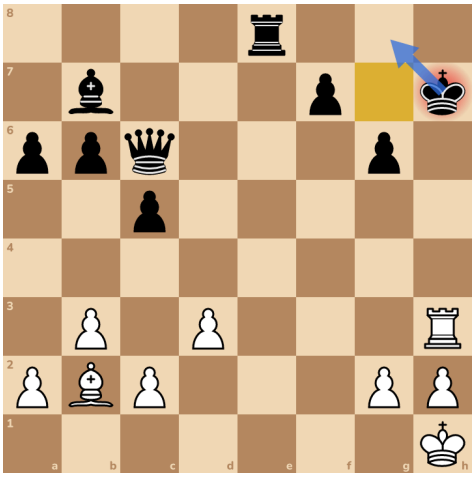
Look at your bishop on b2. It aims all the way to h8, through g7.



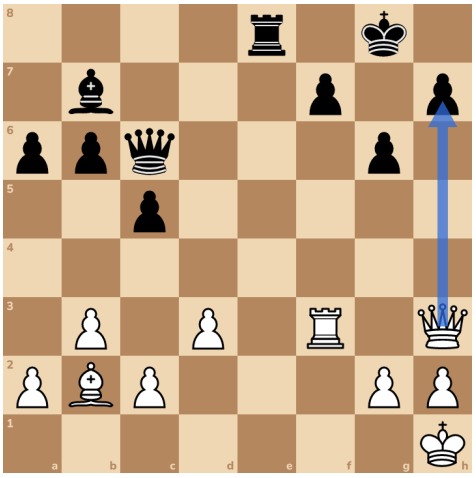
Black's king takes your queen.



His king has to go back to g8. Your bishop guards g7, so he can't go to g7.



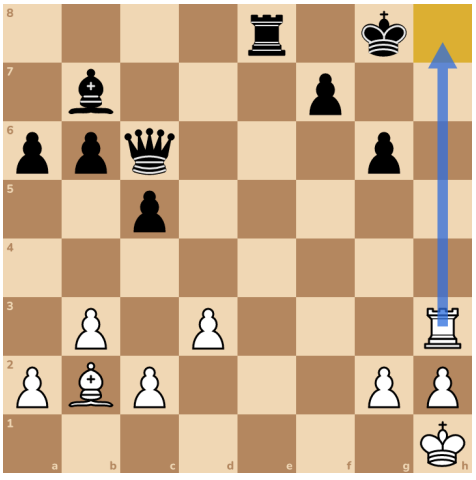
Here's the plan. Step one. Take h7 with your queen, with check! You give up your queen.



Next, swing your rook to h3, with check. It leaves f3, but Black has to answer the check, so he has no time for Qxg2.



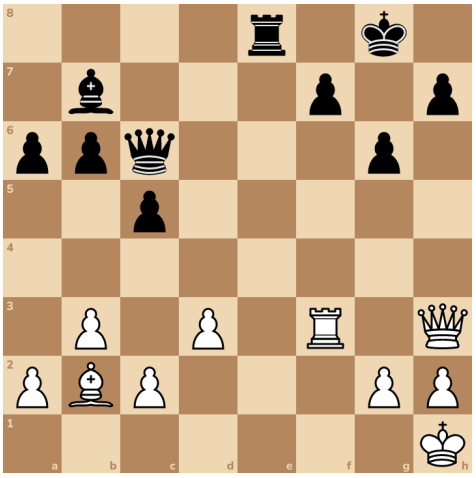
If your rook goes to h8, it's checkmate! His king can't take it, because your bishop guards h8.



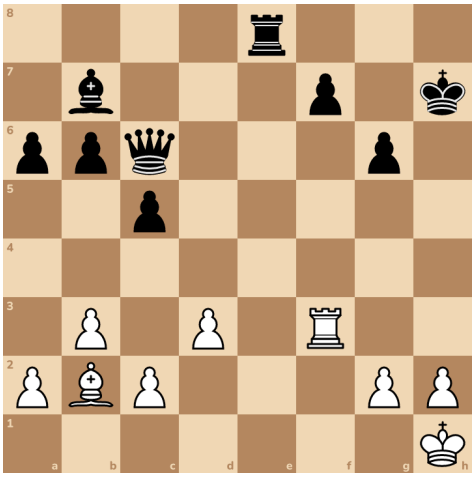
Can his king step to f8? No. Your rook on h8 would still check him there, along the back row.



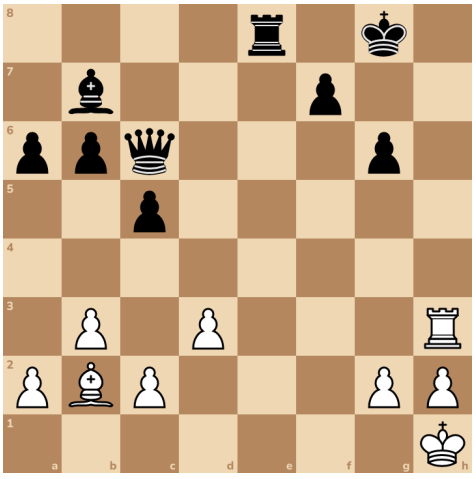
Try it 5. Your turn. Here's the start again. Your queen takes h7, with check!



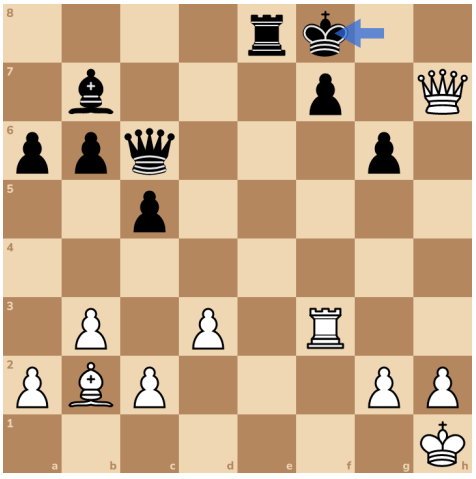
Try it 6. Now check with your rook on h3.



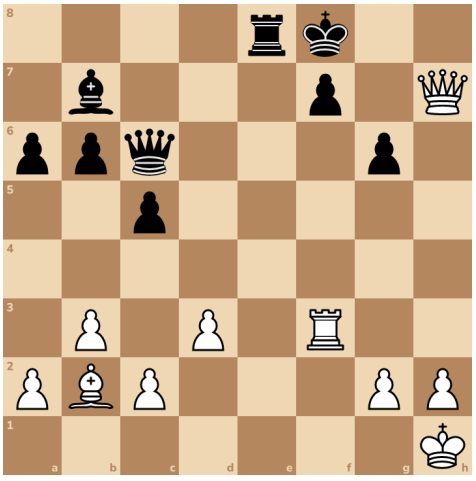
Try it 7. Checkmate!



Here's a new try for Black. After your queen takes h7, his king runs to f8 instead.



Try it 8. Find the checkmate!



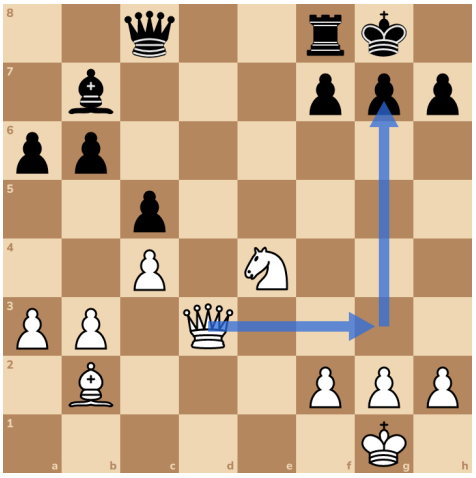
You gave up your queen, your strongest piece, and you still won. Checkmate is worth more than any piece.

A knight opens the door

Here's a new position, from Capablanca. Look at your bishop on b2. It aims at g7.



Lots of players would bring the queen to g3, to aim at g7 too.



But Qg3 isn't check, so Black has time to stop it.



He pushes his pawn to f6, and blocks your bishop.



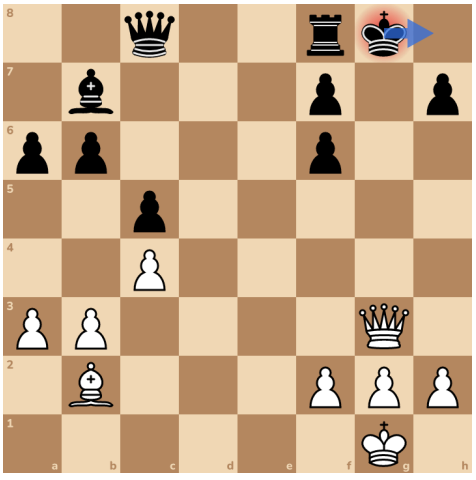
Here's the start again. Here's a better way. Jump your knight to f6, with check! You give it away.



So his g-pawn takes your knight. Now there's nothing on the g column between g3 and his king.



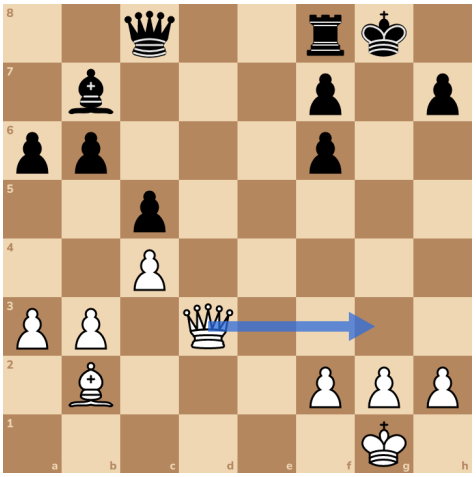
Say his king goes to h8. (He has one more try. You'll see it at the end.)



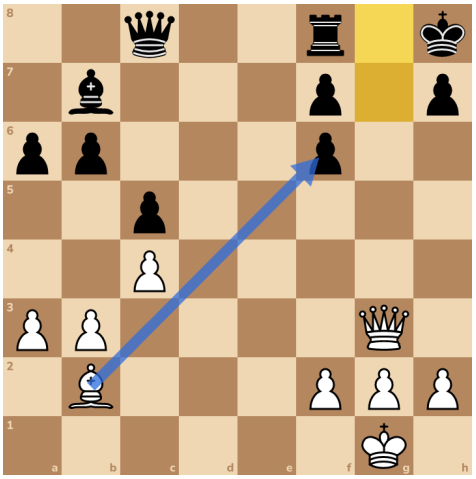
If his king hides on h8, Qxh7 is checkmate, because your knight guards h7.



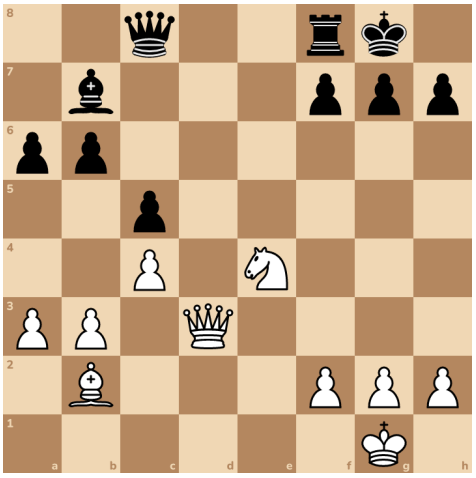
Bring your queen to g3, with check! She comes up the open column.



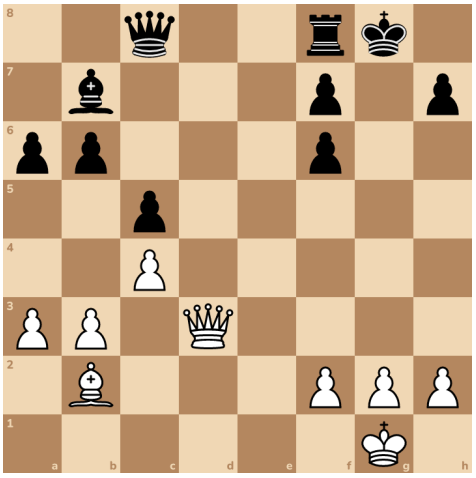
If your bishop takes f6, it's checkmate! Your queen guards g7 and g8, so his king can't get out. Nothing can take your bishop.



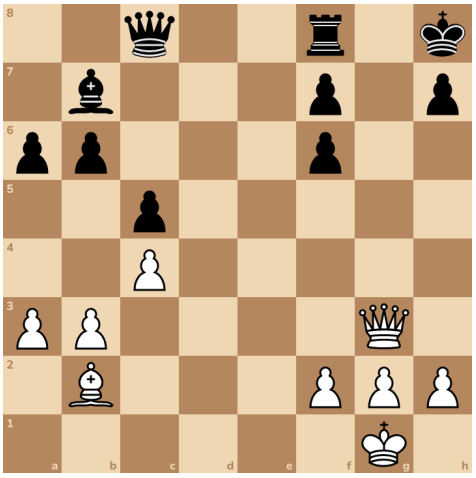
Try it 9. Your turn. Here's the start again. Knight to f6, with check!



Try it 10. Now check with your queen on g3.



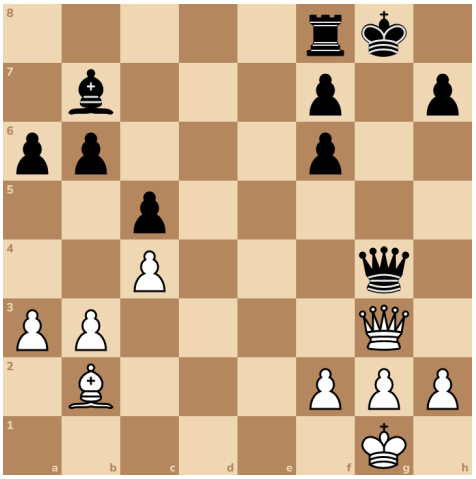
Try it 11. Checkmate!



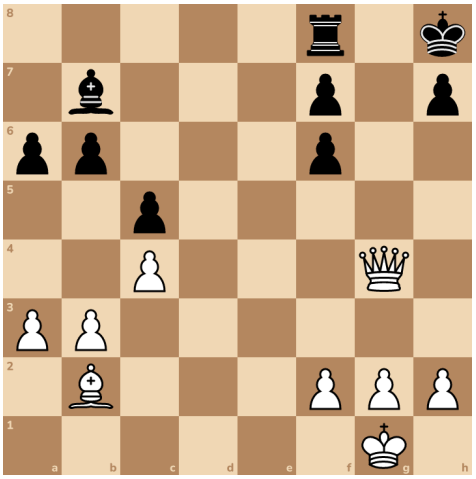
Here's a new try for Black. After your queen checks, he blocks with his queen on g4.



Try it 12. Take his queen, with check!



Try it 13. Checkmate!



Your knight's check opened the door to Black's king. Then your queen and bishop gave checkmate.

Take the guard first

Here's a new position, from Capablanca. It's like the last one. Your knight can jump to f6, and your bishop aims at g7.



If your knight jumps to f6 now, his knight just takes it. Your attack is over.



But don't jump yet! Black's knight on d7 guards f6.



Here's the start again. First, take away the guard. Your bishop on b5 takes the knight on d7.



Now your bishop attacks his queen and his rook on e8. So his queen takes your bishop.



If his king hides on h8, Qxh7 is checkmate, because your knight guards h7.



This time your rook checks, on g3.



Now his knight is gone, so it can't take on f6. Jump your knight to f6, with check! You give it away.



So his g-pawn takes your knight. Now the g column is open.



Say his king goes to h8.



If your bishop takes f6, it's checkmate! Your rook guards g7 and g8.



Try it 14. Your turn. Here's the start again. Take away the guard!



Try it 15. His knight is gone. Now knight to f6, with check!



Try it 16. Check with your rook.



Try it 17. Checkmate!



Here's a new try for Black. After your rook checks, he blocks with his queen on g4.



Try it 18. Take his queen, with check!



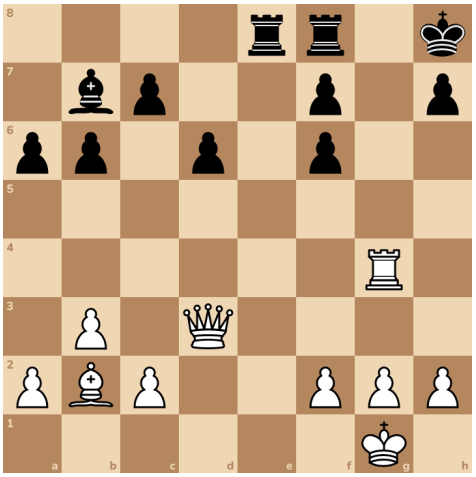
Go back to when your bishop took d7. What if Black doesn't take your bishop?



Then your bishop takes his queen. A queen is worth 9 points.



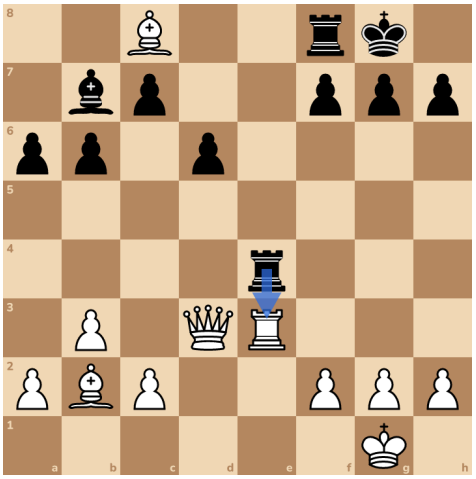
Try it 19. Checkmate!



Say his rook takes your knight on e4.



His rook can take your rook on e3, but your queen takes back. You're still far ahead.



Or say his bishop takes your knight on e4. Now his bishop attacks your queen.



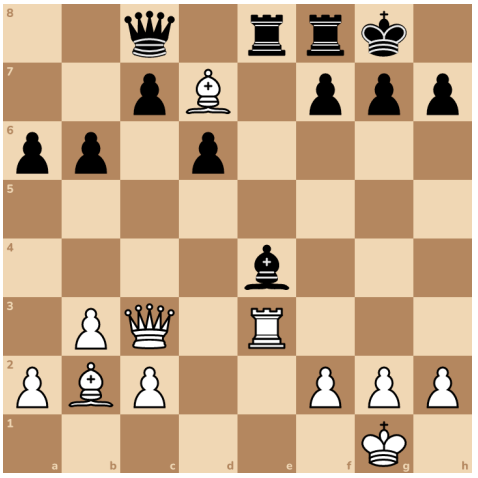
Move your queen to c3, out of the way.



Now Qxg7 would be checkmate, and your bishop still attacks his queen.



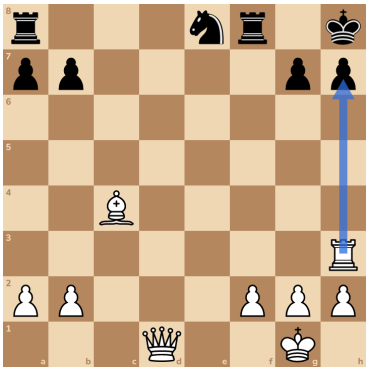
Black can't stop both. If he stops the checkmate, your bishop takes his queen.



When a piece guards the square you need, take that guard away first. Then give your piece.

Answers

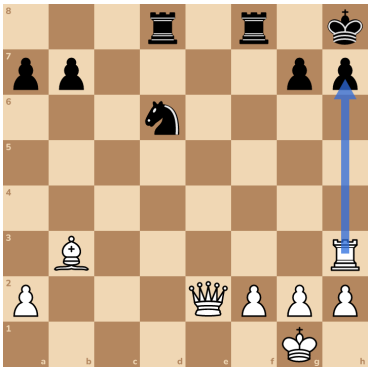
1. Rxh7+



2. Qh5#



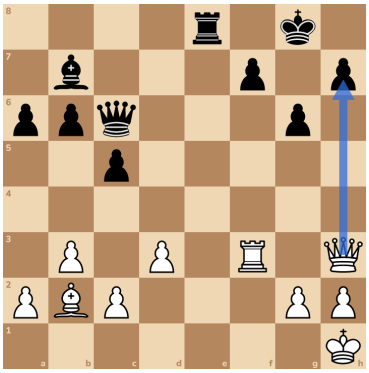
3. Rxh7+



4. Qh5#



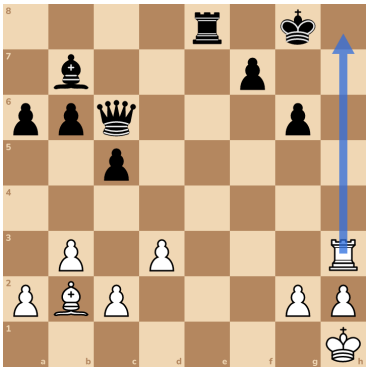
5. Qxh7+



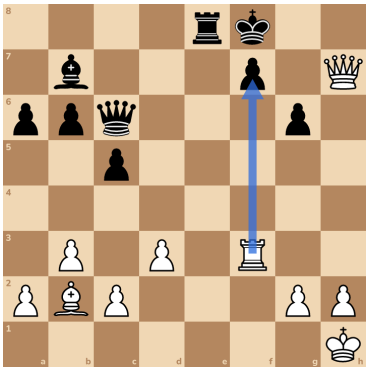
6. Rh3+



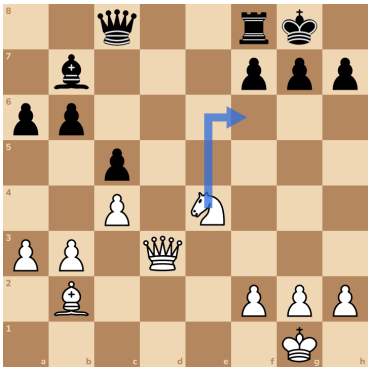
7. Rh8#



8. Rxf7# or Qxf7#



9. Nf6+



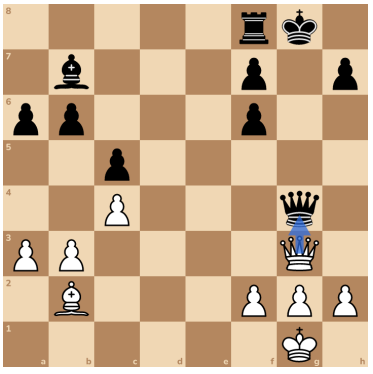
10. Qg3+



11. Bxf6#



12. Qxg4+



13. Bxf6#



14. Bxd7



15. Nf6+



16. Rg3+



17. Bxf6#



18. Rxg4+



19. Bxf6#

