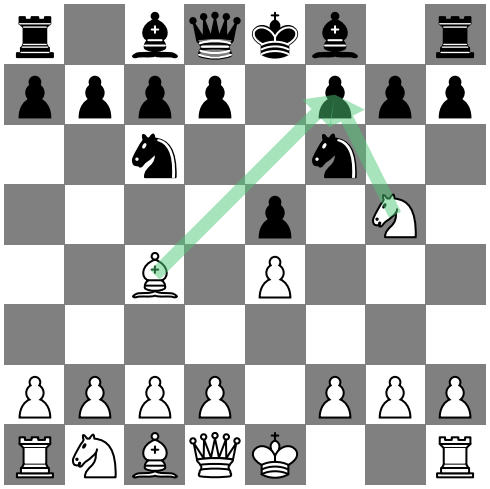
Traxler Counter Attack

Written with mychessnotebook.com

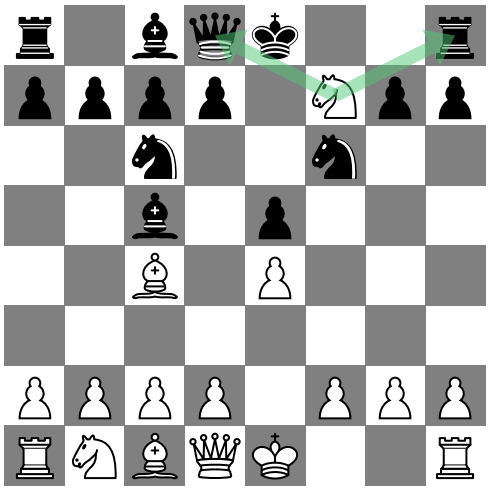
The Traxler counter attack can be used against the fried liver attack. It allows black to have a lot of initiative in the game.

After: **1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5** white may think he has a good attack on the f7 pawn:



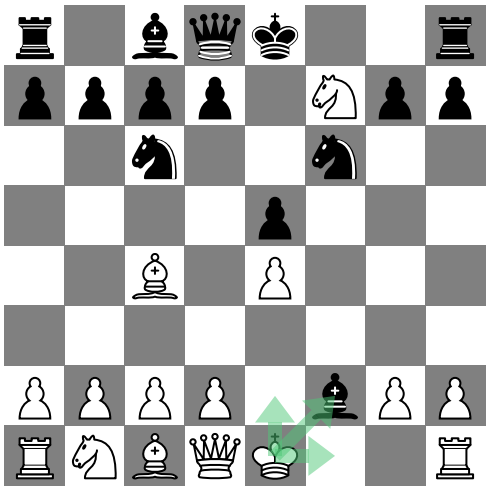
Black to play

However, black can simply ignore the threat and normally develop another piece with Bc5. If white goes for the fork with the knight:



Black to play

black can immediately sacrifice the bishop on f2, leaving white with few options:



White to play

We will explore the following replies

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5 Bc5 5. Nxf7 Bxf2+ [Ke2 / Kf1 / Kxf2]

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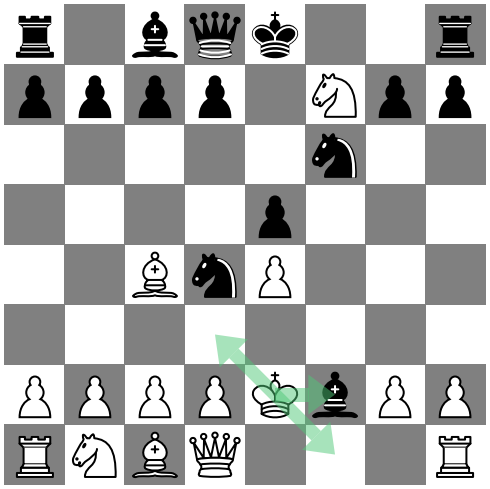
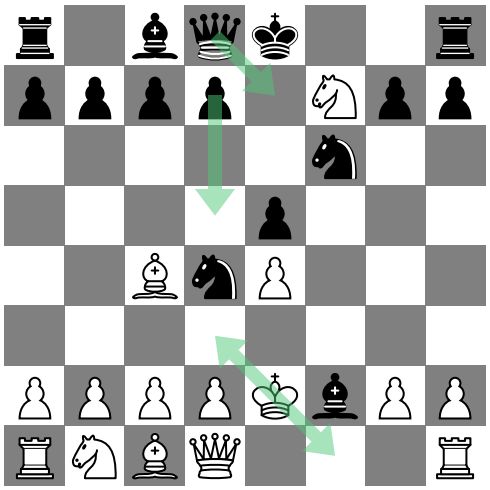
Ke2

The computer already gives -3. Black plays Nd4+



White to play

If white does not take the bishop, black reply is Qe7 and most likely d5:



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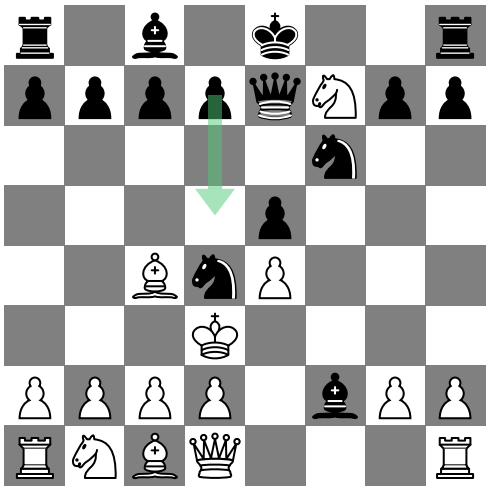
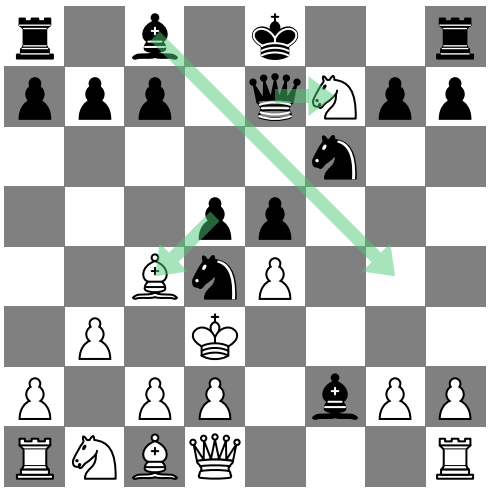
Ke2 -> Kd3

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5 Bc5 5. Nxf7 Bxf2+ 6. Ke2 Nd4+ 7. Kd3 Qe7 and **every** white move is met with **d5** ! On Qg4 (which can be immediately eaten by the black knight on f6) the computer prefers d5.



Indeed, the threats are too strong:



And the position should be an easy win.

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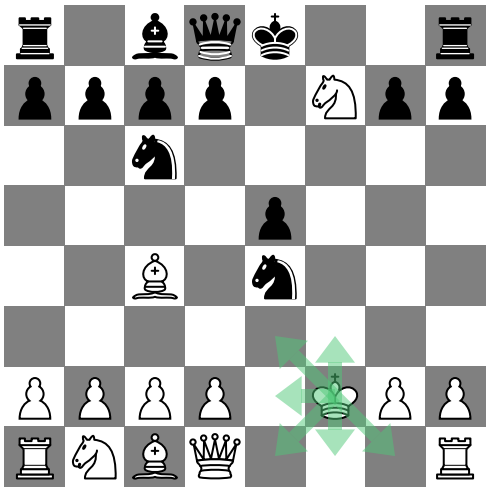
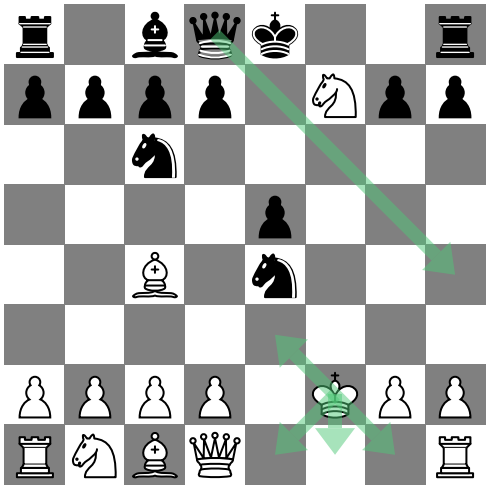
Kxf2

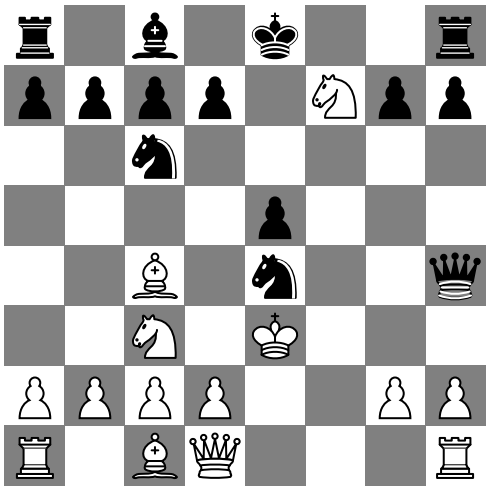
It is the most natural move and it is immediately followed by a check from the knight, the king has many squares to go to:



And the most of them are met with Qh4 (all the squares on the first row and e3)



This is quite easy to remember as black wants to threaten mate on a passive move



Black to play, mate in 3

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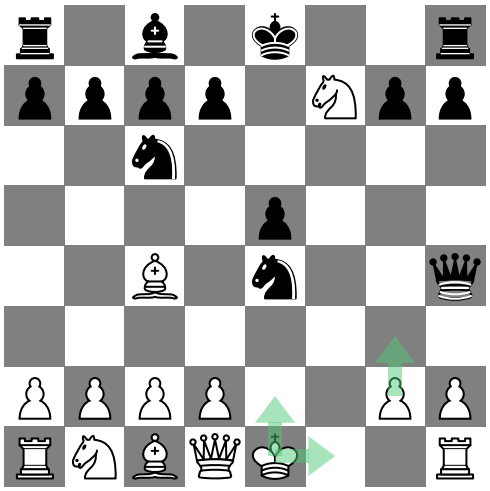
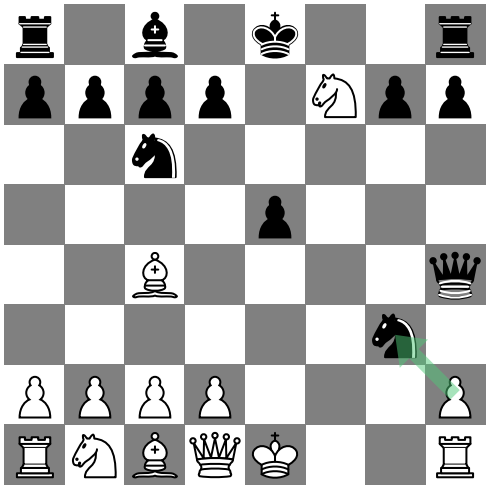
Kxf2 -> Ke1

This is the worst option for white as Qh4 comes with check: 1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5 Bc5 5. Nxf7 Bxf2+ 6. Kxf2 Nxe4+ 7. Ke1 Qh4+ and the only defenses are:

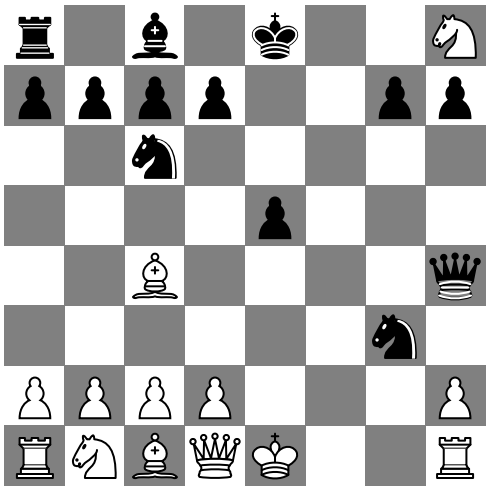


And moving the king leads to forced mate (check it) so the only actual defense is g3, which is immediately taken with the knight:

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5 Bc5 5. Nxf7 Bxf2+ 6. Kxf2 Nxe4+ 7. Ke1 Qh4+ 8. g3 Nxg3



Note that the pawn has to take, otherwise, the attack with queen and knight leads to mate,

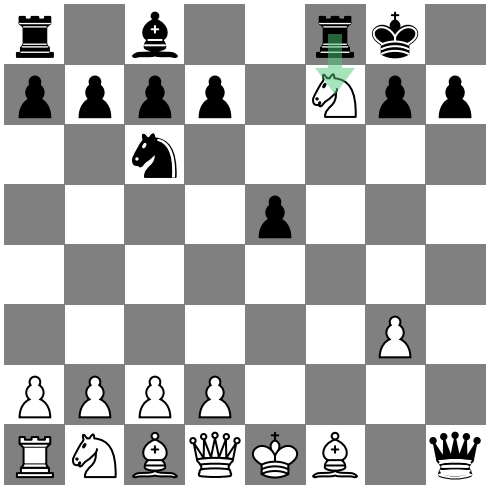


Black to play, forced mate

After the following forced sequence:

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5 Bc5 5. Nxf7 Bxf2+ 6. Kxf2 Nxe4+ 7. Ke1 Qh4+ 8. g3 Nxg3 9. hxg3 Qxh1+ 10. Bf1 O-O

black castles and ends up with a neat material advantage and a safe king.



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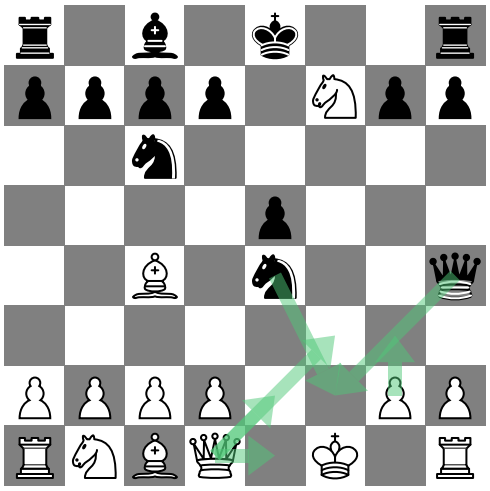
Kxf2 -> Kf1

In this situation, black will equalize the material balance. The reply consists in bringing the queen to the party with: 1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5 Bc5 5. Nxf7 Bxf2+ 6. Kxf2 Nxe4+ 7. Kf1 **Qh4**, already threatening mate

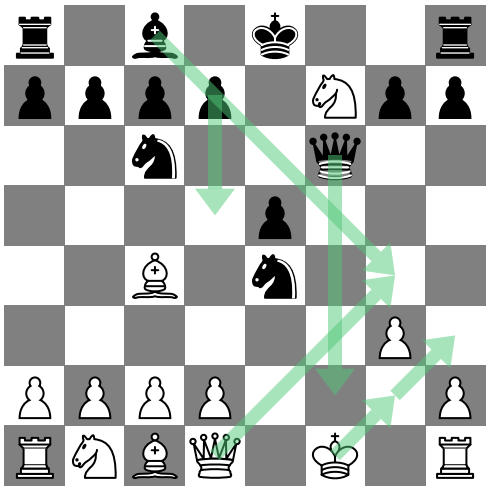


White to play, only the arrow moves prevent mate

A simple thing to note is that after **[Traxler]** 6. Kxf2 Nxe4+ 7. Kf1 Qh4, if white puts a piece (either the queen or the g pawn) on the third row, it is a huge blunder. The other two options force black to be more modest and recover the lost material.

On 8. g3 Qf6+

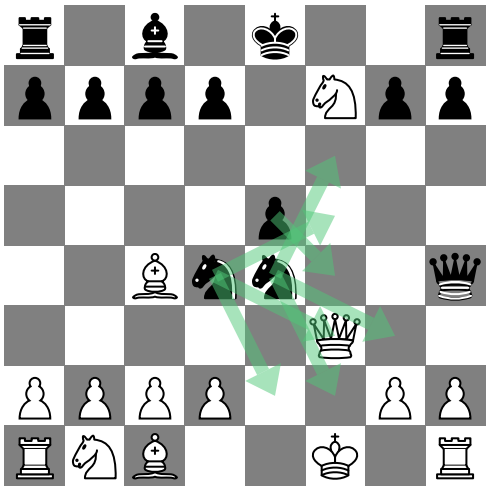
It is actually mate. The moves are quite forced since staying on the first row leads to mate in 1 and e2 leads to mate in 4 (the sequence has been seen in the Ke1 variant)



White to play

On 8. Qf3

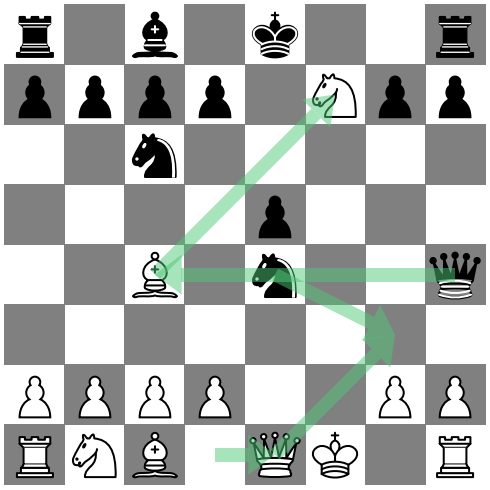
Black reply with Nd4



The queen must defend f2 to prevent mate, but all the squares are threatened

On 8. Qe1

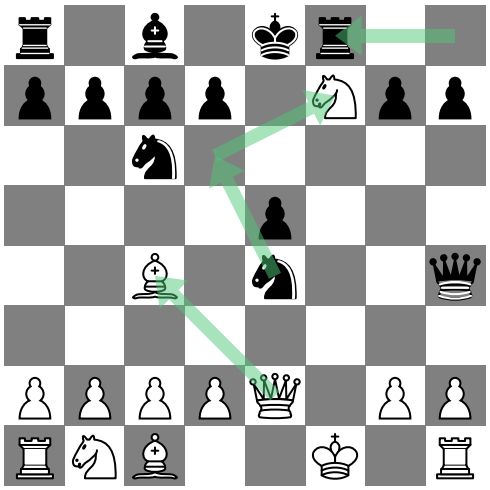
We have to be more modest as the goal will be to recover the sacrified material.



1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5 Bc5 5. Nxf7 Bxf2+ 6. Kxf2 Nxe4+ 7. Kf1 Qh4 8. Qe1 Ng3+ 9. Qxg3 Qxc4+ 10. d3 Qxf7+

On 8. Qe2

Note that the previous line does not work any more since the queen now defends the bishop on c4. Instead, we simply bring the rook to the pin the knight on f7. 1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5 Bc5 5. Nxf7 Bxf2+ 6. Kxf2 Nxe4+ 7. Kf1 Qh4 8. Qe2 Rf8. Then we bring back the black knight to collect it.



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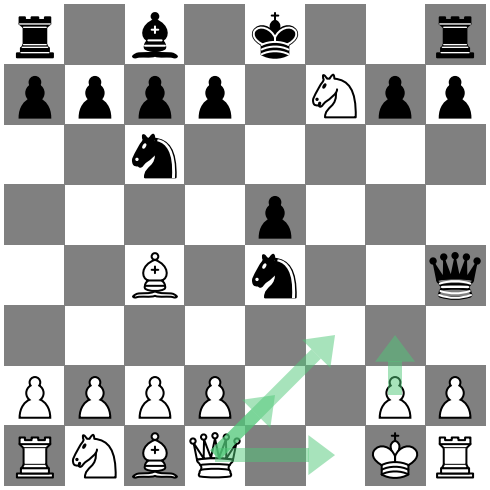
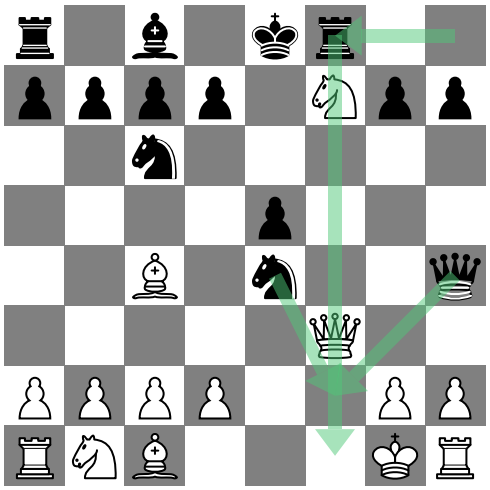
Kxf2 -> Kg1

The computer gives equal, however, there are still many traps.

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5 Bc5 5. Nxf7 Bxf2+ 6. Kxf2 Nxe4+ 7. Kg1 Qh4



Moving the queen on the third column leads to the natural **Rf8**



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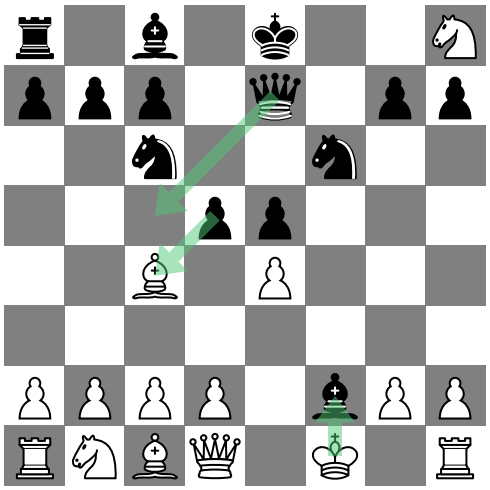
Kf1

This is met with first, saving the queen and then, pushing the pawn:

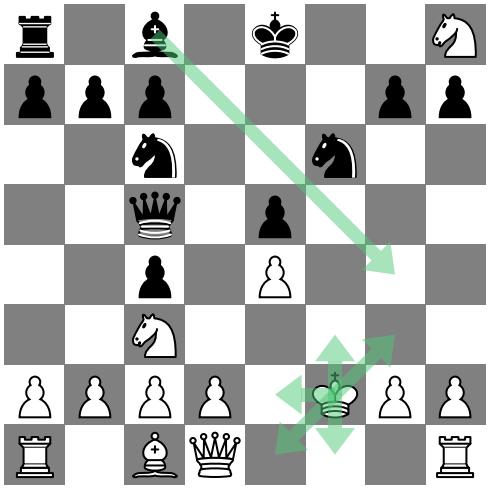
1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. Ng5 Bc5 5. Nxf7 Bxf2+ 6. Kf1 Qe7 7. Nxh8 d5

There are many threats hanging:



White to play

If white decides to take the bishop, then dxc4 and after (per example) kc3, the intermediate check poses new issues to white:



White to play