

Lesson 18: Decoy and Destroy

Decoy!



White is trying to deliver checkmate by moving the queen to h7, protected by the knight on g5. The Black knight on f6 is preventing this, but that means the knight must not move. White can take advantage in two ways:

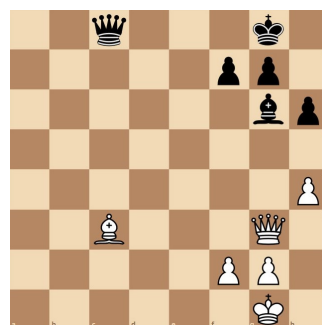
1. Attack the Black knight by moving the pawn to e5. On the next move White captures the knight.

2. Fork the Black queen and knight by moving the knight on c3 to d5. When the queen moves, White captures the knight on f6 and delivers checkmate on h7.

White DECOYS the overworked knight from its vital defensive role.

Puzzle Corner

How can White win material by decoying an overworked defender?



Destroy!



If White can safely move their queen to h7, protected by the knight on g5, it'll be check-mate. Once again, the Black knight on f6 is defending against this threat.

White can DESTROY the defender, capturing the Black knight on f6 with the rook on f1. This is a SACRIFICE. Black can capture the White rook and gain five points, more than the value of the knight (three points). However, White would then deliver check-mate on h7. To prevent checkmate Black must move their queen to d3, accepting the loss of the destroyed knight.

Did you know?

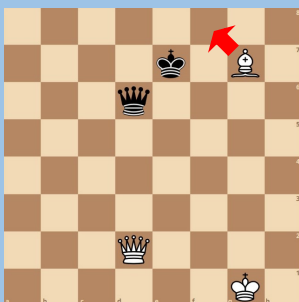
This week's Grandmaster Test features the finish of one of the most famous games of chess of all time. It even has its own Wikipedia page! The game was won by Paul Morphy in Paris in 1858. It was played at an opera house during a performance! Chess or opera—which would you choose?

Grandmaster Test



The Black knight on d7 is preventing the White rook from moving to d8, protected by the bishop on g5, a check-mate. Can you see how White decoyed the knight from its defensive duties?

Grandmaster Test—Lesson 17



Answer: Last week's Grandmaster Test featured another DECOY.

1. First White moves the bishop to g7. It's check and there's a discovered attack on the Black queen. Black escapes the check and defends the queen, moving their king to e7 (see diagram, right).
2. Now White delivers another check with the bishop on f8. This skewer decoys the king from the defence of his own queen.