

Solution to 64 Times Square

By Lee Zen

The puzzle is a chess puzzle. The title “64 Times Square” gives some indication as there are 64 squares on a chess board. Examining the locations within the journal entry all indicate squares on a chess board (e.g. Avenue B at 5th street is b5). Other clues include the pieces (Pawn, Queen, etc.).

The next step is to attempt to place pieces or move them based upon the instructions presented in the journal entry. There are pawns present at b5 and c7. What color are the pawns? The instructions in the journal indicate that the pawn at c7 is promoted (“promotion for the ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ single”) to a Queen (the artist for “Bohemian Rhapsody”) and the author of the journal is the one receiving the promotion. Thus, the author has the white pieces and has two white pawns at b5 and c7. One could also use the *italics* or **bold** to deduce the color of the pieces. [Figure 1]

The first move is moving the pawn at c7 to c8 and promoting to a queen. The next move comes when the black knight (indicated by the capitalized and bolded “Night”) captures the pawn at c8. [Figure 2] Next, the white bishop recaptures at c8 as indicated by the priest coming.

The journal also gives us the position for the black king. Note that the “A” is capitalized in “A corner” and the priest mentions “his own territory.” Thus, the black king is at a8.

The author now considers “passing” his rival, which in French would be “en passant,” also a chess term. The only way for *en passant* to occur is for the opponent to move a pawn from its starting position two spaces. White has a pawn at b5, capable of capturing en passant and we know that black could not have had a pawn at c7. Thus, the black pawn was at a7.

The next move then is ... a7-a5 for black with white giving up the en passant option. [Figure 3] The reason is because it was lead to an impasse — in other words, stalemate. For stalemate to occur, black must have no moves available. Thus, it is likely that the king is alone in the corner as we have no indications of any other black pieces on the board. If white captures en passant, that places the white pawn at a6, preventing the king from moving there. Another piece or pieces must prevent the king from moving to a7 and b8. We cannot be sure yet what piece or pieces those might be except that it is not the white king (it cannot have been at any position to cover those squares).

Finally, the journal entry indicates that the black and white pawns should continue to be pushed forward for resolution. This comes from the text “advance forward” and “continue to push forward.” Thus, after ... a5, white moves b6, black returns with a4, white pushes b7 for checkmate. Why checkmate? We knew that a7 and b8 were covered for the stalemate to occur and pushing the black pawn forward would not change that situation. Of course, the pawn cannot be captured because the bishop at c8 protects it. [Figure 4]

The final part of the puzzle indicates knowing where the “Night” and the “Darkness” come from. The first step is to determine what pieces this is looking for. “Night” could refer to either a black or white knight. “Darkness” refers to a black piece. The idea is that the author wants to know where they came from, implying that in the story, these pieces are never explicitly discussed. The only black piece that is implied is the black pawn on a7 and this is the “Darkness.” Meanwhile, the piece that prevents stalemate is not explicitly mentioned either. Thus, it must be a white knight (“Night”) and therefore sits at c6 to cover both b8 and a7. The white king is not accounted for either, but the journal author does not care about its location. (Refer to [Figure 1] for initial position)

Finally, the last paragraph of the journal entry also mentions some food items and their cost. The purpose of this is to illustrate that locations can generate a value by adding the letter value (a = 1, b = 2, etc.) with the number. For example, “1 Hamburger” (h1) is $8 + 1 = 9$. The white knight location c6 is $3+6=9$ and the black pawn is a7 giving $1+7 = 8$. Converting these back to letters gives ‘i’ and ‘h’ respectively forming the word “hi” as the “something nice” to say.

ANSWER: **HI**

Figure 1. Initial Position

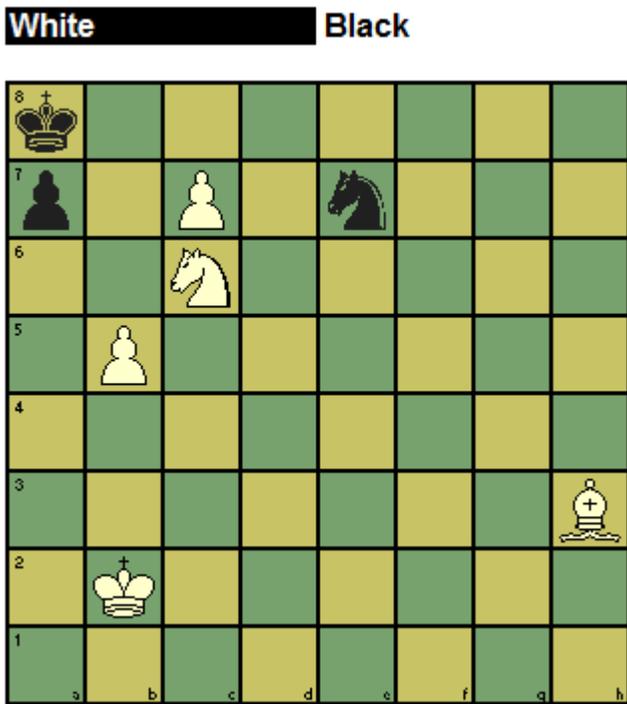


Figure 3. $Bxc8$ a5. En passant leads to stalemate

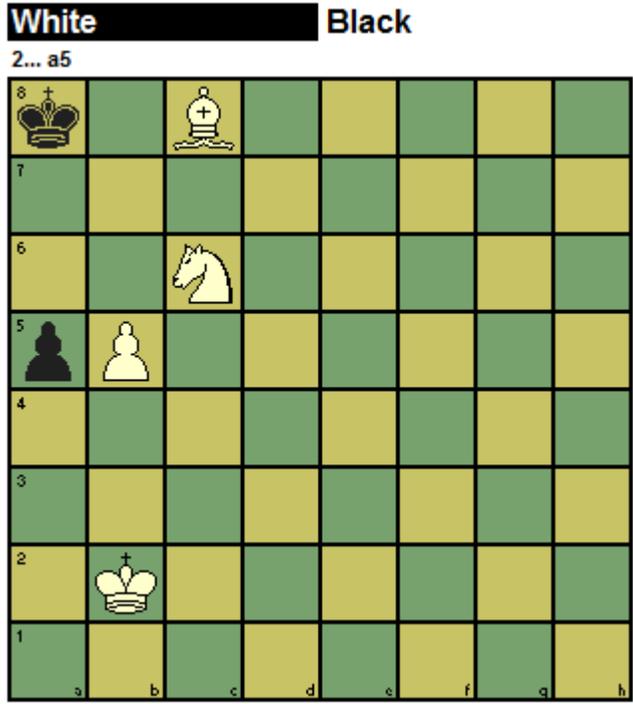


Figure 2. After 1. c8 (Q) Nxc8

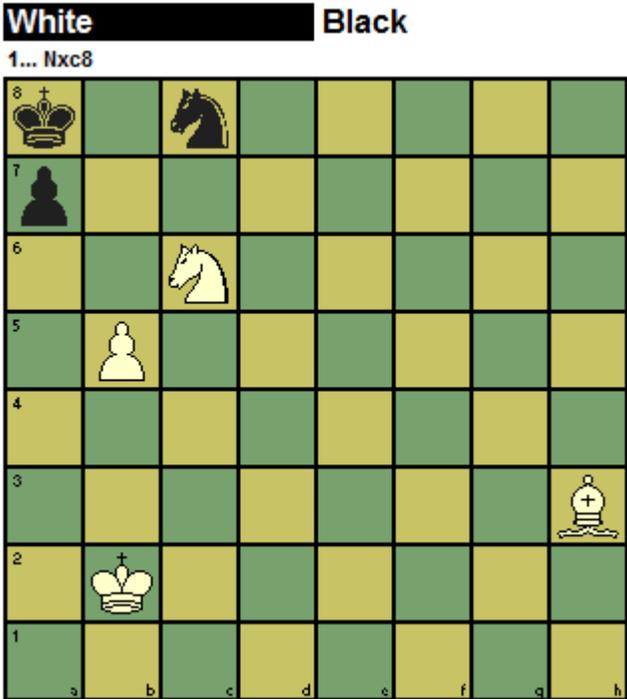


Figure 4. Pawns move forward leading to mate

