

A Happy Solution

Raymund Allen

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The portmanteau, which to Kenneth Dale's strong arm had been little more than a feather-weight on leaving the station, seemed to have grown heavier by magic in the course of the half-mile that brought him to Lord Churt's country house. He put the portmanteau down in the porch with a sense of relief to his cramped arm, and rang the bell.

He had to wait for a few minutes, and then Lord Churt opened the door in person. His round, rubicund face, that would hardly have required any make-up to present an excellent "Mr. Pickwick," beamed a welcome. "Come in, my dear boy, come in. I'm delighted to see you. I wish you a merry Christmas."

It was Christmas Eve, and his manner was bubbling over with the kindness appropriate to the season. He seized the portmanteau and carried it into the hall.

"I am my own footman and parlour-maid and everything else for the moment. Packed all the servants off to a Christmas entertainment at the village school and locked the doors after 'em. MY wife's gone, too, and Aunt Blaxter."

"And Norah?" Kenneth inquired.

"Ah! Norah!" Churt answered, with a friendly clap on Kenneth's shoulder. "Norah's the only person that really matters, of course she is, and quite right too. Norah stayed in to send off a lot of Christmas cards, and I fancy she is still in her room, but she must have disposed of the cards, because they are in the letter-bag. She would have been on the look-out for you, no doubt, but your letter said you were not coming."

"Yes, I know. I thought I couldn't get away, but to-day my chief's heart was softened, and he said he would manage to do without me till the day after to-morrow. So I made a rush for the two-fifteen, and just caught it."

"And here you are as a happy surprise for your poor, disappointed Norah—and for us all," he added, genially.

"I hope you approve of my fiancee," Kenneth remarked, with a smile that expressed confidence as to the answer.

"My dear Kenneth," Churt replied, "I can say with sincerity that I think her both beautiful and charming. We were very glad to ask her here, and her singing is a great pleasure to us." He hesitated for a moment before continuing. "You must forgive us cautious old people if we think the engagement just a little bit precipitate. As Aunt Blaxter was saying to-day, you can't really know her very well on such a short acquaintance, and you know nothing at all of her people."

Kenneth mentally cursed Aunt Blaxter for a vinegar-blooded old killjoy, but did not express any part of the sentiment aloud.

"We must have another talk about your great affair later," Churt went on. "Now come along to th library. I am just finishing a game of chess with Sir James Winslade, and then we'll go and find where Miss Norah is hiding."

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He stopped at a table in the passage that led from the hall to the library, and took a bunch of keys out of his pocket. "She was sending you a letter, so there can be no harm in our rescuing it out of the bag." He unlocked the private letter-bag and turned out a pile of letters on to the table, muttering an occasional comment as he put them back, one by one, in the bag, in his search for the letter he was looking for. "Aunt Emma—ah, I ought to have written to her too; must write for her birthday instead. Mrs. Dunn—same thing there, I'm afraid. Red Cross—hope that won't be lost; grand work, the Red Cross. Ah, here we are: 'Kenneth Dale, Esq., 31, Valpy Street, London, S.W.'" He tumbled the rest of the letters back into the bag and re-locked it. "Put it in your pocket and come along, or Winslade will think I am never coming back."

He was delayed a few moments longer, however, to admit the servants on their return from the village, and he handed the bag to one of them to be taken to the post-office.

In the library Sir James Winslade was seated at the chess-board, and Churt's private secretary, Gornay, a tall, slender figure, with a pale complexion and dark, clever eyes, was watching the game.

The secretary greeted Kenneth rather frigidly, and turned to Churt. "Have the letters gone to post yet?"

"Yes; did you want to send any?"

"Only a card that I might have written," Gornay answered, "but it isn't of any consequence"; and he sat down again beside the chess-players.

Churt had the black pieces, black nominally only, for actually they were the little red pieces of a travelling board. He appeared to have got into difficulties, and, greatly to the satisfaction of Kenneth, who was impatient to go in quest of Norah, the game came to an end after a few more moves.

"I don't see any way out of this," Churt remarked, after a final, perplexed survey of the position. "You come at me, next move, with queen or knight, and, either way, I am done for. It is your game. I resign."

"A lucky win for you, Sir James," Gornay observed.

"Why lucky?" Winslade asked. "You told us we had both violated every sound principle of development the opening, but could Black have done any better for the last few moves?"

"He can win the game as the pieces now stand," Gornay answered.

He proved the statement by making a few moves on the board, and then replaced the pieces as they had been left.

"Well, it's your game fair and square, all the same," Churt remarked good-humouredly. "I should never have found the right reply for myself."

Gornay continued to study the board with attention, and his face assumed an expression of keenness, as though he had discovered some fresh point to interest him in the position. At the moment Kenneth merely chafed at the delay. It was an hour or so later only that the secretary's comments on the game assumed for him a vital importance that made him recall them with particularity.

"If the play was rather eccentric sometimes, I must say it was bold and dashing enough on both sides," Gornay commented. "For instance, when Lord Churt gave up his knight for nothing, and when you gave him the choice of taking your queen with either of two pawns at your queen's; knight's sixth." He turned to Churt. "Possibly you might have done better to take the queen with the bishop's pawn instead of with the rook's."

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"I daresay, I daresay," Churt replied. "I should have probably got into a mess whatever I played. But come along, now, all off you, and I see if we can find some tea."

Kenneth contrived, before entering the drawing-room, to intercept Norah for an exchange of greetings in private, and her face was still radiant with the delight of the unexpected meeting as they entered the room.

After tea Sir James carried off the secretary to keep him company in the smoking-room, and Churt turned to Norah. "You must sing one of the Christmas carols you promised us, and then you young folk may go off to the library to talk over your own private affairs. I know you must both be longing to get away from us old fogies."

"Thank you, Lord Churt, for 'old fogies,' on behalf of your wife and myself, Aunt Blaxter commented. with a mild sarcasm that somehow failed of its intended playful effect. But Norah had sat down at once to the piano, and her voice rang out in a joyous carol before he could frame a suitable reply.

A second carol was asked for, that the others might join in, and in the course of it Kenneth's hand came upon the letter in his pocket. He was opening the envelope as Norah rose from the piano. Her eye caught her own handwriting and she blushed very red. "Be careful, Ken. Don't let anything fall out!" she cried in alarm.

Thus warned, he drew the letter out delicately, being careful to leave in the envelope a little curl of brown hair, a lover's token that she would have been shy to see exposed to the eyes of the others. But, in his care for this, a thin bit of paper fluttered from the fold of the letter to the carpet, and all eyes instinctively followed it. It was a Bank of England note for a thousand pounds.

Kenneth looked at Norah in wonder, but got no enlightenment. Then at Lord Churt, as he bare possibility occurred to his mind that, in a Christmas freak of characteristic generosity, he might have somehow contrived to get it enclosed with her letter. But Churt's dumbfounded expression was not the acting of any genial comedy. His hands trembled as he put on his glasses to compare an entry in his pocket-book with the number on the note. He was the first to break the amazed silence. "This is a most extraordinary thing. This is the identical bank-note that [put into the Red Cross envelope this afternoon as my Christmas gift, the very same that I got for the purpose of sending anonymously, and that you ladies were interested to inspect at breakfast time."

Each looked at the others for an explanation, till all eyes settled on Norah, as the person who might be expected to give one.

Churt looked vexed and troubled, Aunt Blaxter severely suspicious, as she saw that the girl remained silent, with a face that was losing its colour. "As the note was found in a letter sent by Norah, she would be the natural person to explain how it got there," she remarked.

"I haven't the remotest notion how it got there," Norah replied. "I can only say that I did not put it there, and that I never saw it again since breakfast time, until it dropped out of my letter a few moments ago."

"Very strange," Aunt Blaxter remarked, drily. Kenneth turned upon her hotly. "You don't suggest that Norah stole the note, I imagine!"

"My dear people," Churt intervened, soothingly, "do let us keep our heads cool, and not have any unpleasant scene."

Kenneth still glared. "If Norah had put the note into this envelope, she would have referred to it in her letter. I suppose you will accept my word that she doesn't."

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"Read out the postscript, Ken," Norah requested. "Miss Blaxter may like to suggest that it refers to the note." The girl looked at her with a face that was now blazing with anger, and Kenneth read out: "P.S. Don't let anybody see what I am sending you!" It had not occurred to him that it could be taken as anything but a jesting reference to the lock of hair, the note of exclamation at the end giving the effect of "As though I should ever dream you would," or some equivalent. The matter was growing too serious for any shamefacedness, and he produced the lock of hair in explanation. It was cruel luck, he reflected, that the unfortunate postscript should be capable of misconstruction. He had counted on Norah's making a triumphant conquest of the Churt household, and it was exceedingly galling to find her, instead, exposed to an odious suspicion Aunt Blaxter's demeanour was all the more maddening that he could think of no means to prove its unreasonableness. He looked gratefully at Lady Churt, as her gentle voice gave the discussion a fresh turn. "How long has Mr. Gornay been with us?" she asked her husband.

Churt looked shocked. "My dear, we mustn't make any rash insinuations in a matter of this kind. What possible motive could Gornay have for putting the note into Norah's letter, if he meant to steal it? Besides, my evidence clears him."

"Would you mind telling us what you did with the note after you showed it at the breakfast table this morning?" Kenneth asked.

"I'll tell you exactly," Churt answered. "When it had made the round of the breakfast table, I put it back in my pocket-book and kept it in my pocket till this afternoon. It was while we were playing chess that I remembered that the bag would be going to post earlier than usual, and I put the note in the Red Cross envelope with the printed address and stuck it down and put it into the bag. I came straight back to the library, and I remember being surprised at the move I found Winslade had played because he was offering me his queen for nothing. Just at that moment it occurred to my mind that Norah had probably already put her letters into the bag, and that, if so, I might as well lock it at once, for fear of forgetting to do so later. I looked at the chess-board for a few minutes, standing up, and then went and found that Norah's letters were in the bag, and I locked it, and came back and took Winslade's queen."

"But I don't quite see what all that has to do with Mr. Gornay, or how it clears him," Lady Churt remarked.

"Why, my dear, whoever took the note out of one envelope, and put it into the other must have done so in the few minutes between my two visits to the bag. It was the only time that the letter was in the bag without its being locked. And during that time Gornay was watching the chess, so it can't have been him."

"Was he in the library all the time you were playing?" Kenneth asked.

"I can't say that," Churt replied. "I don't think he was. I didn't notice particularly. But I am positive that he did not enter or leave the room while I was standing looking at Winslade's move, and he must have been there when Winslade offered his queen and when I took it, because he was commenting on those very moves after the game was finished, and suggesting that I might have done better to take with the other pawn. You heard him yourself."

"Yes," Kenneth answered. "I follow that. But there is such a thing as picking a lock, you know."

"The makers guarantee that it can't be done to this one," Churt answered "and the key has always been in my possession, so he couldn't have had a duplicate made, even if there had been any time."

Norah interposed in a voice that trembled with indignation. "In short, Lord Churt, you think the evidence conclusive against the only other person, except Sir James Winslade, who was in the house. I have only my word to give against it."

"It is worth all the evidence in the world," Kenneth cried, and she thanked her champion with a bright glance.

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"Lady Churt is quite right," Kenneth went on. "I'd stake my life it was that sneaking Gornay. Have him in here now, and see if his face doesn't show his guilt when I call him a thief."

"Not for the world!" Churt exclaimed, aghast. "We should have a most painful scene. This is no case for rash precipitancy." He assumed the air of judicial solemnity with which, from the local bench, he would fine a rascal five shillings who ought to have gone down for six months. "I entirely refuse to entertain any suspicions of anybody under this roof, guests, servants, or anyone else. It will probably turn out that some odd little accident has occurred, that will seem simple enough when it is explained. On the other hand, it is just conceivable that some evil-disposed person from outside should have got into the house, though I confess I can't understand the motive of their action if they did. In any case, I feel it my duty, for the credit of my household, to have the matter cleared up by the proper authority."

"What do you mean by the proper authority?" Lady Churt asked. "I didn't think the local police were very clever that time when poor Kelpie got stolen."

The Aberdeen terrier at her feet looked up at the sound of his name, and Churt continued: "I shall telephone to Scotland Yard. If Shapland is there, I am sure he would come down at once in his car. He could be here in less than two hours. Until he, or somebody else, arrives I beg that none of you say a word about this affair to anyone who is not now present in this room."

"Quite the most proper course," Aunt Blaxter observed. "It is only right that guilt should be brought home to the proper person, whoever that person may be."

With a tact of which Kenneth had hardly thought him capable, Churt turned to Norah. "I have no doubt Shapland will clear up the mystery for us satisfactorily. Meantime, my dear girl, you and I find ourselves in the same boat, for there is only my word for it that I ever put the note into the Red Cross envelope at all."

The kindness of his manner brought the tears to her eyes, and Kenneth took her away to the library.

"Fancy their thinking I was a thief—a thief, Ken—a common mean thief!"

"Nonsense, my darling girl," he said. "Nobody could believe any such rubbish."

"That odious Aunt Blaxter does, at any rate. She as good as said so." She sat down in a chair, and began to grow calmer, while he paced about the room, angry but thoughtful.

"I was glad I had you to stick up for me, Ken, and Lord Churt is an old dear."

"He's a silly old dear, all the same," he answered. "He has more money than he knows what to do with, but fancy fluttering a thousand-pound note through the Christmas post, to get lost among all the robins and good wishes!"

They were interrupted at this point by the entry of Gornay.

"I am not going to stay," he said, in answer to their not very welcoming expressions. "I have only come to ask a quite small favour. I am having a great argument with Sir James about character-reading from handwriting, and I want specimens from people we both know. Any little scrap will do."

Kenneth took up a sheet of note-paper from a writing table and wrote, "All is not gold that glitters," and Norah added below, "Birds of a feather flock together." It seemed the quickest way to get rid of him.

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Gornay looked up at the sheet with a not quite satisfied air. "I would rather have had something not written specially. Nobody ever writes quite naturally when they know that it is for this sort of purpose. You haven't got an old envelope, or something like that?"

Neither could supply what he wanted, and he went off, looking a little disappointed.

"I wonder whether that was really what he wanted the writing for," Kenneth remarked, suspiciously. "He's a quick-witted knave. Look how sharp he was to see the right move in that game of chess. It wasn't very obvious."

The chess-board was lying open on the table, where Churt had left it before tea. He glanced at it, casually at first, and then with growing interest. He took up one of the pieces to examine it, then replaced it, to do the same with others, his manner showing all the time an increasing excitement.

"What is it, Ken?" Norah asked.

"Just a glimmer of something." He dropped into a chair. "I want to think—to think harder than ever in my life."

He leant forward, with his head resting on his hands, and she waited in silence till, after some minutes, he looked up.

"Yes, I begin to see light—more than a glimmer. He's a subtle customer, is Mr. Gornay, oh, very subtle!" He smiled, partly with the pleasure of finding one thread of a tangled web, partly with admiration for the cleverness that had woven it. "Would you like to know what he was really after when he came in here just now?"

"Very much," she answered. "But do you mean that he never had any argument with Sir James?"

"Oh, I daresay he had the argument all right—got it up for the occasion; but what he really wanted was this." He took out of his pocket the envelope in which the bank-note had been discovered. "The character-reading rot was not a bad shot at getting hold of it, and probably his only chance. But no, friend Gornay, you are not going to have that envelope—not for the thousand pounds you placed in it!"

"Do explain, Ken," Norah begged.

"I will presently," he answered, "but I want to piece the whole jigsaw together. There is still the other difficulty."

He dropped his eyes to the hearthrug again, and began to do his thinking aloud for her benefit. "Churt's reasoning is that Gornay must have been in here, watching the game, at the only time when the letters could have been tampered with, because he knew afterwards the move that was played just at the beginning of that time, and the move that was played just at the end. But why might not Winslade have told him about those two moves while Churt was letting me in at the front door? That would solve the riddle. I should have thought Winslade would have been too punctilious to talk about the game while his opponent was out of the room, but I'll go and ask him. I needn't tell him the reason why I want to know."

He came back almost immediately. "No, there was no conversation about the game while Churt was out of the room. Very well. Try the thing the other way round. Assume—as I think I can prove—that Gornay did tamper with the letters, the question is how could he tell that those two moves had been played?"

He took up the chess-board again and looked at it so intently and so long that, at last, Norah grew impatient.

"My dear boy, what can you be doing, poring all this time over the chess?"

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"I have a curious sort of chess problem to solve before the Sherlock Holmes man turns up from Scotland Yard. Follow this a moment. If there was any way by which Gornay could find out that the two important moves had been played, without being present at the time and without being told, then Churt's argument goes for nothing, doesn't it?"

"Clearly; but what other way was there? Did he look in through the window?"

"I think we shall find it was something much cleverer than that. I think I shall be able to show that he could infer that those two moves had been played, without any other help, from the position of the pieces as they stood at the end of the game; as they stand on the board now." He again bent down over the board. "White plays queen to queen's knight's sixth, not taking anything, and Black takes the queen with the rook's pawn; those are the two moves."

For nearly another half-hour Norah waited in loyal silence, watching the alternation of his face as it brightened with the light of comprehension and clouded again with fresh perplexity.

At last he shut up the board and put it down, looking profoundly puzzled.

"Can it not be proved that the queen must have been taken at that particular square?" Norah inquired.

"No," he answered. "It might equally have been a rook. I can't make the matter out. So many of the jigsaw bits fit in that I know I must be right, and yet there is just one little bit that I can't find. By jove!" he added, suddenly starting up, "I wonder if Churt could supply it?"

He was just going off to find out when a servant entered the room with a message that Lord Churt requested their presence in his study.

The conclave assembled in the study consisted of the same persons who, in the drawing-room, had witnessed the discovery of the bank-note, with the addition of Shapland, the detective from Scotland Yard. Lord Churt presided, sitting at the table, and Shapland sat by his side, with a face that might have seemed almost unintelligent in its lack of expression but for the roving eyes, that scrutinised in turn the other faces present.

Norah and Kenneth took the two chairs that were left vacant, and, as soon as the door was shut, Kenneth asked Churt a question.

"When you played your game of chess with Sir James Winslade this afternoon, did he give you the odds of the queen's rook?"

Everyone, except Norah and the sphinxlike detective, whose face gave no clue to his thoughts, looked surprised at the triviality of the question.

"I should hardly have thought this was a fitting occasion to discuss such a frivolous matter as a game of chess," Aunt Blaxter remarked sourly.

"I confess I don't understand the relevance of your question," Churt answered "As a matter of fact, he did give me those odds."

"Thank God!" Kenneth exclaimed, with an earnestness that provoked a momentary sign of interest from Shapland.

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"I should like to hear what Mr. Dale has to say about this matter," he remarked. "Lord Churt has put me in possession of the circumstances."

"I have an accusation to make against Lord Churt's private secretary, Mr. Gornay. Perhaps he had better be present to hear it."

"Quite unnecessary, quite unnecessary," Churt interposed. "We will not have any unpleasant scenes if we can help it."

"Very well," Kenneth continued. "I only thought it might be fairer. I accuse Gornay of stealing the thousand-pound bank-note out of the envelope addressed to the Red Cross and putting it into a letter addressed to me. I accuse him of using colourless ink, of a kind that would become visible after a few hours, to cross out my address and substitute another, the address of a confederate, no doubt."

"You must be aware, Mr. Dale," Shapland observed, "that you are making a very serious allegation in the presence of witnesses. I presume you have some evidence to support it?"

Kenneth opened the chess-board. "Look at the stains on those chess pieces. They were not there when the game was finished. They were there, not so distinctly as now, about an hour ago. Precisely those pieces, and only those, are stained that Gornay touched in showing that Lord Churt might have won the game. If they are not stains of invisible ink, why should they grow more distinct? If they are invisible ink, how did it get there, unless from Gornay's guilty fingers?"

He took out of his pocket the envelope of Norah's letter, and a glance at it brought a look of triumph to his face. He handed it to Shapland. "The ink is beginning to show there, too. It seems to act more slowly on the paper than on the polish of the chess-men."

"It is a difference of exposure to the air," Shapland corrected. "The envelope has been in your pocket. If we leave it there on the table, we shall see presently whether your deduction is sound. Meanwhile, if Mr. Gornay was the guilty person, how can you account for his presence in the library at the only time when a crime could have been committed?"

"By denying it," Kenneth answered. "What proof have we that he was there at that particular time?"

"How else could he know the moves that were played at that time?" Shapland asked.

Kenneth pointed again to the chess-board. "From the position of the pieces at the end of the game. Here it is. I can prove, from the position of those pieces one, provided the game was played at the odds of queen's rook, that White must, in the course of the game, have played his queen to queen's knight's sixth, not making a capture, and that Black must have taken it with the rook's pawn. If I can draw those inferences from the position, so could Gornay. We know how quickly he can think out a combination from the way in which he showed that Lord Churt could have won the game, when it looked so hopeless that he resigned."

The detective, fortunately, had an elementary knowledge of chess sufficient enable him to follow Kenneth's demonstration.

"I don't suggest," Kenneth added, when the accuracy of the demonstration was admitted, "that he planned this alibi beforehand. It was a happy after-thought, that occurred to his quick mind when he saw that the position at the end of the game made it possible. What he relied on was the invisible ink trick, and that would have succeeded by itself, if I hadn't happened to turn up unexpectedly in time to intercept my letter from Norah."

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While Kenneth was giving this last bit of explanation, Shapland had taken up the envelope again. As he had foretold, exposure to the air had brought out the invisible writing so that, although still faint, it was already legible. Only the middle line of the address, the number and name of the street, had been struck out with a single stroke, and another number and name substituted. The detective handed it to Churt. "Do you recognise the second handwriting, my lord?"

Churt put on his glasses and examined it. "I can't say that I do," he answered, "but it is not that of Mr. Gornay." He took another envelope out of his pocket—book, addressed to himself in his secretary's hand, and pointed out the dissimilarity of the two writings. Norah cast an anxious look at Kenneth, and Aunt Blaxter one of her sourest at the girl. The detective showed no surprise.

"None the less, my lord, I think it might forward our investigation if you would have Mr. Gornay summoned to this room, I don't think you need be afraid that there will be any scene," he added, and, for an instant, the faintest of smiles flitted across his lips.

Churt rang the bell and told the servant to ask his secretary to come to him.

"Mr. Gornay left an hour ago, my lord. He was called away suddenly and doesn't expect to see his grandmother alive."

"Poor old soul! On Christmas Eve, too!" Churt muttered, sympathetically, and this time Shapland allowed himself the indulgence of a rather broader smile.

"I guessed as much," he observed, "when I recognised the handwriting in which the envelope had been redirected, or I should have taken the precautions of going to fetch the gentleman, whom you know as Mr. Gornay, myself. He is a gentleman who is known to us at the Yard by more than one name, as well as by more than one handwriting, and now that we have so fortunately discovered his present whereabouts, I can promise you that he will soon be laid by the heels. Perhaps Lord Churt will be kind enough to have my car ordered and to allow me to use his telephone."

"But you'll stay to dinner?" Churt asked. "It will be ready in a few minutes, and we shall none of us have time to dress."

"I am much obliged, my lord, but Mr. Dale has done my work for me here in a way that any member of the Yard might be proud of, and now I must follow the tracks while they are fresh. It may not prove necessary to trouble you any further about this matter, but I think you are likely to see an important development in the great Ashfield forgery case reported in the newspapers before very long."

"Well," Churt observed, "I think we may all congratulate ourselves on having got this matter cleared up without any unpleasant scenes. Now we shall be able to enjoy our Christmas. I call it a happy solution, a very happy solution."

His face beamed with relief and good-humour as he once more produced his pocket-book. "Norah, my dear, you must accept an old man's apology for causing you a very unpleasant afternoon; and you must accept this as well. No, I shall not take a refusal. and it will be much safer to send a cheque to the Red Cross."

Solution

[The solution of the end-game given in this story, and the proof that a white queen must have been taken by the pawn at Q Kt 3, is given herewith.]

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1.... P to K 6; 2.

Q to R 6 (a), Q to R 5, ch.; 3.

Q (or B) takes Q, B to B 5; 4. Kt to Kt 3, B takes Kt and mates, very shortly, with R to R

(a) 2. Kt to Kt 4, Q takes Kt; 3. Q (or P) takes Q (b), B to B 5 as before.

(b) If 3. Q to R 6, Q to R 5, ch., as before.

If 2. P to K Kt 4, B to Kt 6, 3. Kt takes B, Q takes Kt and wins.

The following is the proof, from the position of the pieces, that a white queen must have been taken by the pawn at Q Kt 3: All the black men except two are on the board; therefore White made only two captures. These two captures must have been made with the two pawns now at K 5 and B 3, because they have left their original files. White, therefore, never made a capture with his Q R P, and therefore it never got on to the knight's file. Therefore the black pawn at Q Kt 3 captured a piece (not a pawn). The game having been played at the odds of queen's rook, the white Q R was off the board before the game began, and the white K R was captured on its own square, or one of two adjacent squares, there being no way out for it.

Now, since Black captured a piece with the pawn at Q Kt 3, and there are no white pieces off the board (except the two white rooks that have been accounted for), it follows that, whatever piece was captured by the pawn at Q Kt 3 must have been replaced on the board in exchange for the white Q R P when it reached its eighth square. It was not a rook that was captured at Q Kt 2, because the two white rooks have been otherwise accounted for. The pawn, on reaching its eighth square, cannot have been exchanged for a bishop, or the bishop would still be on that square, there being no way out for it, nor can the pawn have been exchanged for a knight for the same reason (remembering that the capture at Q Kt 3 must necessarily have happened before the pawn could reach its eighth square).

Therefore the pawn was exchanged for a queen, and therefore it was a queen that was captured at Q Kt 3, and when she went there she did not make a capture, because only two captures were made by White, both with pawns. Q.E.D.