

Chess Tactics: Double Attack & The Fork!

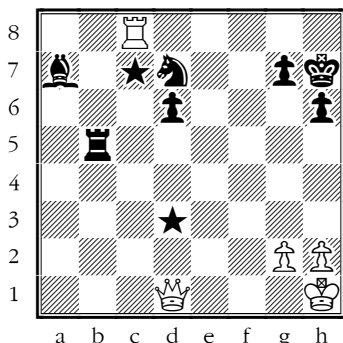
Part 1: Essential Tactical Knowledge: Double Attacks & The Fork

Concepts:

- Learning to **double attack** in chess!
- What is a “fork”?
- “The Killer Knives”, “the Fearsome Forks” and “the Soft Spoons”!

Now that you have learned the basic terminology of chess, some fundamental strategies, and received your introduction to the different “phases” a chess game might take – like the Opening stage – it is time to learn what 90% of chess is all about: **Tactics!**

Two is Better Than One, “Double” Attacks are Simply More Fun!

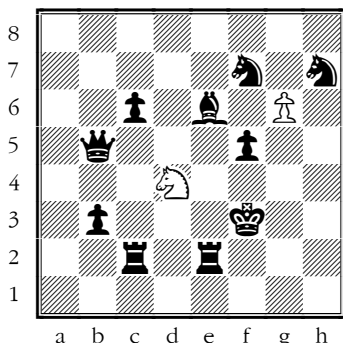


1.Rc7 and 1.Qd3+ are both “double attacks”!

90% of chess is tactics! The reason? **All games are eventually decided by tactics.** So, though it is true that the different positional and long term strategies you will learn later are just as important, you must first learn how to use tactics! Tactics win pieces, more pieces leads to a better chance at checkmating the enemy King, and checkmating the enemy King is the goal of the game!

Our first tactic of discussion is the **double attack**, or **fork** in some cases. Here white has two possible methods of double attack, and they both win material! A double attack is simple: A move that attacks two pieces at the same time!

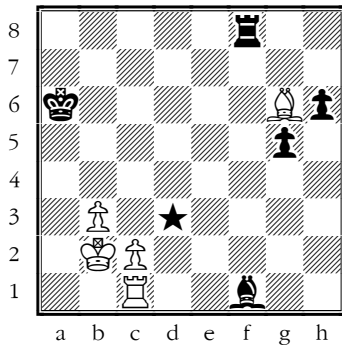
Double Attacks Continued: The Fork! The Knight and Pawn Join the Fun!



When a Knight and pawn double attack two enemy pieces, this is called a **“fork”**. Why the different name? Because the Knight and the pawn attack in such a way that is “split” – just like the fork you use to eat! In our diagram both the Knight and Pawn are “forking” at least two enemy pieces.

Though it is *possible* for a Knight to fork up to eight enemy pieces, like this position here, it is highly unlikely. The most common fork is one or two pieces, and rarely three. Though if the enemy King is forked, good results will usually follow!

Example 1: The “Killer Knives” – Double Attacks by Rooks, Bishops and Queens!

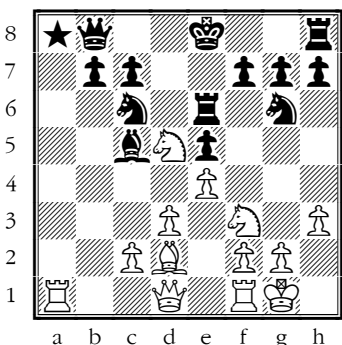


1.Rxf1! Rxf1 2.Bd3+! -
winning by double attack!

The best way to learn how to use tactics is practice, and we will get to the worksheets soon enough! Before we do however, it is good to learn **how to find** viable (worthwhile) **targets** for a tactic. This is the method of recognizing “*tactical patterns*”. Patterns repeat, right? Well, in chess positions repeat too. To follow are three very common ways to double attack and fork your opponents. ***Knives first!***

When white does a double attack with the “**straight**” (like a knife) moving pieces, we call these “Killer Knife” double attacks. Not real knives of course, just make believe! Here white plays a combination for a killer-knife double attack!

Example 2: The “Fearsome Forks” – Double Attacks by Knights and Pawns!

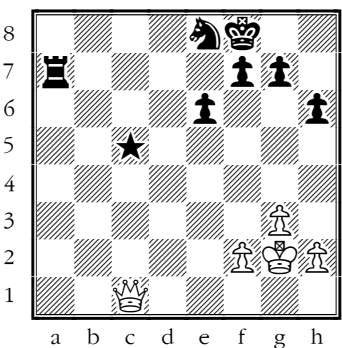


White used the strong Knight and the open file for the Rook to create a “Fearsome Fork” tactic!

Whenever the enemy King is lined up on a straight line with his pieces, there might be a chance for the double attack used in our previous diagram. ***That is a pattern!*** Likewise, whenever we have a strong Knight in the center, with lots of enemy pieces around it, we should look for an opportunity to execute a “Fearsome Fork” tactic. Can you see it?

White's Knight on d5 is a super-horsey, and black hasn't castled the King yet! It is white's job to punish the black King for hanging around too long. White plays 1.Ra8!!, sacrificing the Rook in order for the c7-pawn to become undefended. After black has to play 1...Qxa8 (or lose the Queen) white plays 2.Nxc7+!, forking the King, Queen and Rook on e6. We call this a “**Royal Fork**”!

Example 3: The “Soft Spoons” – Double Attacks That Really Aren't that Good!



1.Qc5+ is met by 1...Re7,
guarding the Rook.

Tactical patterns like the ones shown in examples one and two **happen everyday in chess games all around the world!** Use the worksheets to see more patterns of double attacks and forks. Here we tried to provide an example of a “not-so-impressive” fork: We call them “**Soft Spoons**”!

A “spoon” is a fun term for a double attack that doesn't really do anything. If a Knight tried to fork an enemy Knight, for example, that might be a spoon because an enemy Knight can capture the same way your Knights can. Here white gives a check and double attacks the Rook and King, but to no avail as black can simply protect both pieces.

Chess Tactics: Double Attack & The Fork!

Instructor's Guide

The importance of this lesson, as well as the other “tactical lessons” to follow, should be very clear: Tactics are the major deciding factor of every chess game. The basics of counting attackers and defenders was discussed in Lesson 5, but here the concept of attacking your opponent's pieces in specific ways is introduced. Ultimately no amount of general chess advice or positional chess knowledge can help a chess player who misses tactics.

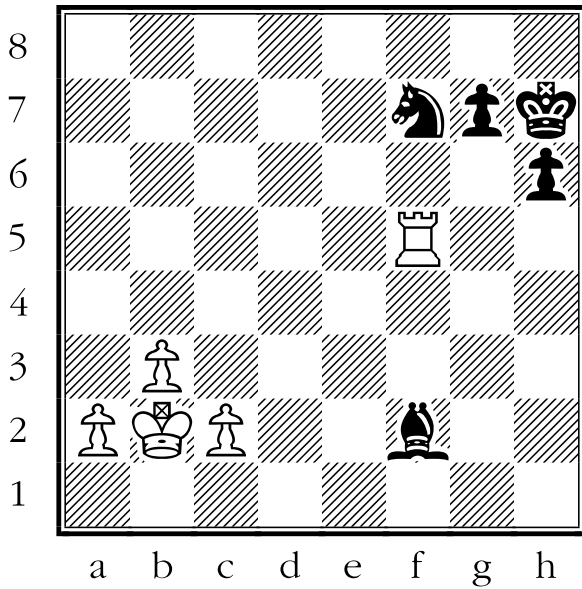
The double attack is self-explanatory & its merit is obvious: Attacking two things at the same time is better than attacking one. Recognizing and even creating the opportunities for powerful double attacks and forks is a more difficult matter. However, with practice your students will eventually “buy in” to learning these tactical methods so that they may be aware of the tactical patterns in their own games.

Practical Notes and Advice – Lesson 9:

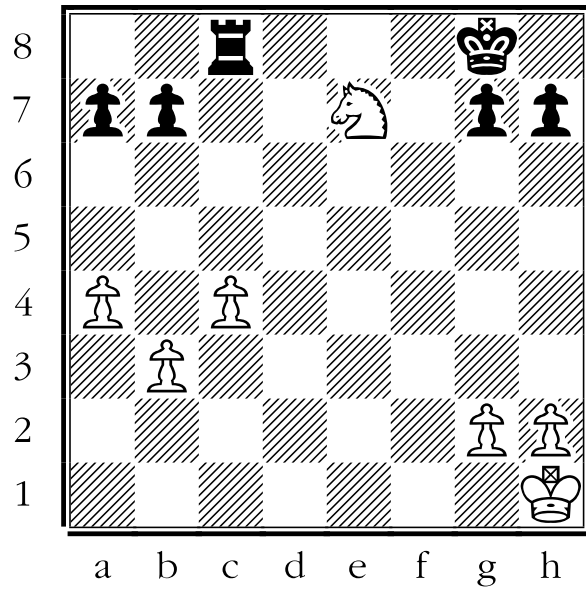
- **The best type of double attack is one that targets two “undefended” or “loose” pieces/squares in your opponent's position.**
- **Teaching your students to always look for “hanging” (undefended) enemy chessmen is the first step towards helping them to use double attacks and forks effectively in their own chess games.**
- **Have your students play practice games, raising their hands to show you every time they used a double attack or fork against their opponent.**
- **During these practice sessions, students will naturally want your approval, likely calling you over for multiple “spoon” double attacks. Point out every time they thought they had a “Killer Knife” double attack, or a powerfully “Fearsome Fork,” but instead they were actually only attacking their opponent with a spoon.**

Lesson 9: Which is it?

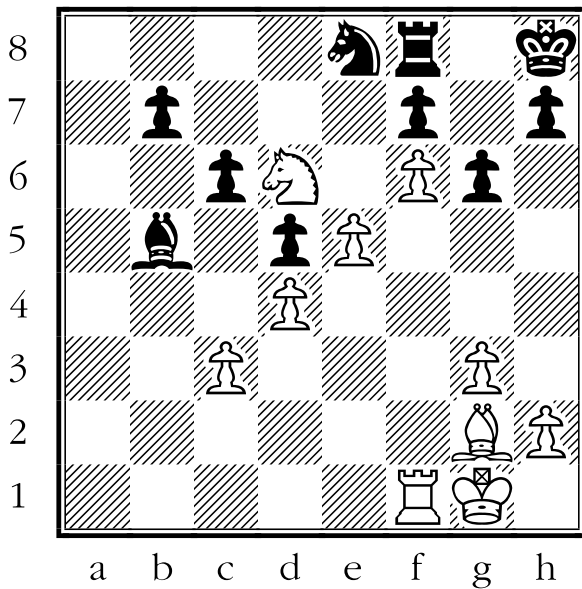
A “Killer Knife”, a “Fearsome Fork” or a “Soft Spoon”? Circle the correct answer beneath each diagram. **BONUS:** Circle the white piece that is doing the attacking in each position.



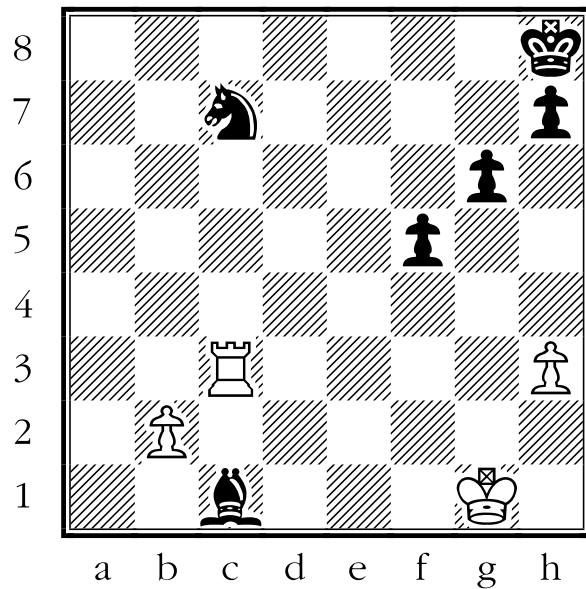
Circle the correct answer:
Knife? Fork? OR Spoon?



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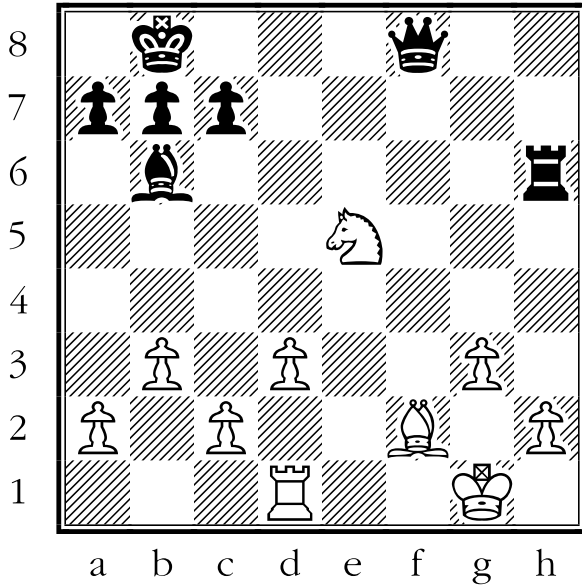
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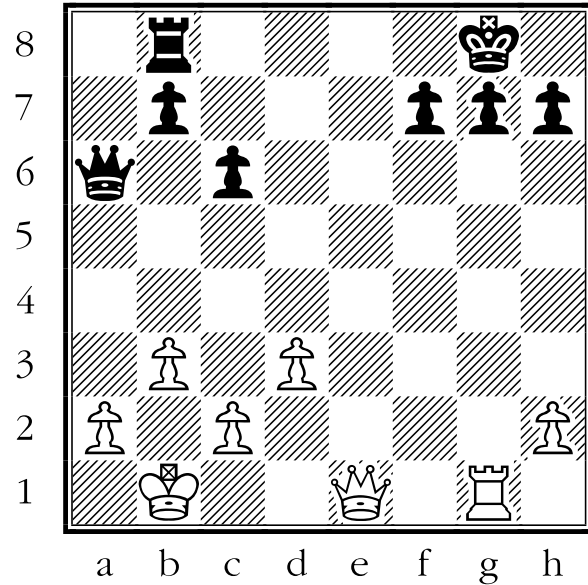
Circle the correct answer:
Knife? Fork? OR Spoon?

Lesson 9: Knives & Forks!

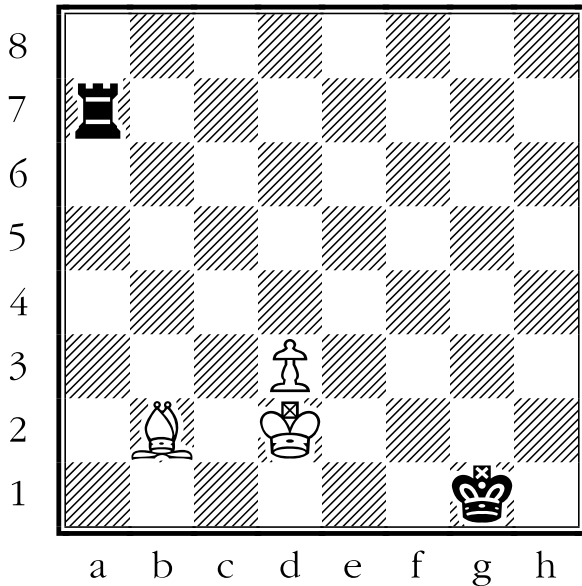
In each diagram there is an opportunity for either white or black to apply a double attack (whether by knife or fork) to the opponent. Circle the piece and draw an "X" on the square it should move to. **BONUS:** Use algebraic notation and write down the move to the right.



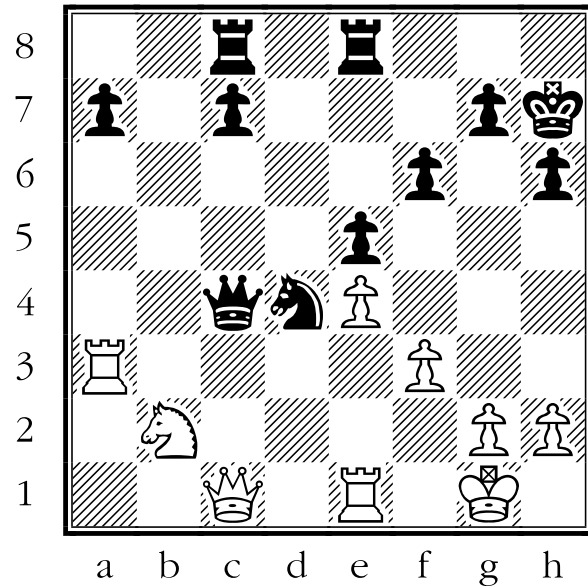
White to Play:
Find the double attack by... Fork!



White to Play:
Find the double attack by... Knife!



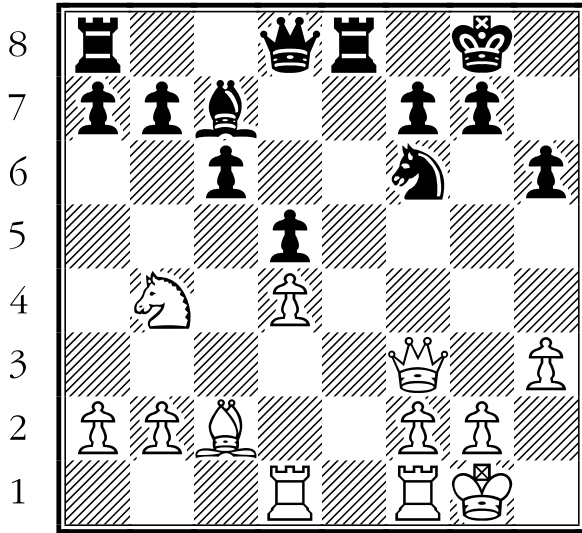
White to Play:
Find the double attack by... Knife!



Black to Play:
Find the double attack by... Fork!

Lesson 9: Knives & Forks - Tricky!

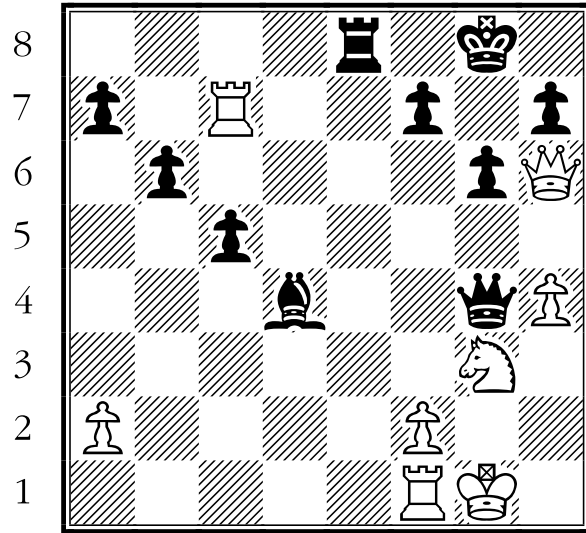
In each diagram there is an opportunity for either white or black to apply a double attack (whether by knife or fork) to the opponent. Circle the piece and draw an "X" on the square it should move to. **BONUS:** Use algebraic notation and write down the move to the right.



a b c d e f g h

Black to Play:

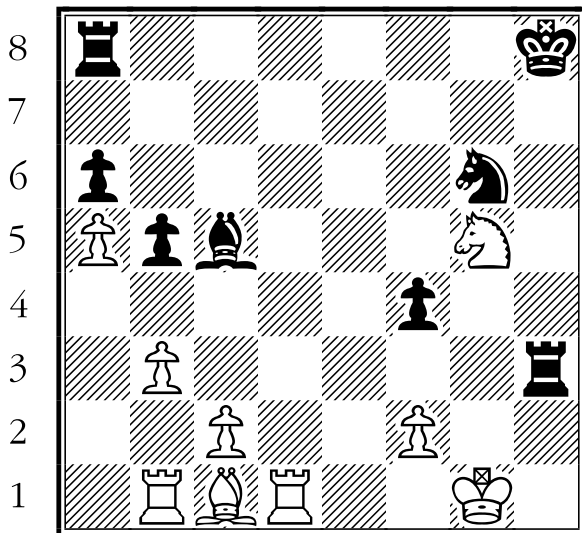
Find the double attack by... Knife!



a b c d e f g h

Black to Play:

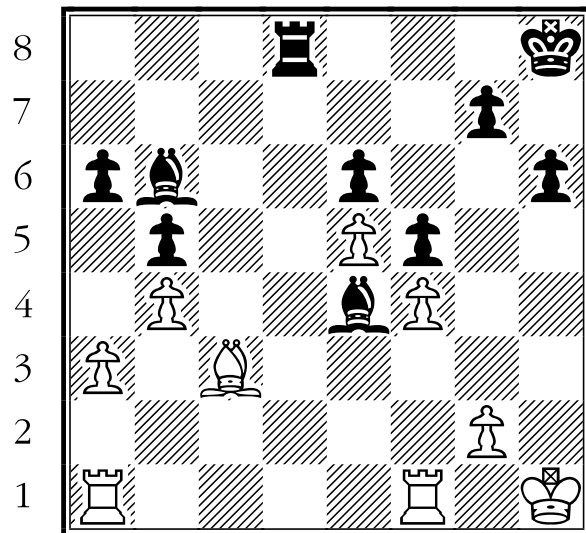
Find the double attack by... Knife!



a b c d e f g h

Black to Play:

Find the double attack by... Knife!



a b c d e f g h

Black to Play:

Find the double attack by... Knife!

Knives, Forks & Spoons!

Answer Key

Worksheet Page 1: "Which is it"

Diagram #1 – Knife. Circle white Rook on f5.

Diagram #2 – Spoon. Circle Knight on d6. – Both pieces are protected and the Knight on e8 can capture the Knight on d6, so this “fork” is actually a “spoon”.

Diagram #3 – Fork. Circle the Knight on e7.

Diagram #4 – Spoon. Circle the white Rook on c3. Despite the double attack, black can play 1...Bf4, protecting both the Bishop and the c7-Knight.

Worksheet Page 2: "Knives & Forks"

Diagram #1 – 1.Nd7+ – Forking the King and Queen. Circle e5-Knight and “X” d7-square.

Diagram #2 – 1...Bd4+! – A “knife” double attack of the King and the a7-Rook. Circle b2-Bishop and d4-square.

Diagram #3 – 1.Qe5! – A “knife” double attack of the b8-Rook and the g7-square (which is the threat of checkmate). Circle e1-Queen and “X” e5-square.

Diagram #4 – 1...Ne2+ – Forking the King and Queen. Circle d4-Knight and “X” e2-square.

Worksheet Page 3: "Knives & Forks – Tricky"

Diagram #1 – 1...Qd6! – A “knife” double attack of the b4-Knight and the h2-square (which is the threat of checkmate). Circle d8-Queen and “X” d6-square.

Diagram #2 – 1...Rg3+! – A “knife” double attack of the g5-Knight and the King (white's f2-pawn is pinned. See Lesson 10). Circle h3-Rook and “X” g3-square.

Diagram #3 – 1...Qxg3+!! – A “knife” double attack of the c7-Rook and the King (white's f2-pawn is pinned. See Lesson 10). Circle g4-Queen and “X” g3-square.

Diagram #4 – 1...Rd3! – A “knife” double attack of the c3-Bishop and the h3-square (which is the threat of checkmate). Circle d8-Rook and “X” d3-square.