

**212**  
**Surprising**  
**Checkmates**

by  
**Bruce Alberston**  
&  
**Fred Wilson**



2011  
Russell Enterprises, Inc.  
Milford, CT USA

212 Surprising Checkmates  
by  
Bruce Alberston & Fred Wilson

ISBN: 978-1-936490-23-3

© Copyright 2011  
Bruce Alberston & Fred Wilson

All Rights Reserved

No part of this book may be used, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any manner or form whatsoever or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the express written permission from the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

Published by:  
Russell Enterprises, Inc.  
P.O. Box 3131  
Milford, CT 06460 USA

<http://www.russell-enterprises.com>  
[info@russell-enterprises.com](mailto:info@russell-enterprises.com)

Cover design by Janel Lowrance

Printed in the United States of America

This is a revised edition, with additional material, of *202 Surprising Checkmates*, originally published by Dover Publications in 1998



## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	4
Symbols and Abbreviations	4
Introduction	5
Definitions	10
Chapter 1	
White Mates in One Move 1-100	11
Chapter 2	
White Mates in Two Moves 101-150	61
Black Mates in Two Moves 151-200	86
Chapter 3	
White Mates in Three Moves 201-212	111
Answer Diagrams	117







## 212 Surprising Checkmates

### Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the following people who either contributed positions, checked solutions, or made useful suggestions:

Adam Marcus, Gregory Caesar, Dan Satterwaite, Ben Schanback, Jeff Tannenbaum, Tom Schrade, Mike Senkiewicz, Emmitt Jefferson, Andy Ansel, Andrew Fox, Glen Hart, Ned Wall, Oshon Temple, and Marianna Loosemore.

### Symbols & Abbreviations

	or K	stands for King
	or Q	stands for Queen
	or R	stands for Rook
	or B	stands for Bishop
	or N	stands for Knight
	or P	stands for Perfect, the score you are aiming for.

The symbol for the pawn is P, but is rarely used. A pawn move is indicated by a lower case letter which identifies the file of the moving pawn.

x	stands for a capture
0-0	stands for kingside castling
0-0-0	stands for queenside castling

...	three dots following a move number indicate a black move
/	means that a pawn is promoted to a piece indicated by a capital letter immediately to the right of the slash mark

e.p. stands for *en passant*, a special type of pawn capture. A pawn advancing two squares may be captured by an opposing pawn standing on the same rank, on an adjacent file.

The enemy pawn captures the advancing pawn as though it had advanced one square.

+	stands for check
#	stands for mate or checkmate
!	exclam! means a very good move
!!	double exclam!! means a brilliant move
?	means a bad move
??	means a losing blunder

## Introduction

It is now generally recognized that, especially beneath the master level, the outcome of a chess game is mostly determined by tactical errors. And these errors can be both of commission and omission. Which of us has not, “in the heat of battle,” ruined a well-played game by not paying attention to our opponent’s last move, thereby overlooking his or her threat of checkmate in one or two moves?

Conversely, who hasn’t missed the opportunity to play a cute *mate-in-one*, perhaps by failing to note that the enemy king has no *flight squares* – so that all possible checks should obviously be considered – or by giving the wrong *discovered* or *double check*? [Note: italicized terms are defined at the end of the introduction.]

Even worse, how many times have we all overlooked an attractive *mate-in-two* – not even bothering to look for it! – because, being so consumed with our own plans, we don’t notice that the opponent’s last move was a serious tactical mistake? And how often, after having missed a brilliant shot, have we found that it was there for one move only, and it was our one opportunity to win?

As chess teachers of many years of experience we believe the best way to overcome short-term tactical oversights is to combine practice with study. Solving problems with quick, clever tactical solutions will increase your

alertness to such opportunities when they occur in your own games.

The first 100 positions in this book are checkmates you can achieve in one move (white to move and mate in one), and to make them more difficult, most are rather problem-like.

They are, in other words, unlikely to occur in a real game. Although one of the authors, Fred Wilson, admits he carelessly fell into the mate in position 46 during a training game with a student! Still, since you know the right move is a check, make the effort to find the most effective one.

Twenty of the solutions involve discovered checks, but stretch your brain to see which move is necessary to prevent an enemy piece from interposing, for example, or to take away a possible flight square.

As you approach this first group of positions, bear in mind that many of them employ special chess moves such as castling long, or the *en passant* Pawn capture.

Also, be on the lookout for long moves, especially ones involving the queen. Finally, remember that a pinned piece can give mate, if the enemy piece pinning it to your king is itself pinned to its king by another of your pieces.

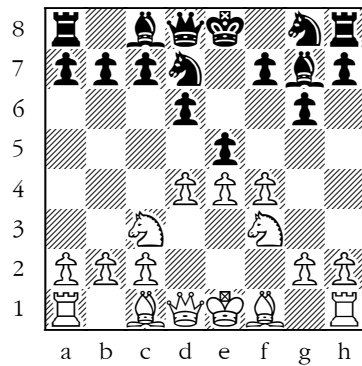
But, you ask, how often do you really have to think about mate-in-one during

## 212 Surprising Checkmates

practical play? Consider the following game, which we find very instructive for intermediate students to play over. [Note that an explanation list, "Symbols and Abbreviations," precedes this introduction.]

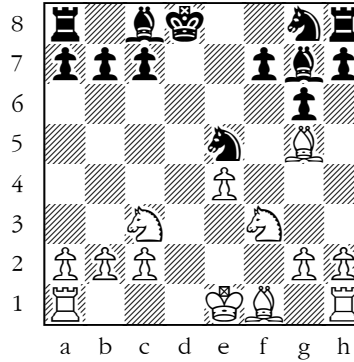
**P. H. Clarke vs. J. Jerolim**  
 England versus Luxembourg  
 International Chess Olympiad  
 Amsterdam 1954  
 Opening: Modern Defense

**1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.f4 Nd7 5.Nf3 e5?**



A very bad move. After the following series of forced exchanges, Black will be unable to castle and will come under vicious attack. 5...c5 would have been a much better move.

**6.fxe5 dxe5 7.dxe5 Nxe5 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 9.Bg5+! ...**

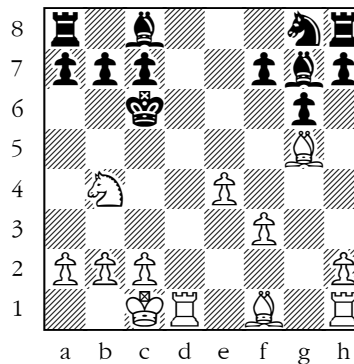


This precise move initiates a winning attack. If Black replies 9...f6, then 10. Nxe5! fxg5 11. Nf7+ wins the exchange. Black's problem is that even though he has traded queens, he is not yet in an endgame, but rather a queenless middlegame, and his king, trapped in the center, is an easy target for White's better developed pieces. The play continues...

**9...Ke8 10.Nd5! Nxf3+ 11.gxf3 Kd7**

Trying to guard c7 against the knight fork. If 11...Bxb2 then 12.Rb1 Be5 13. f4 Bd6 14.e5 c6 15.Nf6+! wins a piece.

**12.0-0-0 Kc6 13.Nb4+! ...**

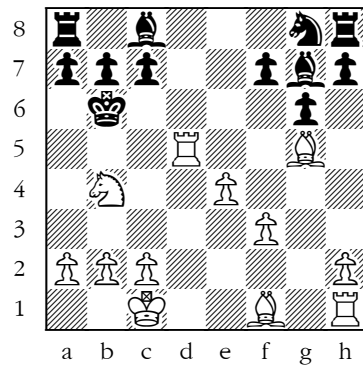


## Introduction

### 13...Kb6

If 13...Kc5? then 14.Rd5+! Kxb4 and you have mate in two moves, 15.Bd2+ Ka4 16.Bb5 mate.

### 14.Rd5!! Resigns

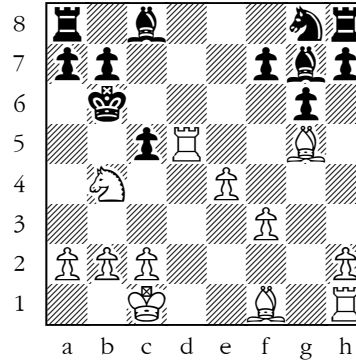


Now take a good look at the final position. What is White's threat? Can't Black safely bring out a piece, by 14...Nf6, attacking White's rook? Actually, no, because 15.Rb5 is mate.

We are fairly certain you found this mate-in-one quickly, as it is the most immediate threat behind White's 14.Rd5!! . And we hope you noticed that Black's king has no flight squares!

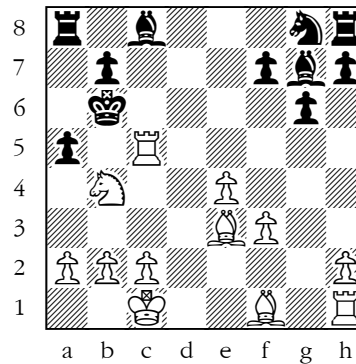
However, what if Black sees the threat and defends by 14...c5. See the next diagram.

We have found that it usually takes intermediate players about 30-60 seconds to find **15.Bd8 mate!** which also refutes 14...c6. But remember, if you were playing this game and you missed 15.Bd8 mate, Black would now have some chances to save the position.

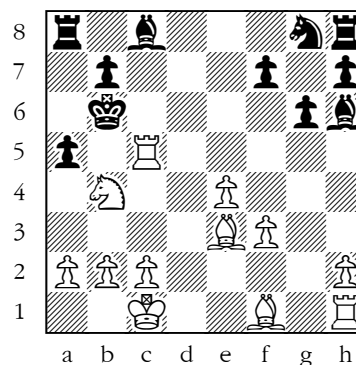


*Analysis: after 14...c5*

So, okay, what if Black finds 14...a5  
15.Be3+ c5 16.Rxc5! –



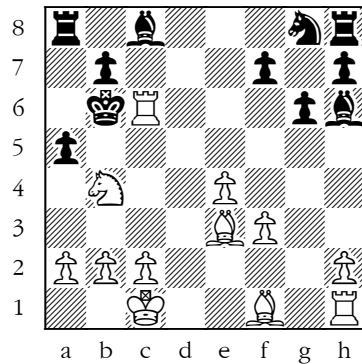
the threat is if 16...axb4 17.Rxc8+  
(discovered check!) 17...Ka5 18.Rxa8  
mate – 16...Bh6



## 212 Surprising Checkmates

which we believe is Black's best chance to maneuver out of a lost position?

Many students ignore Black's last move and want to play 17.Rxc8+?? immediately, overlooking the fact that if Black replies 17...Bxe3, it is with check – so now Black is winning! Less impulsive students usually take from one to three minutes to find the right idea here, that there is probably some very strong discovered and/or double check available – namely **17.Rc6 mate!**



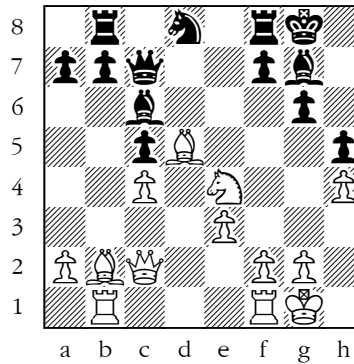
Congratulate yourself if you found the one-move mates in these position fairly quickly, but always remember how often the possibility of a tricky mate-in-one can arise even in a serious game between experienced players.

If you are willing to do the work necessary to solve the 100 tricky one-movers in this book, we believe you'll rarely miss such opportunities in your own games again!

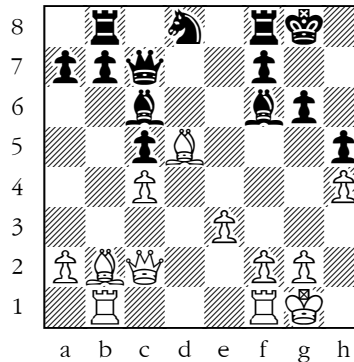
If many mates-in-one are overlooked, it stands to reason that a tremendous number of mates-in-two are also missed, and not just by beginners and intermediates.

Look at the next diagram position, which occurred in a game between two of the strongest grandmasters in the world at that time.

Szabó vs. Reshevsky  
Zurich Candidates 1953  
White to Play



Lazlo Szabó played **20.Nf6+** and Samuel Reshevsky quickly replied **20...Bxf6??**



Incredibly, Szabó played **21.Bxf6?** and missed 21.Qxg6+ with mate next move! Somehow, Szabó either overlooked or forgot that Black's f7-pawn was pinned against his king by White's bishop on d5.



## Introduction

Reportedly, when he realized his mistake, Szabó was so upset that, despite still having a great positional advantage, he only managed to draw the game.

Other examples of great masters blundering are found in position 133, where Ludek Pachman (Black) has just played his rook to c7, completely oblivious to Julio Bolbochán's brilliant reply, and in position 136, where Boris Spassky overlooked a two-move mate against E. Vladimirov in 1961 (although Spassky did win anyway).

Since so many mates-in-two are missed in practical play, we decided for the most part to create and use game-like positions in 101-200. Positions 151-200 are Black mates-in-two because we believe that it is very important for players to learn to study printed chess positions from Black's perspective.

Our game-like positions can, and often did occur in actual play, and we believe they have much instructive value. Themes to look for include queen sacrifices that not only deflect away or destroy pieces defending the enemy king but also attract, by force, the enemy king onto a square where checkmate is possible.

Also, there are a number of *smothered mates*, and mates with a pawn, which seem unusually hard for beginners and intermediates to find. Finally, many mates are caused by a quiet move, perhaps the hardest practical checkmate to plan, because its sole purpose is to eliminate potential flight squares, so that an unstoppable check on the second move wins against any reply.

The last twelve positions in this book are all White mates-in-three. By the time you get to them, we think you will be ready to analyze a slightly longer sequence and so we urge you to try them.

For example, #201 employs a fairly common type of sacrifice to force a *back-rank-mate* (hint!) and is therefore useful to know. #202 is much harder to solve, but both spectacular and beautiful – truly “mind over matter.”

If you enjoy finding these *combinations*, you are now ready to study more advanced books on chess tactics, and are, almost certain, on the road to becoming a stronger player.

The positions in this book are usually, though not always, arranged in order of difficulty. With the one movers especially, this order has not always been so easy to determine. Fred Wilson took more than one minute to solve position 59, and has seen a number of masters and experts take even longer!

We actually found it easier to agree on the sequence of positions 101-200, although since 151-200 are black mates-in-two, the easiest black mates begin with 151. Finally, in this new edition, we have added ten white mates-in three.

In case you are curious, we have found the hardest two-movers to solve, even for advanced players, are 148, 149, and 150, probably because they are problem-like rather than game-like. If you enjoyed solving these three then you might also like to get some books specifically on chess problems.