## SWITCHEROO TWINS

number 10   September 15, 2012

A *switcheroo* is a fun and sometimes challenging puzzle. The goal is to put the black king in checkmate by switching the position of two pieces. No actual chess moves are made. The pieces simply swap squares.

Any two pieces can switch places. Colours do not matter. You can trade white with white, black with black, or white with black. Switching the black king is a common trick.

One important rule is that *the position after the switch must be legal*. A position is legal if it could occur in an actual game. This rule implies several things.

  a) A pawn cannot be put on the 1st or 8th rank.

  b) Both kings cannot be in check.

  c) There must be a way to reach the resulting position with a legal white move. Impossible checks, especially double checks, are a frequent "violation".

  d) In some cases, *retrograde analysis* may be required to decide if the position after a switch is legal.
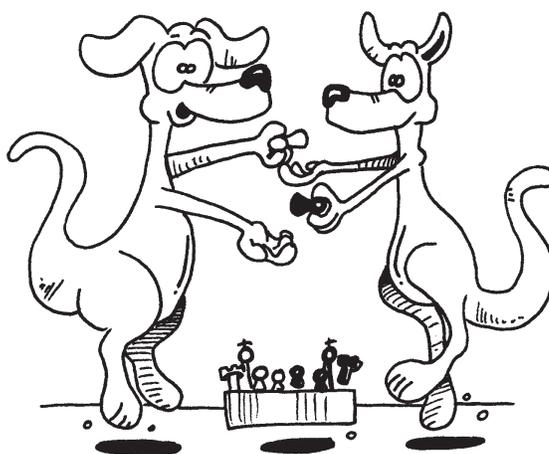
Our first switcheroo should be fairly easy for most players. As usual, the puzzles become more difficult as the column goes on.

Switcheroo 05
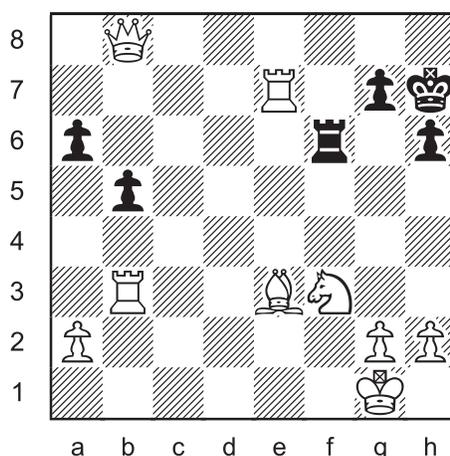
Switch two pieces so that Black is in checkmate.

Any two pieces may trade places. Colours do not matter.
The resulting position must be legal. No fair placing both
kings in check or putting pawns on the 1st or 8th rank.
Do not place the black king in an impossible check.

For problems 1-4 and more information on switcheroos, see column 04 in the *Puzzling Side* archives.
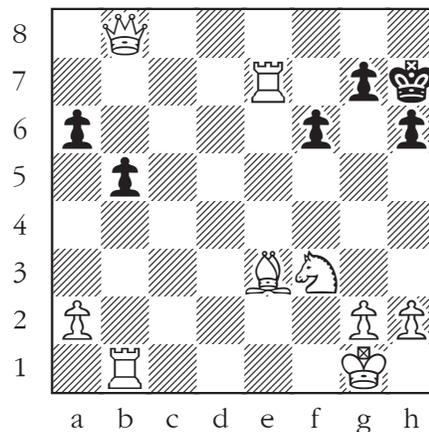
Switcheroo 06
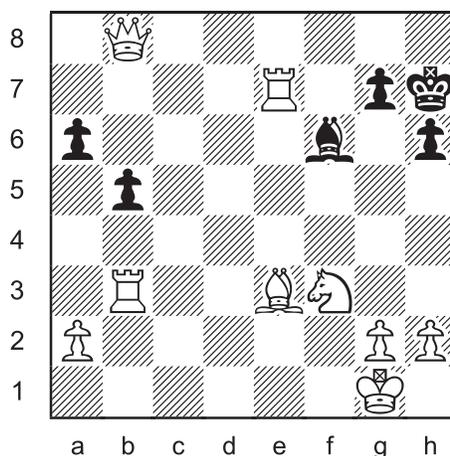
Switch two pieces so that
Black is in checkmate.

As you no doubt noticed, the only difference between puzzles 5 and 6 is the black piece on f6. Problems like these are called "twins".

A *twin* is a chess composition which is almost identical to another. A small change is made to the position, and that difference is enough to alter the solution.
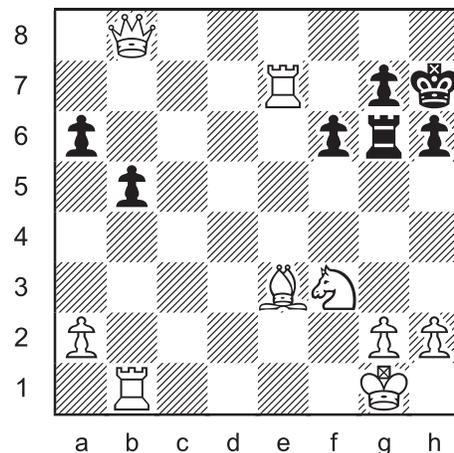
Switcheroo 07

Switch two pieces so that
Black is in checkmate.

Switcheroo 7 is different in two ways from 5 and 6. The black piece on f6 is a pawn and there is a white rook on b1 instead of b3.

In the strictest sense, a *twin* may only have a single change from the original. Composers call a position with two differences an "approximate twin". The special terminology in the world of chess problems is astoundingly extensive!

Even when there are three or more versions of a problem, they are still normally referred to as "twins". However, the terms "triplets", "quadruplets", and "multiples" are occasionally seen.
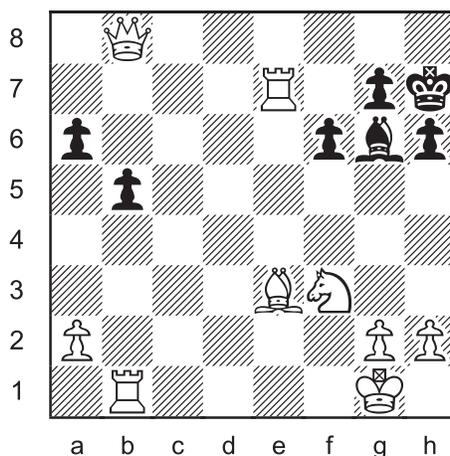
Switcheroo 08

Switch two pieces so that
Black is in checkmate.

Switcheroos are a popular exercise at school chess clubs. They appeal to players of all skill levels. Multiple puzzles with a similar setting, like those in this column, can be very entertaining. They are also very easy for the instructor to set up on the demonstration board!?
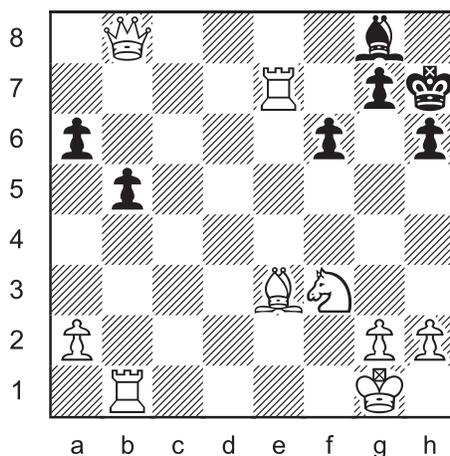
Switcheroo 09

Switch two pieces so that
Black is in checkmate.

Puzzle 9 gave us quintuplets and 10 will be sextuplets. The basic arrangement of pieces underlying all these switcheroos (defined by problemists as the "zero-position") is very fertile.
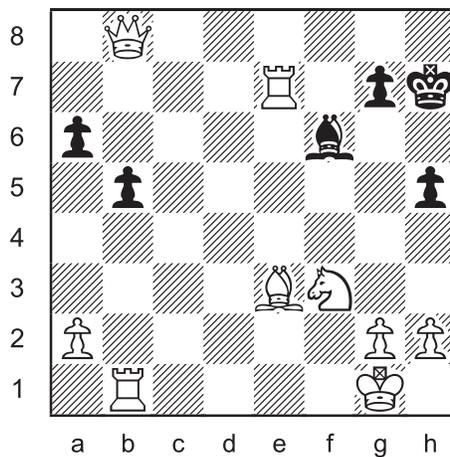
Switcheroo 10

Switch two pieces so that
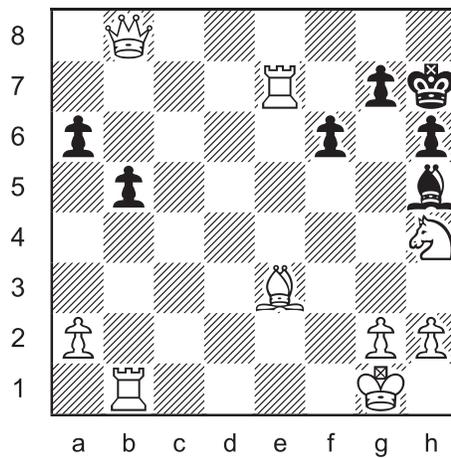Black is in checkmate.

Switcheroo 11

Switch two pieces so that
Black is in checkmate.

In our final two puzzles, the white knight takes up a new post on h4, with a black bishop on h5.
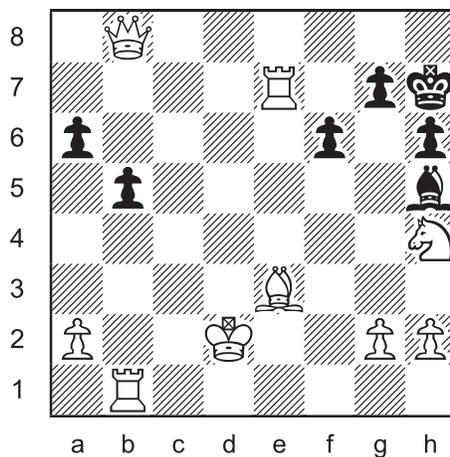
Switcheroo 12

Switch two pieces so that
Black is in checkmate.

The following position makes the ninth twin. Do you know the word for a group of nine which corresponds to 'triplets' and 'quadruplets'?
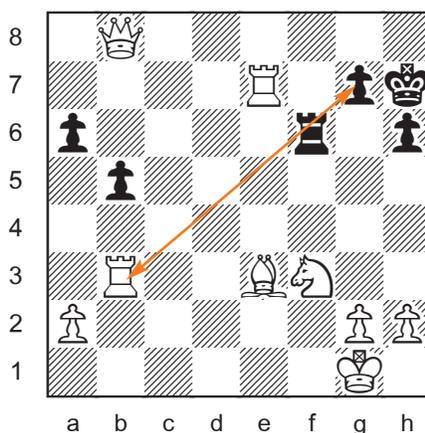
Switcheroo 13

Switch two pieces so that
Black is in checkmate.

SOLUTIONS

All switcheroos by J. Coakley. 5 and 6 are from *Winning Chess Puzzles For Kids Volume 2* (2010). The rest are *ChessCafe.com* originals (2012).

PDF hyperlinks. You can advance to the solution of any puzzle by clicking on the underlined title above the diagram. To return to the puzzle, click on the title above the solution diagram.
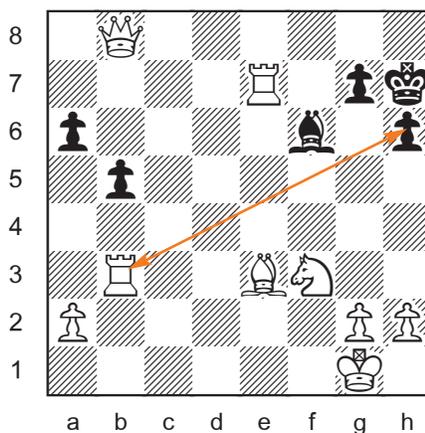
Switcheroo 05

Rb3↔g7

The white rook on b3 and the black pawn on g7 switch places.

(Be3↔Kh7? is an impossible double check by the two white rooks.)
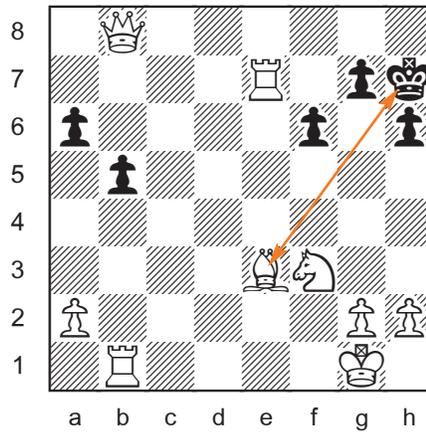
Switcheroo 06

Rb3↔h6

The black pawn on g7 is pinned.
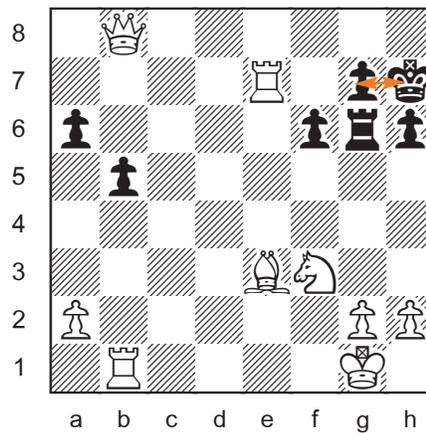
Switcheroo 07

Be3↔Kh7

The white bishop controls d3 from h7.

(Qb8↩g7? puts a pawn on the 8th rank.)
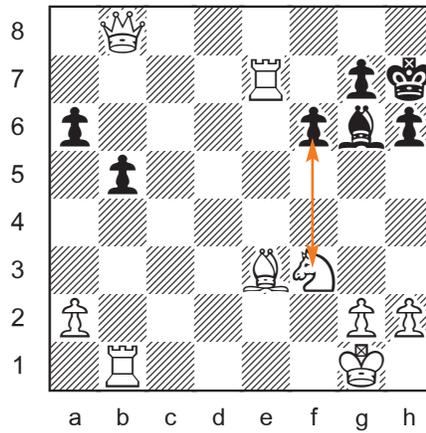(Rb1↩g7? and Rb1↩h6? put a pawn on the 1st rank.)

Switcheroo 08

g7↔Kh7

For a bonus puzzle **(08b)**, place the black rook on f5 instead of g6.
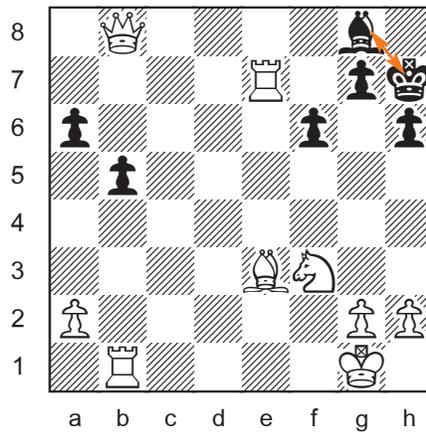Then the switch is Be3↔Rf5.

Switcheroo 09

Nf3↔f6

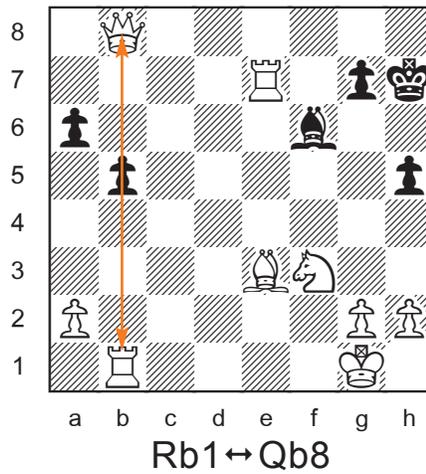The black bishop now blocks the king's flight to g6 and the black g-pawn is still pinned.

For a bonus puzzle **(#9b)**, place a white bishop on f3 instead of a knight. Then the switch is h6↔Kh7.
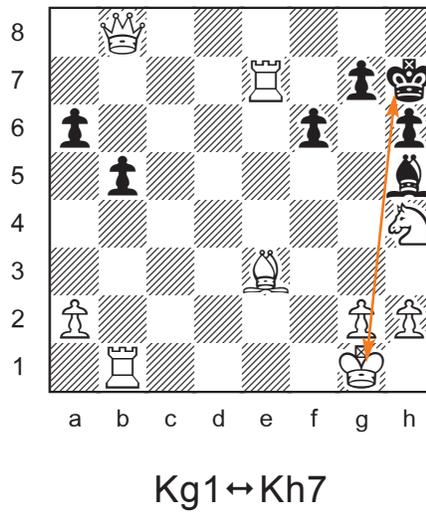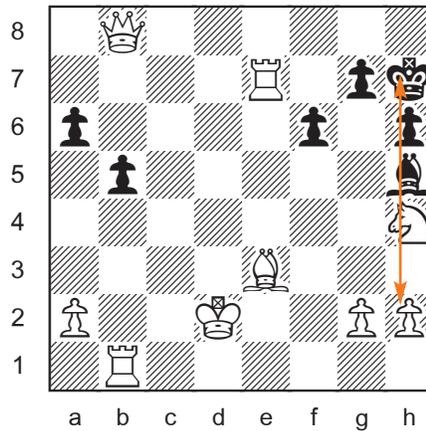
Switcheroo 10

Bg8↔Kh7

Switcheroo 11

Rb1↔Qb8

Switcheroo 12

Kg1↔Kh7

The last move was a double check by Bc1-e3#.

(The black bishop on h5 prevents g7↔Kh7.)

Switcheroo 13

h2↔Kh7

Nine offspring from one birth are called *nonuplets*. I'm probably not the only person who had to look it up.

If we add in bonus puzzles 08b and 09b, there are eleven twins: *undecaplets*.

Until next time!