

CHESS ENDGAMES FOR KIDS

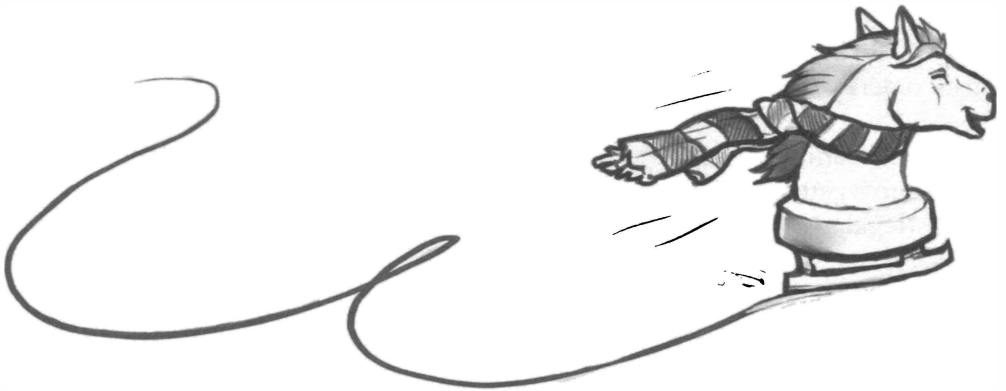


**Featuring 50
Endgame Lessons**

Karsten Müller

Chess Endgames for Kids

Karsten Müller



THE W-MANOEUVRE

GAMBIT

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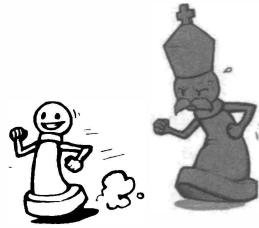
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Introduction

This book is for every chess-player who has learned the rules, played some games and studied basic tactics, but knows very little about the endgame. It starts at the very beginning, with the basic mates, such as forcing checkmate with a queen or rook against a bare king. I go on to provide the essential endgame knowledge that you will need as you start to face more challenging opponents.

We shall be focusing on endgames where both sides have no more than a king, some pawns and one other piece. Studying the fundamental motifs is highly rewarding as endgame theory doesn't change rapidly, and this knowledge will be useful as long as you play chess; it will not get outdated like opening analysis. Endgame training also highlights the strong sides and limitations of all the pieces very clearly, which will help you in the other phases of the game too.

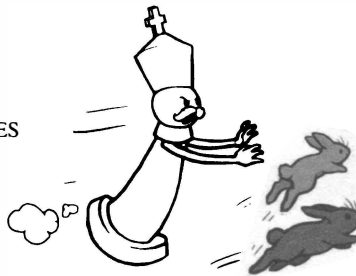
Unfortunately, simply reading this book is not sufficient. Endgame play requires practical skills, as well as theoretical knowledge. You should also solve the exercises and practice the key positions and techniques against a friend or a computer. Only then can you really be sure that you have mastered, e.g., how to checkmate with a rook, or that you know how to defend a standard rook ending.

I consider pawn endings and rook endings the most important endgame topics. Pawn endings form the basic foundation of endgame theory. Almost all other endings can lead to a pawn ending through an exchange of pieces, so it is very hard to assess 'higher' endgames without a knowledge of pawn endings. Pawn endgames also provide very good training in the calculation of long variations, since neither side has a wide choice of moves at their disposal. Rook endings are the ones that occur most often in practice, and there are many positions where knowing the right method or manoeuvre can make the difference between winning, drawing or losing.

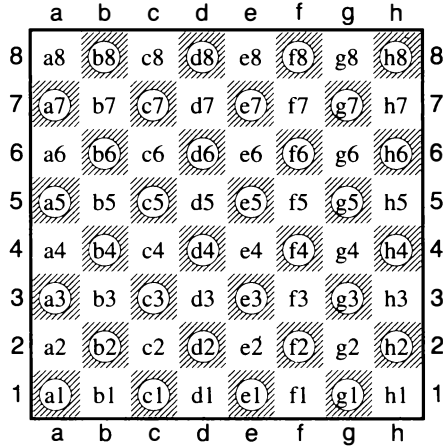
Finally I want to thank Gambit Publications, and especially Graham Burgess for his superb editing work and help supplying the exercises.

*Karsten Müller
Hamburg 2015*

CHASING TWO HARES



Algebraic Notation



The chess notation used in this book is the simple, algebraic notation in use throughout the world. It can be learnt by anyone in just a few minutes.

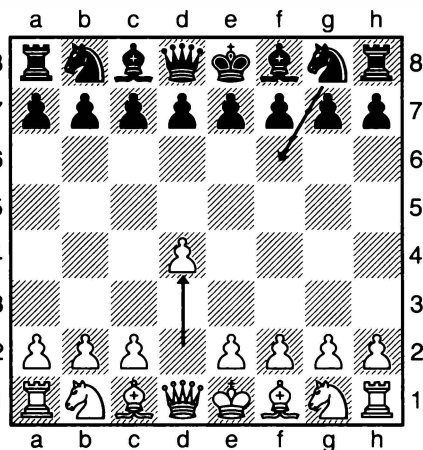
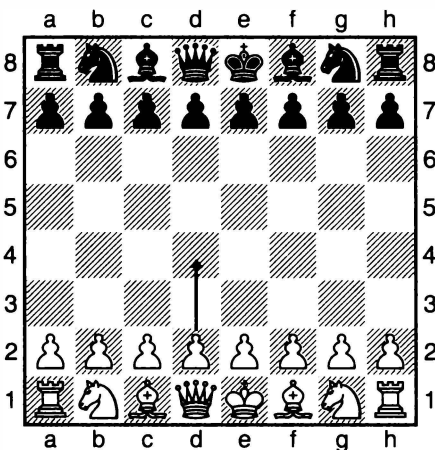
As you can see from the chessboard above, the files are labelled a-h (going from left to right) and the ranks are labelled 1-8. This gives each square its own unique reference point. The pieces are described as follows:

- Knight = 
- Bishop = 
- Rook = 
- Queen = 
- King = 

Pawns are not given a symbol. When they move, simply the *destination square* is given.

The following additional symbols are also used:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|---------|------------------|------|
| Check | = + | Good move | = ! |
| Double Check | = ++ | Bad move | = ? |
| Checkmate | = # | Interesting idea | = !? |
| Capture | = x | Inaccurate move | = ?! |
| Castles kingside | = 0-0 | Brilliant move | = !! |
| Castles queenside | = 0-0-0 | Disastrous move | = ?? |
| See diagram 2 (etc.) | = (2) | | |



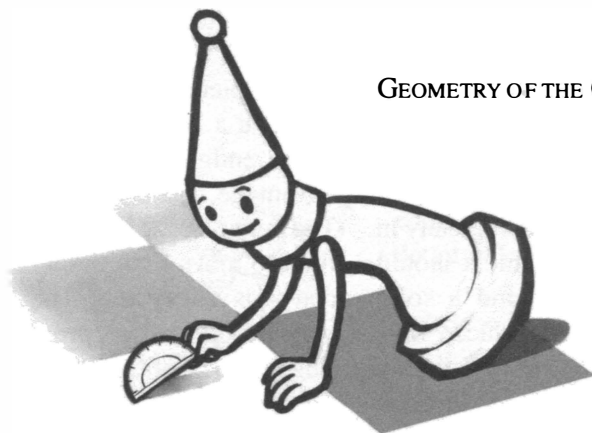
In the left-hand diagram above, White is about to play the move **1 d4**. The **1** indicates the move-number, and **d4** the destination square of the white pawn.

In the right-hand diagram, White's **1 d4** move is complete. Black is about to reply **1... Nf6** (moving his knight to the **f6-square** on his *first move*).

When a pawn promotes, the piece chosen is written immediately after the square where the pawn promotes. Thus **e8 Q** means that White moved his pawn to e8 and promoted to a queen.

In this book, there are many *game references*. This is a shorthand way of saying that a specific position and sequence of moves occurred in a game between two particular players. White's name is given first, followed by Black's name and the place and year where the game was played (e.g., Fischer-Spassky, Reykjavik 1972).

GEOMETRY OF THE CHESSBOARD



What's So Special About the Endgame?

A chess game generally has three stages: the opening, the middlegame and the endgame. In the opening, the players fight to bring out their pieces to good squares. In the middlegame they pursue a variety of plans while countering those of the opponent. They might attack the enemy king or simply try to dominate the position. In the middlegame, the king needs to be carefully protected, and every move is precious. However, once there have been many piece exchanges, we reach an endgame. How does this differ from a middlegame? Why do chess-players even make a distinction between the two? Mating attacks and sacrifices are still possible in the endgame, and the right to move can still be precious, but there are some major differences too. Firstly, the battle often centres around the fight to promote pawns, while long-term planning and lengthy calculation become more important. There are two other specific factors that must be noted:

The King

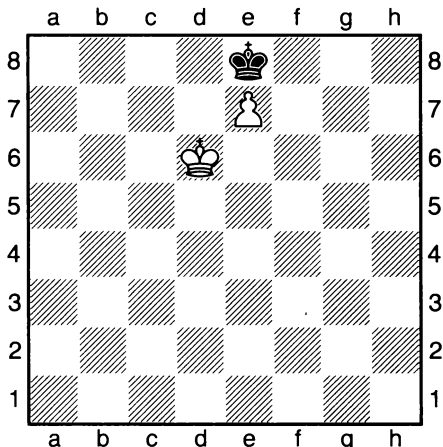
The role of the king changes completely in the endgame. In the middlegame it should usually be tucked away behind a solid wall of pawns. Due to the reduced firepower in the endgame, the king can play an active role instead. Indeed, not just *can* but *must*. If you don't use your king but the opponent uses his king, then you will

be fighting with one piece less. The king is well suited to blockade enemy pawns and support its own pawns. It can also cause havoc by invading the enemy position, attacking pawns and pieces, and even join in a mating attack on his opposite number! So when you feel you have reached an endgame, be sure to include your king in your active plans, as soon as it is safe to do so.

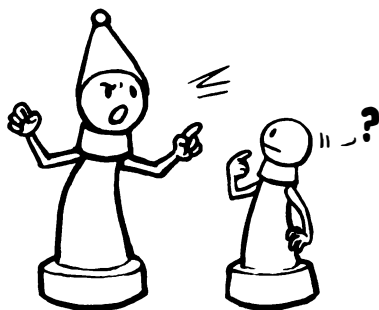
The Right to Move – or is it a Burden?

In the opening and middlegame, the right to move is all-important. Sometimes it is worth sacrificing material just to gain time to play one extra move. That can also be true in the endgame, but there is another side to the coin. For a defender whose pieces and pawns are already on their best squares, the fact that he *has to* move can cause his downfall, as it forces him to move a piece away from its best square or to make a fatal pawn weakness. Experienced endgame players use this to their advantage, and base their plans around it. The name for this situation – where the right to move becomes an unpleasant burden – is **zugzwang**. This German word may be difficult to pronounce for many English speakers, but you'll soon be using the idea in your own games – and may already have done so – even if you can't quite get your tongue around the word itself.

Zugzwang can prove more powerful than direct threats and may even be the only way to win. Consider the following position:



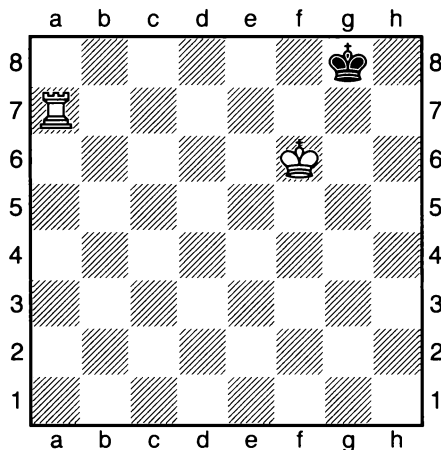
This is one of the simplest endgames and also one of the most important. Can White win? Not if it is his turn to move, as 1 ♖e6 is stalemate, and otherwise he must move his king away and Black can then take the pawn on e7. But if it is Black's turn to move, he must play 1... ♜f7. White replies 2 ♜d7 and next move 3 e8♚, when he has a whole extra queen, with an easy win. Black was in zugzwang! If he could



BISHOP AND WRONG
ROOK'S PAWN

simply 'pass' and leave his king on e8, White would have no way to win. But the rules of chess don't allow that. For more details, see Lesson 7.

The next example underlines the importance of zugzwang in the endgame.



White is a whole rook up. Does he really need to use something as subtle as zugzwang to win? In fact, he does. White could threaten mate by playing 1 ♖g6, but Black can reply 1... ♜f8, parrying the threat of 2 ♜a8#. But if White plays a waiting move, such as 1 ♜b7, then Black has to make a move; he would like to 'pass' but he can't. 1... ♜f8 allows instant mate by 2 ♜b8#, while 1... ♜h8 is met by 2 ♜g6 and mate next move by 3 ♜b8#. We look at the ending of king and rook vs king in more detail in Lessons 3 and 4.

But zugzwang also has another side: what if *both* sides' pieces are in their best positions, so whoever is to move would be in zugzwang? This is called **mutual zugzwang**, and near such positions great