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# Alice and the chess master

**Partial interpretation of Alice's chess game resulting of the book of Lewis CARROLL « Through the looking glass and what Alice found there »**

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Number in which Alice will discover the art of chess and splendours which can hide in.



**« Reader, do you dare to penetrate once more into the cave of the big magician ? If you lack courage, stop there, close these pages, do not read it more ! »**

**Lewis CARROLL (The Walking-Stick of the Destiny)**

## The last message (coded !) of Lewis CARROLL.

Domaine de Lacroix-Laval, May 10th 2007

Here is the last message (coded !) that Lewis CARROLL did address in December 1896 to the chess players and his readers of the book "Through the looking glass and what Alice found there" which is the sequel of Alice in wonderland.

### Preface to 1896 edition

As the chess-problem, given on the previous page, has puzzled some of my readers, it may be well to explain that it is correctly worked out, so far as the *moves* are concerned. The *alternation* of Red and White is perhaps not so strictly observed as it might be, and the "castling" of the three Queens is merely a way of saying that they entered the palace; but the "check" of the White King at move 6, the capture of the Red Knight at move 7, and the final "checkmate" of the Red King, will be found, by any one who will take the trouble to set the pieces and play the moves as directed, to be strictly in accordance with the laws of the game.

The new words, in the poem "Jabberwocky", have given rise to some differences of opinion as to their pronunciation: so it may be well to give instructions on *that* point also. Pronounce "slithy" as if it were the two words "sly, the": make the "g" *hard* in "gyre" and "gimble" : and pronounce "rath" to rhyme with "bath".

For this sixty-first thousand, fresh electrypes have been taken from the wood-blocks (which, never having been used for printing from, are in as good condition as when first cut in 1871), and the whole book has been set up afresh with new type. If the artistic qualities of this reissue fall short, in any particular, of those possessed by the original issue, it will not be for want of painstaking on the part of author, publisher, or printer.

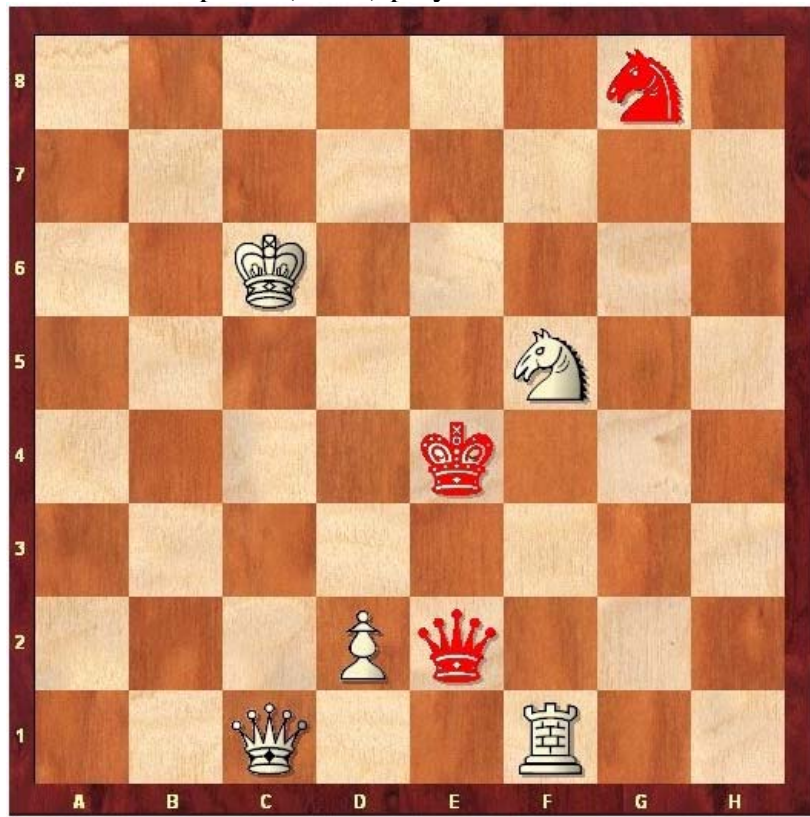
I take this opportunity of announcing that the Nursery "Alice", hitherto priced at four shillings, net, is now to be had on the same terms as the ordinary shilling picture books – although I feel sure that it is, in every quality (except the *text* itself, in which I am not qualified to pronounce), greatly superior to them. Four shillings was a perfectly reasonable price to charge, considering the very heavy initial outlay I had incurred : still, as the Public have practically said, "We will *not* give more than a shilling for a picture-book, however artistically got-up, "I am content to reckon my outlay on the book as so much dead loss, and, rather than let the little ones, for whom it was written, go without it, I am selling it at a price which is, to me, much the same thing as *giving* it away.

Christmas, 1896

Lewis CARROLL

And here is the diagram which is before the story with this text :

The white pawn (Alice) plays and wins in 11 moves



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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Alice meets red Queen</li> <li>2 Alice through <b>d3</b> (by railway) moves to <b>d4</b> (<i>Tweedledum et Tweedledee</i>)</li> <li>3 Alice meets white Queen (with shawl)</li> <li>4 Alice moves to <b>d5</b> (<i>shop, river, shop</i>)</li> <li>5 Alice moves to <b>d6</b> (<i>Humpty Dumpty</i>)</li> <li>6 Alice moves to <b>d7</b> (<i>forest</i>)</li> <li>7 ♖xe7 – White Knight takes red Knight</li> <li>8 Alice moves to <b>d8</b> (<i>coronation</i>)</li> <li>9 Alice becomes <b>Queen</b></li> <li>10 Alice castles (<i>feast</i>)</li> <li>11 Alice takes red Queen, and wins. ♔xe8 checkmate.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 ♔h5 – The red Queen moves to h5</li> <li>2 ♕c4 - The white Queen (<i>after shawl</i>) moves to c4</li> <li>3 ♕c5 (<i>the white Queen becomes sheep</i>)</li> <li>4 ♖f8 (<i>the white Queen leaves egg on shelf</i>)</li> <li>5 ♕c8 (<i>flying from the red Knight</i>)</li> <li>6 ♗e7+ The red Knight moves to e7 (<i>check</i>)</li> <li>7 ♖f5 - The white Knight moves to f5</li> <li>8 ♕e8 - Red Queen moves to e8 (<i>examination</i>)</li> <li>9 Queens castle</li> <li>10 ♖a6 (<i>soup</i>)</li> </ol> |
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### Extract of chapter III :

**Visual exercises to train oneself (not to learn how to play chess but to learn Mr. Lewis CARROLL's rules of play !).**

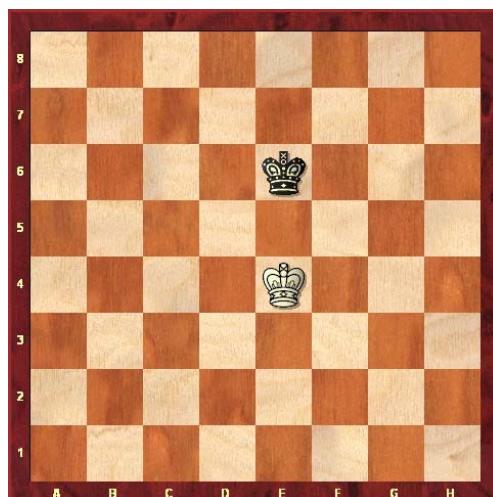
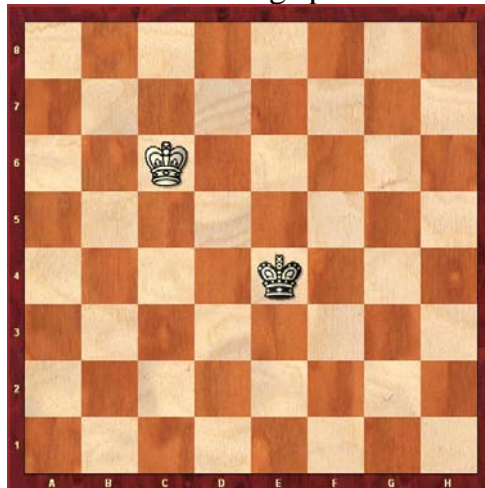
Before to go further, so that the reader understands the author, here are some additional concepts well known by the chess players and some symbolic sights of Lewis CARROLL !

#### Chess player language :

Reader could see that the author chose red and white chess sets (like the mirror chess board of the Domaine de Lacroix-Laval !).

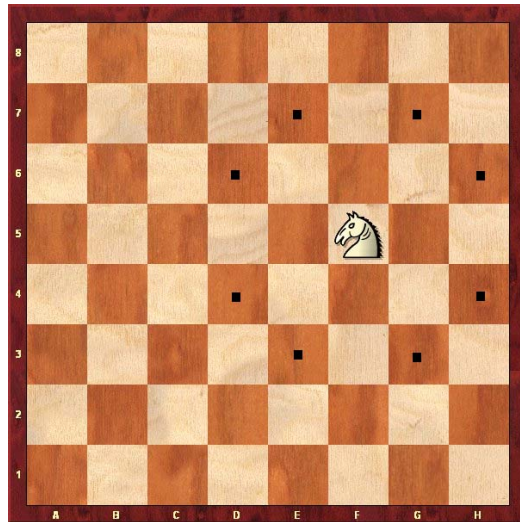
*(Like Lewis CARROLL, we will use the red colour instead of the black.)*

All club chess players know that 2 Kings placed like this are in *opposition*.

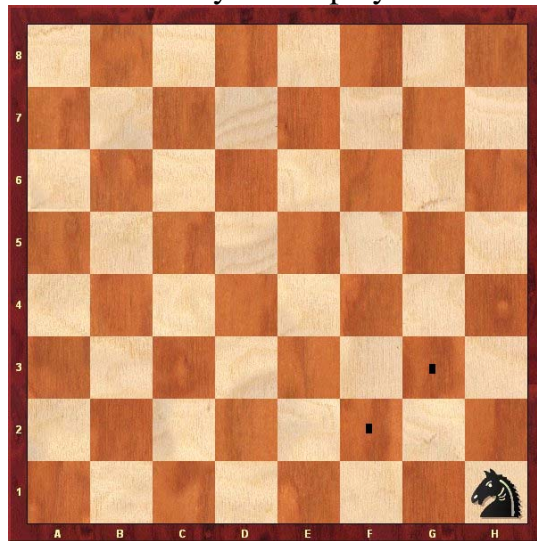


What are the characters who are often in opposition in Alice's *neighbours* ?

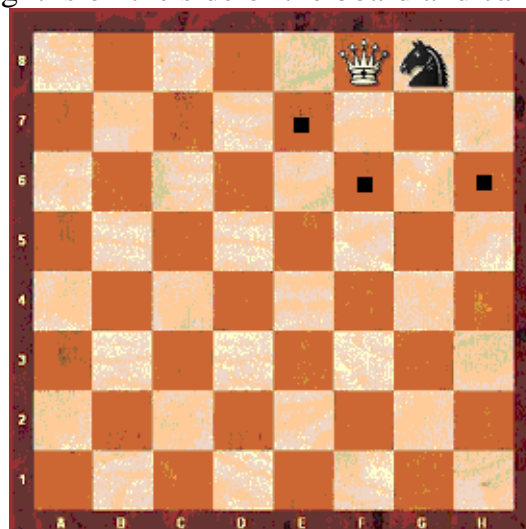
A Knight moves like this. The Knight changes of colour of square in each move. A knight placed here *radiates*. He can go to 8 squares.



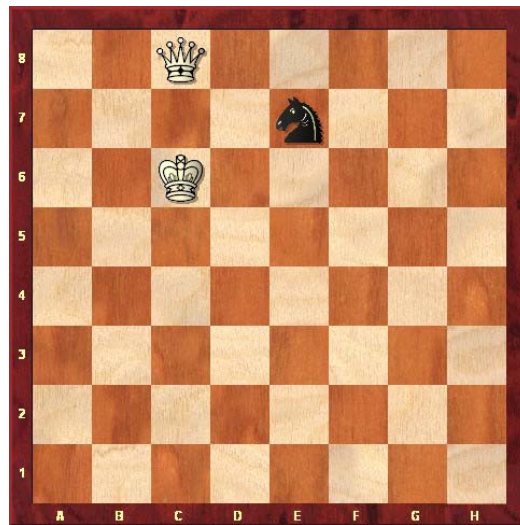
A Knight placed like this is totally out of play. He can only go to 2 squares.



A Queen placed like this totally dominates the Knight because anywhere he moves he will be taken. This Knight is on the side of the board and can only go to 3 squares.



Put the Knight on the square where he will be able to take both the King and the Queen. Here is it : we call this a “fork” ! (Imagine that this King and this Queen are husband and wife).

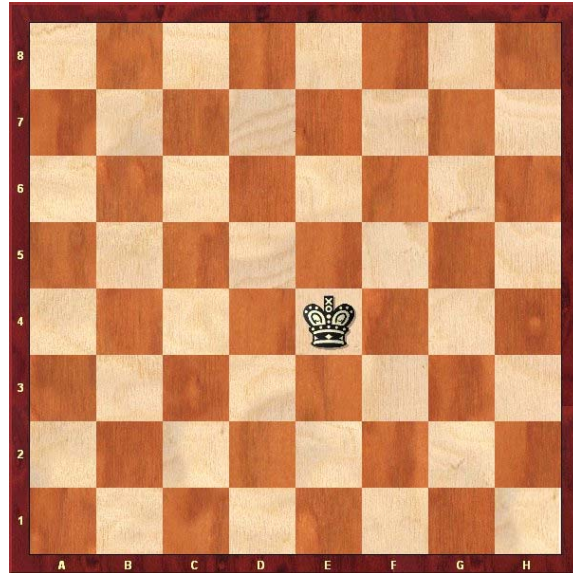


**Chess sets have a number of points well defined.** One never knows, if you find a Carroll’s fetich number somewhere (42 for example !) or one of his *multiples* (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 21). This can be useful !

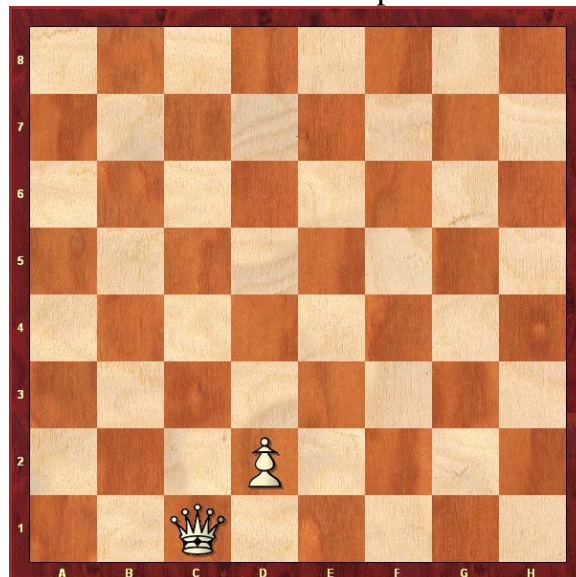
- Queen’s value = 10 points
- Rook’s value = 5 points
- Knight’s value = 3 points
- Pawn’s value = 1 point
- Bishop’s value = 3 points (We can note that « bishop » has religious significance in english too and that there is no bishop in this game !)
- King’s value = undefined (0 point or all if you want !)

**Lewis CARROLL's language :**

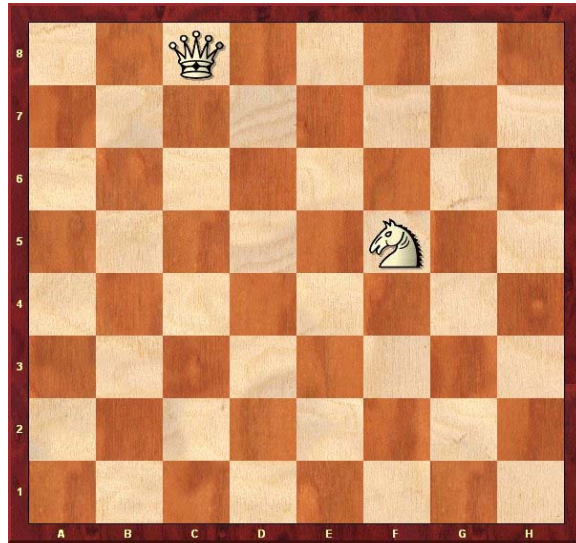
Put the red King on the center of the board, like a heart which beats. (Moreover, the way the chess sets are drawn chosen by the author makes that the red King looks like a heart !).



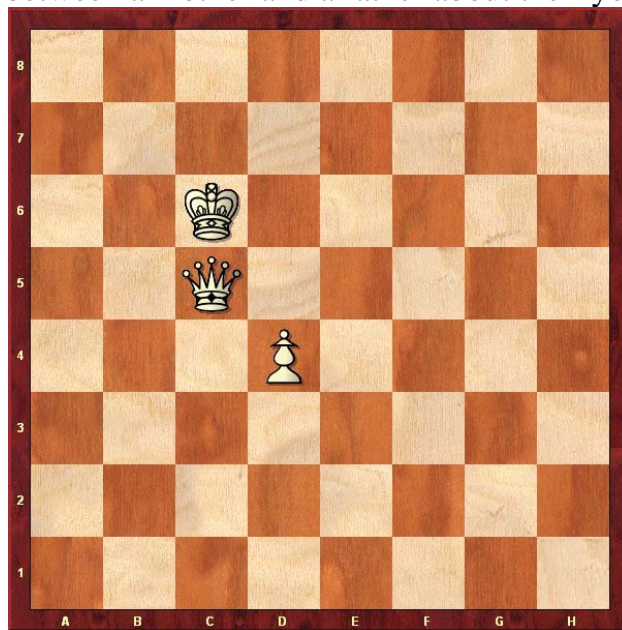
Imagine this Queen give the hand to this pawn which is none other than a young girl. This young girl always want to go far. Find the moves of the young girl who always goes right in front of her and of the Queen (her mother) who wants unceasingly to accompany her or precede her since her first escape.



Imagine that this Queen looks and can touch this Knight.

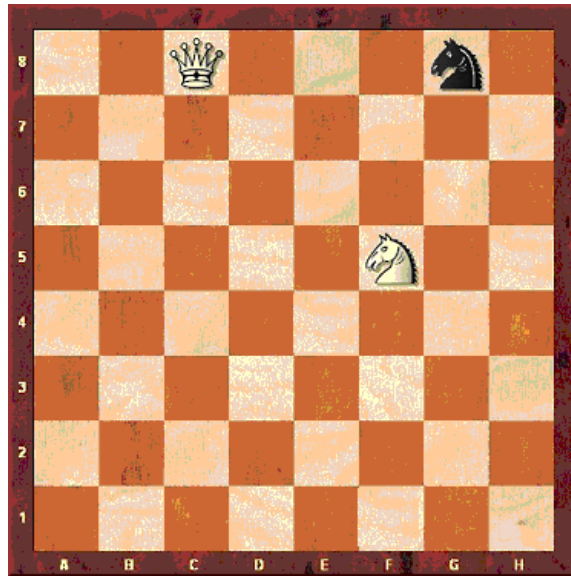


Conversation between a mother and a father about their young daughter !

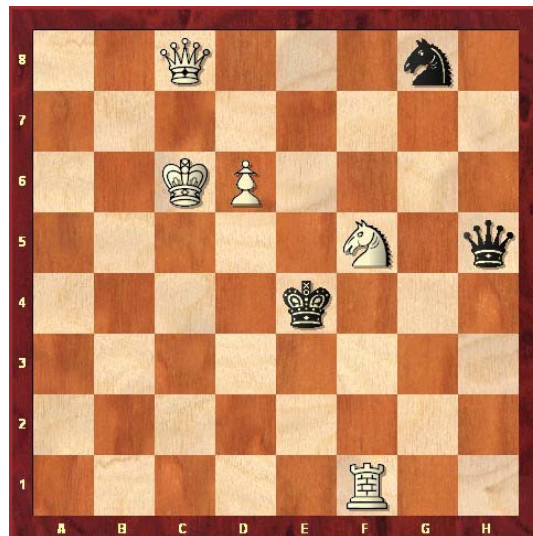




Exercise : Find the square of the white Queen so that she can touch both Knights : with the glance !! Here !



Play of glances : several chess sets look at each others and converse. Supervise themselves, observe themselves, etc. (Train yourself with this new chess language in inventing positions like Carroll !).



Finally and step by step, we begin to reach the level of Mr. CARROLL... (Only in this chess game, of course !).

**Now it's up to you, dear readers, to replay the moves on page 3 proposed by the author and to find to what (to who?) can correspond these chess sets.**

**The list of moves must already be less mysterious for you...**

**However, to go further, don't forget to visit or visit again the exhibition « Gardens and Wonders : Alice's mirror »**

**Reflection and walks are guaranteed !**

*NB : For adults who always don't understand this symbolic language of Carroll, you may begin to think taking holidays. If it's impossible, write to Mr. Lewis CARROLL, 42Christ Church avenue, Dodgsonstown, WONDERLAND.*

*We have never seen a child fail to understand this language. However, if you want nevertheless to write a letter to Mr. CARROLL, please do not hesitate. We are sure he will be glad of it.*

Domaine de Lacroix-Laval, May 10th 2007.

Christophe LEROY,  
President of Rhone Chess Comittee  
and délégué général of Lyon Olympic Chess.

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**« Alice and the Chess master » in Domaine of Lacroix-Laval**

**► « Tea party » at 16.00**

Solution of the chess game of « Through the looking glass » the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month, June 17<sup>th</sup>, July 15<sup>th</sup>, August 19<sup>th</sup> and September 16<sup>th</sup>, followed by a tasting of frozen tea

Free access.

Appointment in castle's gardens.

**► For the public, from 7 to 77 year « Alice's chess game »**

5 wednesday from 17.00 to 18.00 (May 23<sup>th</sup> ; June 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> ; July 11<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>). Appointment at 17.00 behing the castle (enter of the museum).

**► Philatelic memories, stamps and seal 1st day "Alice and the chess master"**

Friday June 8<sup>th</sup> from 14.00 to 17.00

Appointment behing the castle (enter of the museum).

Information « reservation reception » : Karine SERAFIN : 04 78 87 65 65.

**► Without forgetting « Rhône Vacances » animations from July**

9<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> from Monday to Friday from 15.00 to 18.00.

Contact Comité Rhône Echecs : 06 10 60 60 75