

Two Knights Save the Day

A World Champion's
Favorite Studies

100

studies with just
two knights
in the finale

Sergei
Tkachenko



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Two Knights Save the Day:
A World Champion's Favorite Studies

by

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The Cavalry in Attack and Defense

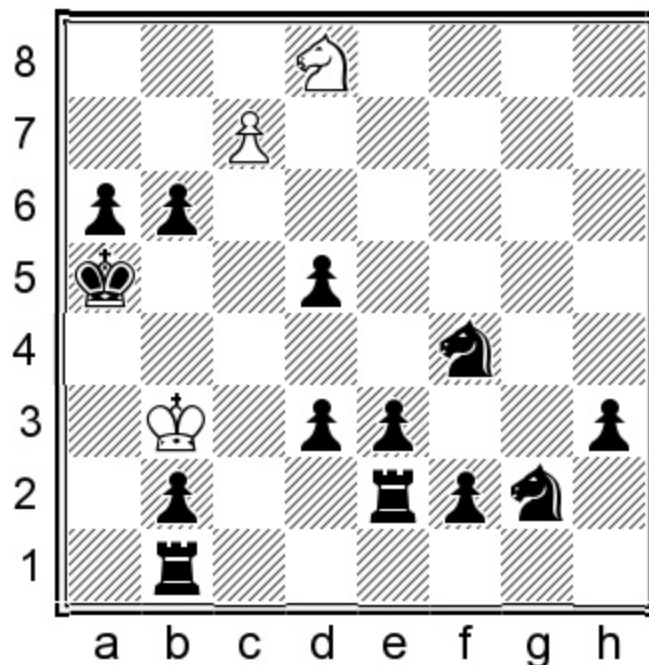
Two knights cannot normally checkmate a lone king. White, the side with the two knights, can only deliver checkmate in case of cooperative play, when the black monarch voluntarily climbs the scaffold.

However, if black has a pawn on a certain square blocked by the knight... a win is possible! The point is, when the time comes, the treacherous pawn will be able to move, depriving its king of stalemate salvation, and while it heads towards the promotion square, the white knights will get just enough time to checkmate the black king. This pattern was first noticed in the early 20th century by one of the fathers of modern endgame studies, Alexey Troitsky. Thus, the theory of 2 knights vs. pawn endgames was born, named after him. In this book, the author presents several brilliant studies that ultimately lead to this endgame, or at least feature the “Troitsky endgame” in one of their lines...

The knight pair can actually be effective even against a much more potent black force!

Harold van der Heijden’s endgame study database has one such example. Unfortunately, its author and source are unknown...

No. I



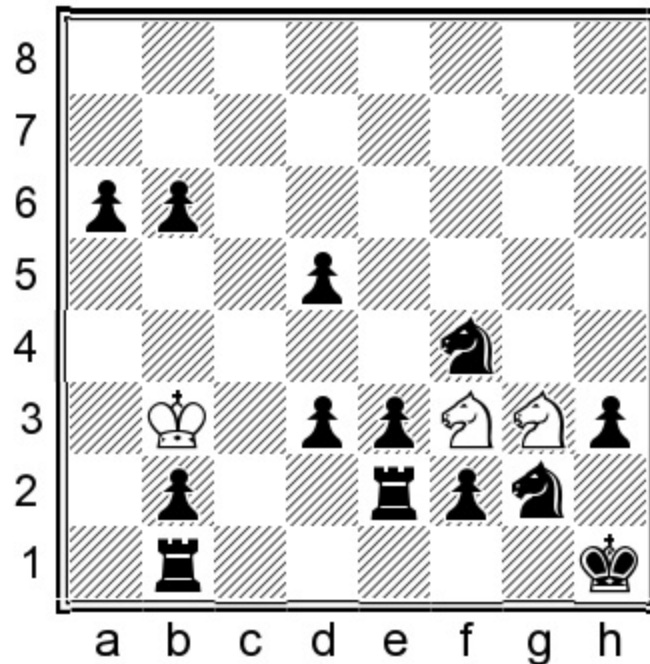
White to play and win

An inexperienced player would have promoted the pawn to the strongest piece without much thought: 1.c8=♔?. And after 1...♖c1 2.♘b7+ ♔b5 3.♘d6+ ♔a5 4.♘b7+, he would be satisfied with a draw.

But a stronger player would have promoted to a humbler piece!

1.c8=♖!! ♜b5! After 1...f1=♚, there's a mate in two: 2.♗b7+ ♜b5 3.♗a7#.

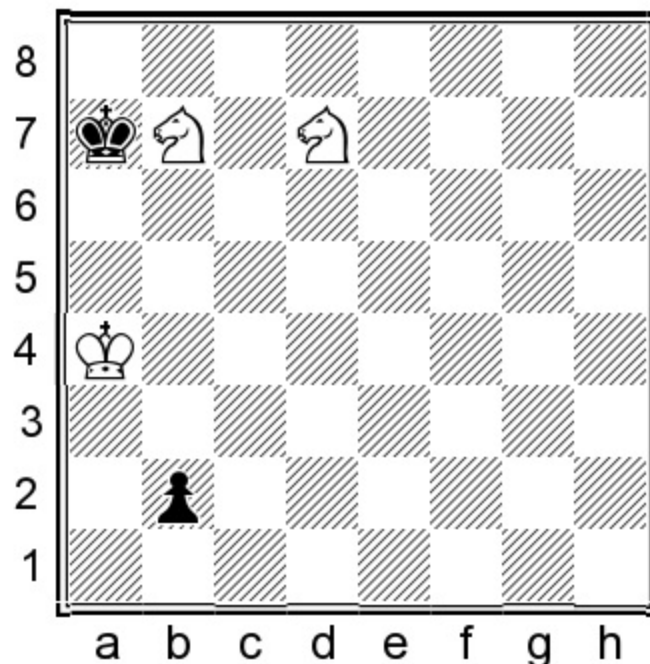
2.♗a7+ ♜b5 3.♗b7+ ♜d4 4.♗c6+ ♜e4 5.♗d6+ ♜f3 6.♗e5+ ♜g3 7.♗f5+ ♜h2 8.♗f3+ ♜h1 9.♗g3#!



The coordinated work of white's cavalry is mesmerizing, isn't it?

But attack is not the only skill the knights have! There are examples of the knight pair holding off much stronger pieces. Here's one of the earlier cases of such a feat.

No. II



White to play and draw

1.♗bc5! The black king can't go anywhere now!

1...b1=♖ 2.♔a5! 2.♔a3? loses to 2...♖b5 3.♔a2 ♖b4 4.♔a1 ♖c3+ 5.♔b1 ♖d2 6.♔a1 ♖c2, and the knights are forced to set the black king free.

2...♖b2 3.♔a4 ♖b1 4.♔a5. Positional draw.

Author G. Walker, 1841 (edited by S. Tkachenko)

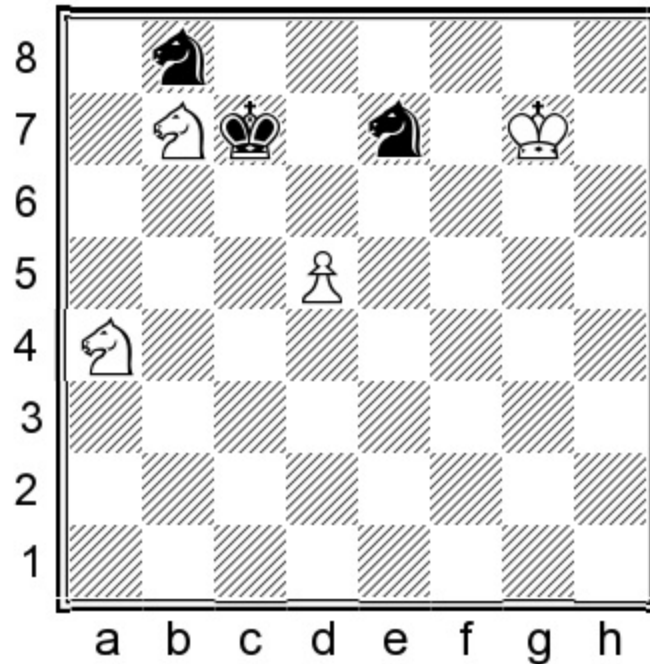
This book features 100 instructive endgame studies where only two white knights either win or hold off various sets of black pieces. As per tradition, the number of moves in the solutions is no more than six with rare exceptions. This allows experienced players to test their tactical prowess and calculation technique without a board.

Analyzing these diagrams will be beneficial for novices as well. The diversity of tactical ideas where two knights demonstrate smooth coordination and composure will surely help them in their chess growth.

Good luck in your hunt for the secrets of chess!

Show in Text Mode

No. 1



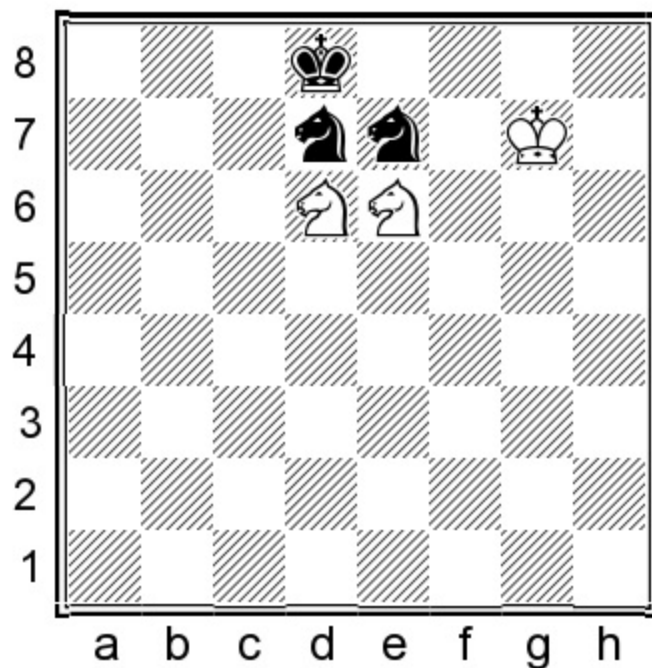
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

Black is more than content to exchange both his knights for the pawn and settle for a draw...

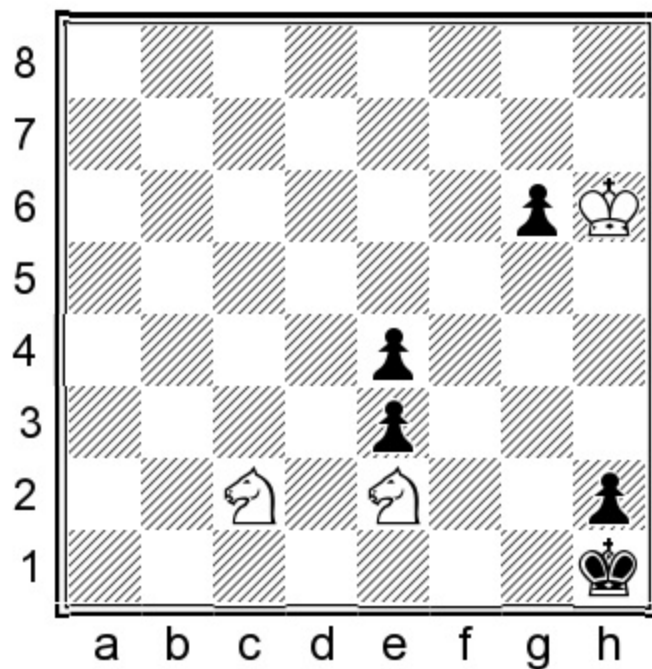
1.d6+ ♔d7 (1...♔xb7 2.dxe7) **2.♞ac5+ ♔e8**. Black is counting on 3.♔f6? ♞d7+ 4.♔e6 ♞c8, and the pawn falls.

But suddenly: **3.d7+!! ♞xd7 4.♞d6+ ♔d8 5.♞e6#!**. A beautiful mating finale!



Author A. Troitsky, 1896

No. 2



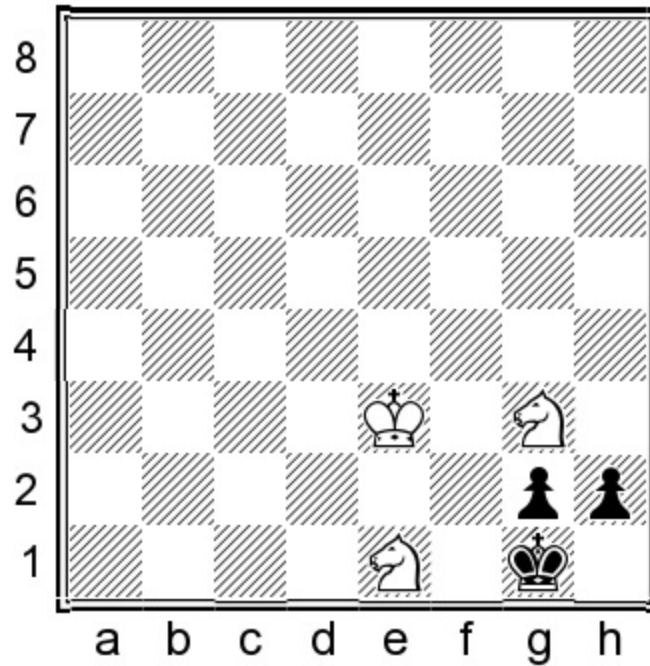
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

How to corner the black king? 1.♖xe3? looks like a good way to achieve that, but after 1...g5 2.♗h5 g4 3.♗h4 g3 4.♗h3 g2 5.♖xg2 e3 6.♖g3+ ♔g1, white cannot win.

The correct move is 1.♖e1!! g5 2.♗g6!! Taking the roundabout way! Not 2.♗xg5?, with stalemate.

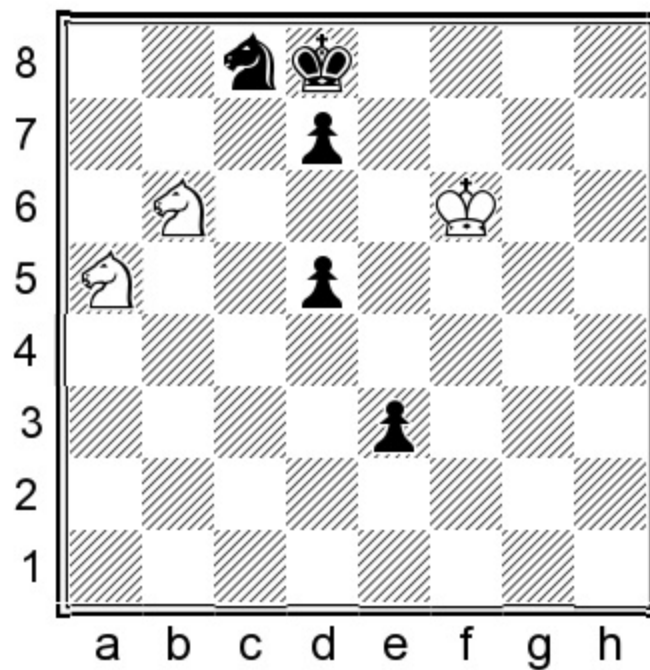
2...g4 3.♔f5! g3 4.♕xe4 g2 5.♘g3+ ♔g1 6.♕xe3. The key position!



Black cannot avoid 7.♘f3#.

Author A. Troitsky, 1908 (edited by S. Tkachenko)

No. 3



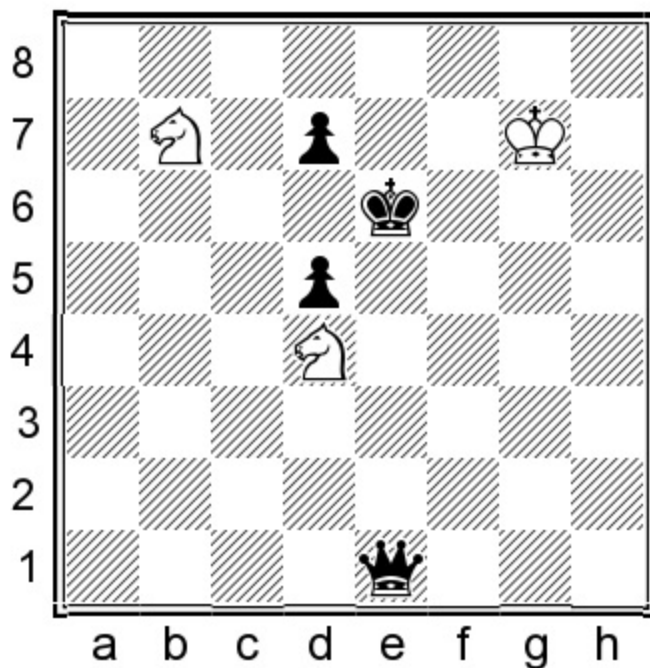
White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

How to stop the e3 pawn from promoting? Certainly not with 1.♘xd5? e2 2.♘b7+ ♔e8 3.♘c7+ ♔f8 4.♘c5 e1=♔ 5.♘xd7+ ♔g8, curtains.

The correct move is **1. ♖b7+! ♜e8** (1...♜c7 2. ♖xd5+ ♜xb7 3. ♖xe3) **2. ♖xc8 e2 3. ♜g7!!** The point.

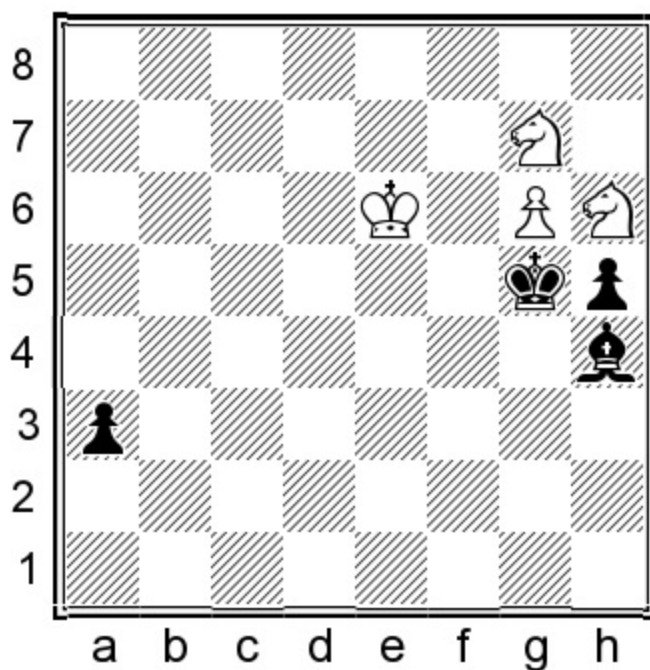
3...e1=♚ (3...d6 4. ♖cxd6+ ♜d7 5. ♖c5+ ♜xd6 6. ♖d3 ♜c6 7. ♜f6) **4. ♖cd6+! ♜e7 5. ♖f5+ ♜e6 6. ♖d4+**



It turns out that the black king cannot escape perpetual check: 6...♜e7 7. ♖f5+ etc., or 6...♜e5 is met with the fork 7. ♖f3+. Draw.

Author H. Matisons, 1913

No. 4



White to play and draw

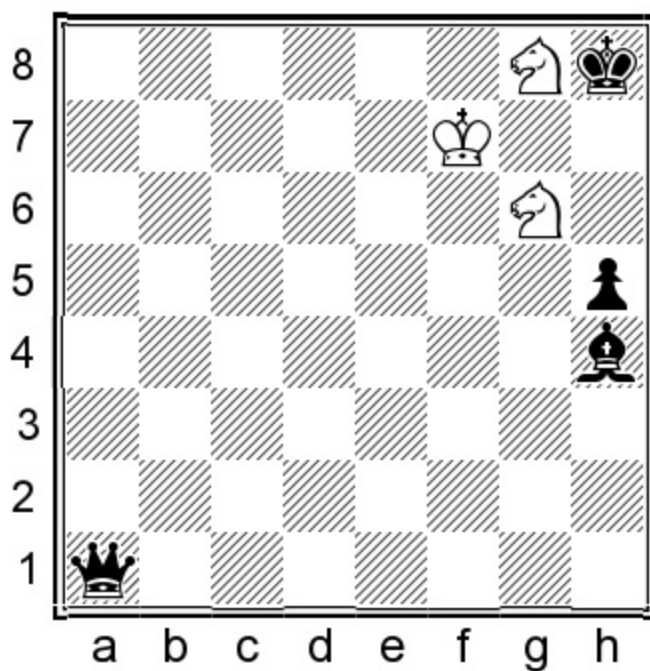
Show/Hide Solution

White can't save the game without the king's help: **1.♔f7!** Both **1.♘h5? ♕xg6 2.♘f4+ ♕xh6 3.♘e2 a2** and

1.♘f7+? ♕xg6 2.♘e5+ ♕xg7 3.♘d3 a2 are bad – the pawn promotes.

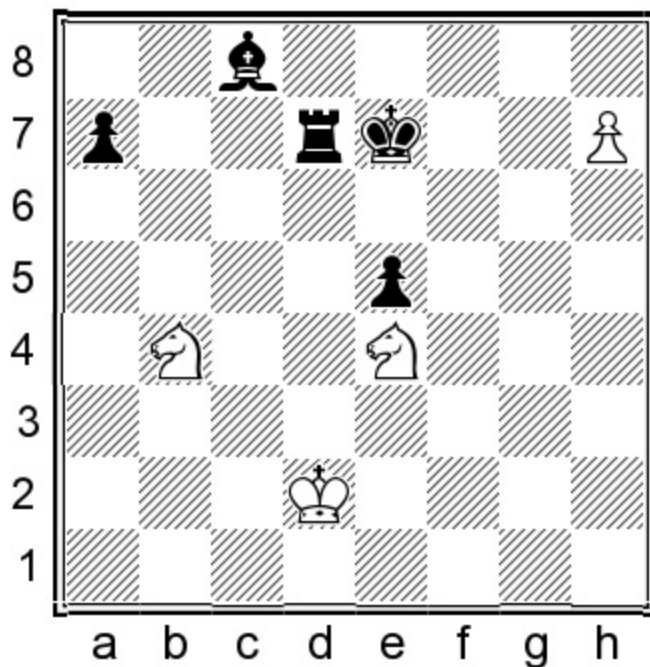
1.♔f7! a2 2.♘e6+! ♕xh6 3.g7 a1=♚. Counting on **4.g8=♚? ♚f6+ 5.♔e8 ♚e7#!**

Suddenly: **4.g8=♘+! ♕h7 5.♘f8+ ♕h8 6.♘g6+.** Perpetual check.



Author A. Daniel, 1922 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 5



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

1.♔e1!! Anticipating the finale!

1...♚d8 2.♖c6+ ♔f7! 3.♗xd8+ ♔g7 4.♗f7! Not 4.♗g5? ♕f5, and black saves the game.

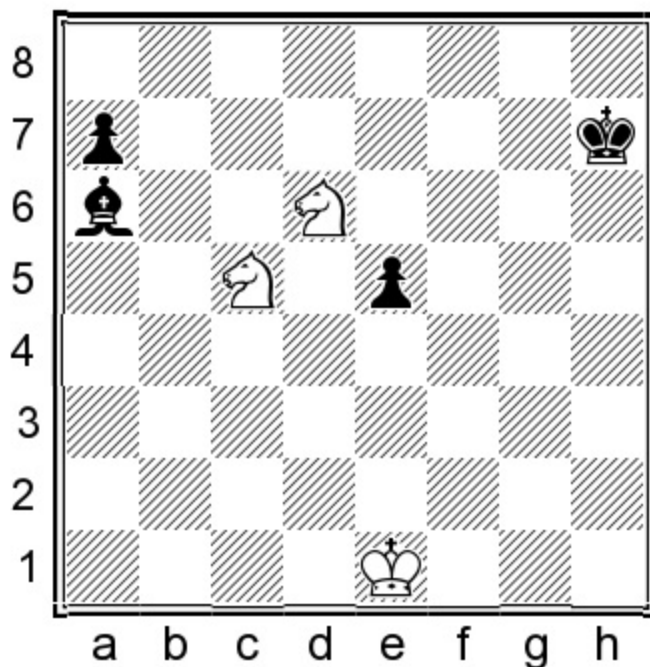
4...♔xh7 5.♗fd6! It turns out that the bishop has no good moves along the c8-h3 diagonal:

5...♕h3(e6) 6.♗g5+ or 5...♕g4(d7) 6.♗f6+, forking the bishop and winning a Troitsky endgame.

Black can't save the game either with 5...a5 6.♗xc8 a4 7.♔d2 a3 8.♔c3 a2 9.♔b2 etc.

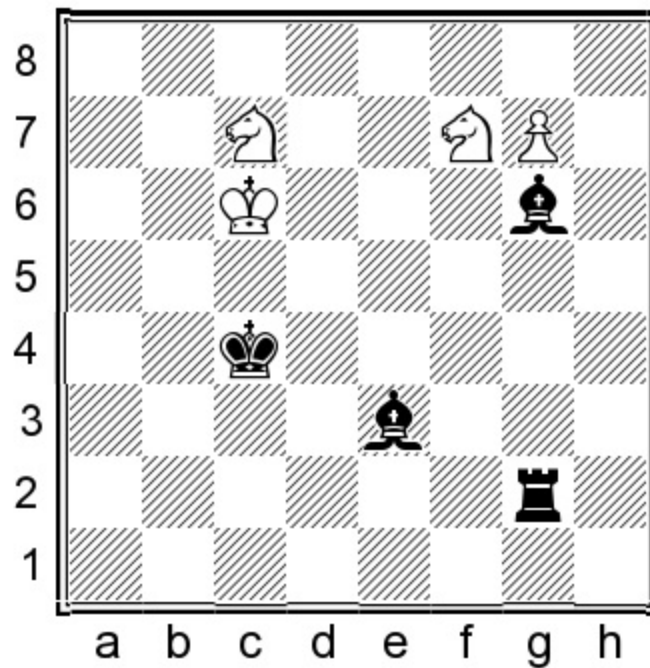
5...♕a6 6.♗c5! Domination! That's why the white king took control of the f1 square on the first move.

After taking the bishop, white wins a Troitsky endgame.



Author A. Troitsky, 1924 (position after black's 2nd move)

No. 6

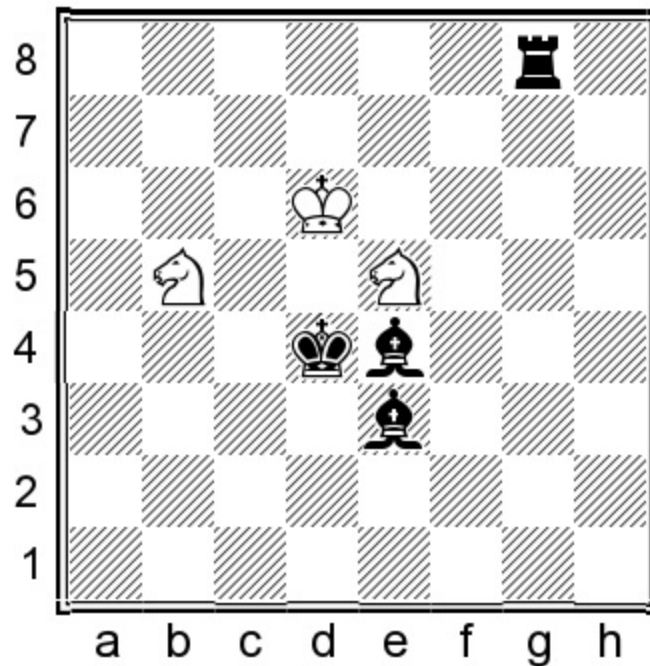


White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

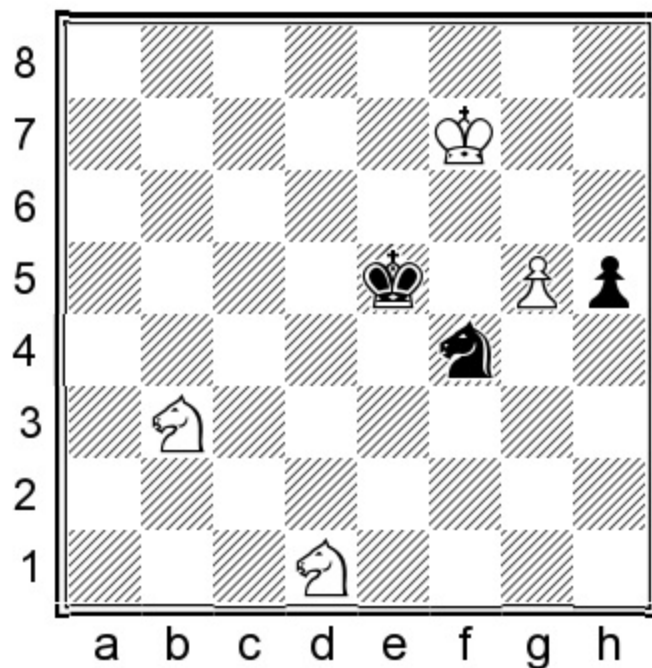
The pawn cannot be promoted immediately: 1.g8=♚? ♙e4+, and black wins.

White wins with the preliminary check 1.♘e5+! ♔d4. 1...♙c3(b4) 2.♘d5+ 3.g8=♚ is no better: black's discovered attack doesn't work anymore. 1...♙b3 2.g8=♚+ (check!) is equally bad 2.g8=♚! (now it is time!) 2...♙e4+ 3.♙d6! ♖xg8 4.♘b5#!



Author F. Lazard, 1923

No. 7



White to play and win

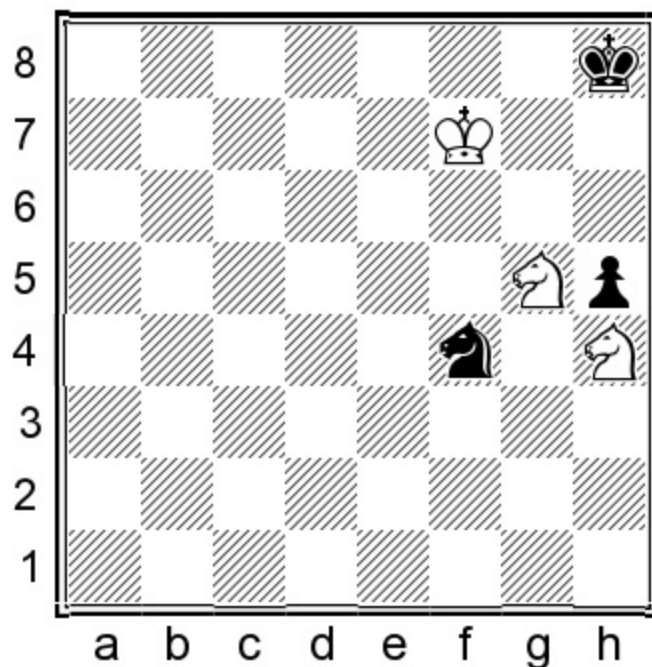
Show/Hide Solution

How can white convert his material advantage? Certainly not with 1.♖e3? h4 2.♖d2 h3, and black draws.

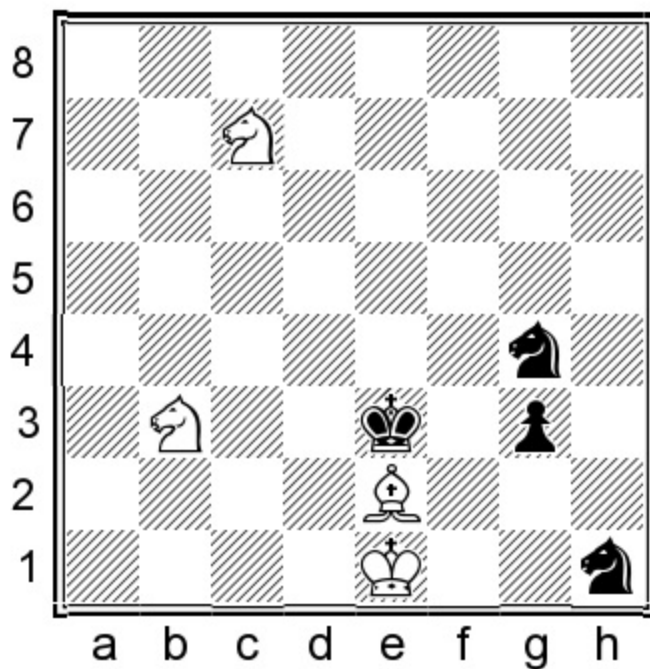
1.♔g7? ♖e6+ 2.♔h6 ♖xg5 3.♔xg5 h4 4.~ h3 is no better: the black pawn is in Troitsky's drawing zone.

Eureka: **1.♖d2!! ♔f5** (1...h4 2.♖f3+ ♔f5 3.♖f2 h3 4.♖xh3 ♖xh3 5.g6) **2.♖e3+ ♔xg5**. 2...♔e5 3.♖f3+ ♔e4 4.♖g2! ♖xg2 5.g6 ♔xf3 6.g7 h4 7.g8=♚ h3 8.♚b8 doesn't help either.

3.♖f3+ ♔h6 4.♖f5+ ♔h7 5.♖g5+ ♔h8 6.♖h4! Black is in zugzwang and gets checkmated on the next move. But not 6.♖e7? h4!, with a draw.



No. 8



White to play and win

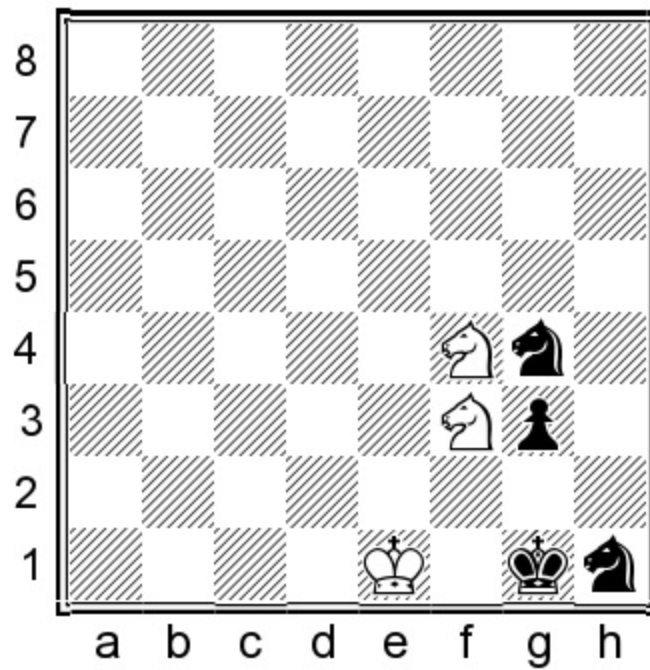
Show/Hide Solution

Two knights and a bishop cannot usually win against a pair of knights. But here... they get help from the black pawn!

1. ♖d5+! The black knight is poisoned: 1. ♜xg4? g2 2. ♖d5+ ♜e4 3. ♖c3+ ♜f4, with a draw.

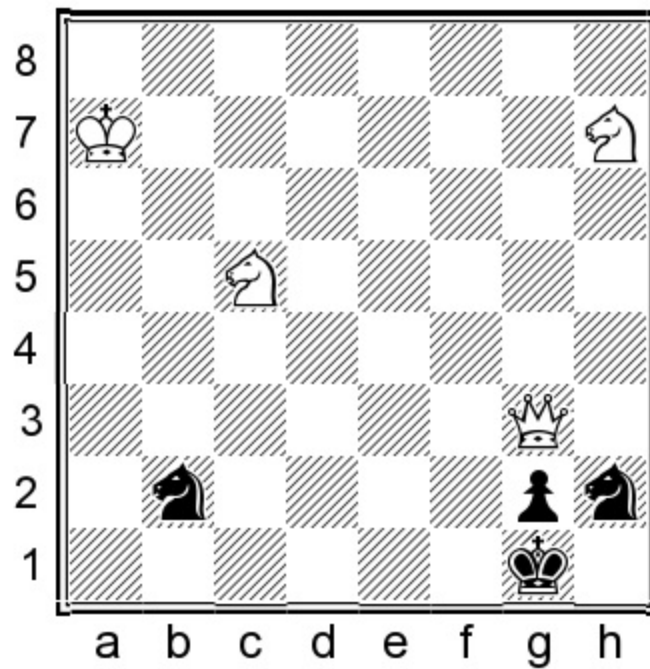
1. ♖d5+! ♜e4 2. ♜f3+!! The point! White forces black to capture the bishop and launches a mating attack with inferior material.

2... ♜xf3 3. ♖d2+ ♜g2 4. ♖f4+ ♜g1 (or 4... ♜h2 5. ♖f3#) **5. ♖f3#.**



Author A. Gurvich, 1927

No. 9



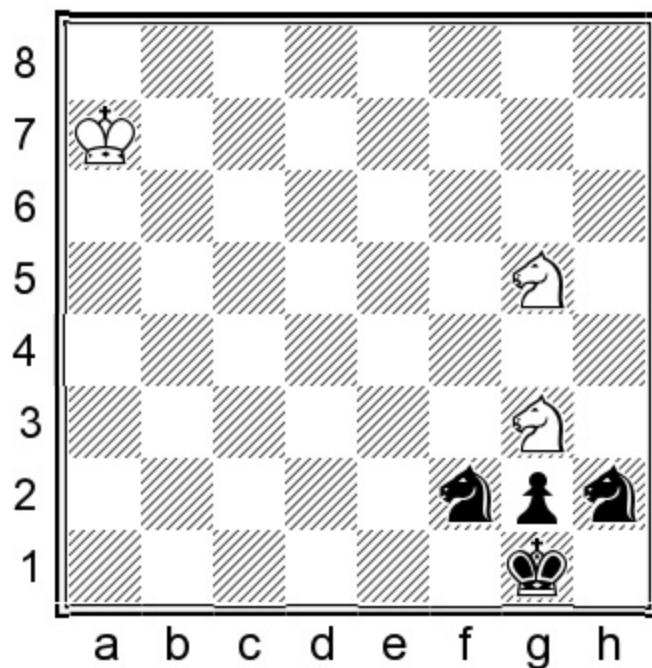
Black to play. White wins

Show/Hide Solution

With **1...♔h1**, black tries to queen his pawn.

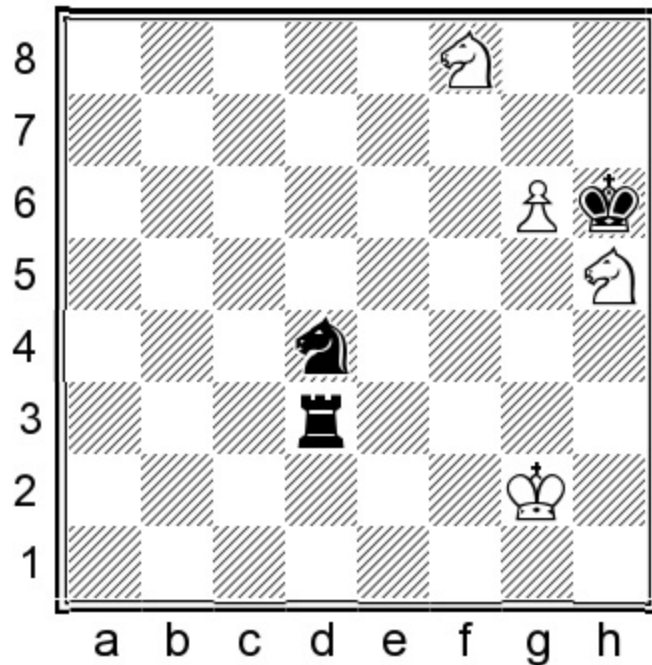
2.♞e4! ♞d1! (2...g1=♚+ 3.♞f2+) **3.♚f2!!** The point!

3...♞xf2 (3...g1=♚ 4.♞g3+) **4.♞g3+! ♔g1 5.♞g5!** The finishing touch!



Black is undone by his own pawn: 5...♖hg4 6.♘f3# or 5...♘fg4 6.♘h3#.
 Author A. Gurvich, 1927 (edited by S. Tkachenko)

No. 10



White to play and win

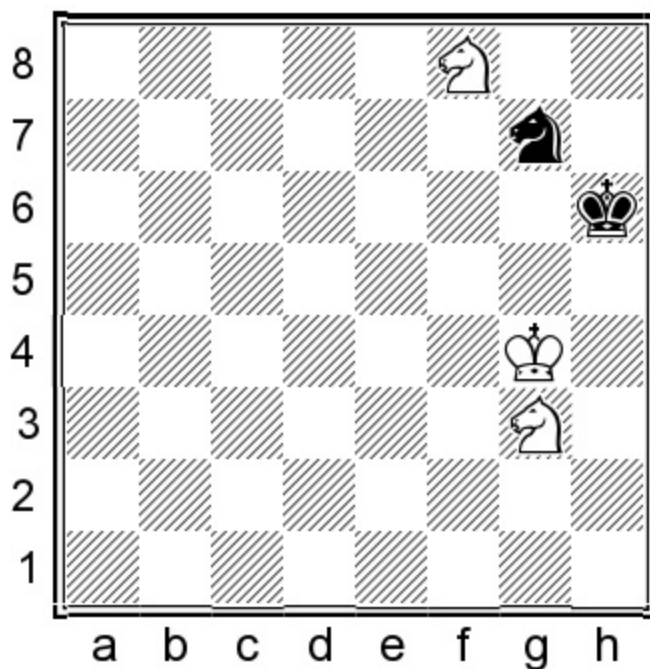
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1.g7 ♖d2+! 2.♔h3! Going down is bad: 2.♔f1? ♘f3 (the simplest) 3.g8=♚ ♘h2+ 4.♔e1 ♘f3+, with a perpetual check.

2...♖d3+ 3.♔g4! Not 3.♔h2? ♘f3+ 4.♔g2 ♖d5, and black saves the game.

3...♖g3+! 4.♗xg3 ♜f5+ 5.♗g4 ♜xg7. Black is slowly suffocated after 5...♞e7 6.♞e6 ♜g8 7.♞d4 (the fastest) 7...♞f6+ 8.♗f5 ♜g8 9.♗e6! ♗xh5 10.♗f7 ♜h6+ 11.♗f8, curtains.

6.♞g3! The whole point of white's idea!

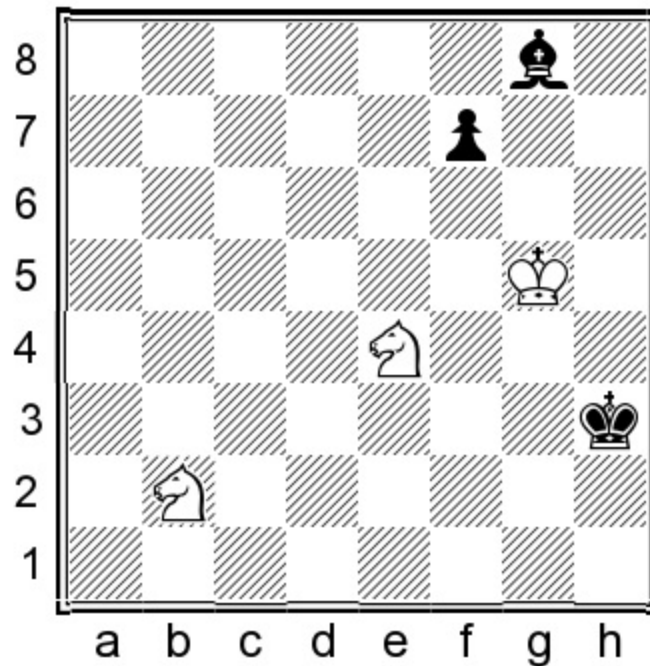


Black is in zugzwang and gets checkmated on the next move – 7.♞f5#.

Author A. Troitsky, 1928

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No. 11



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

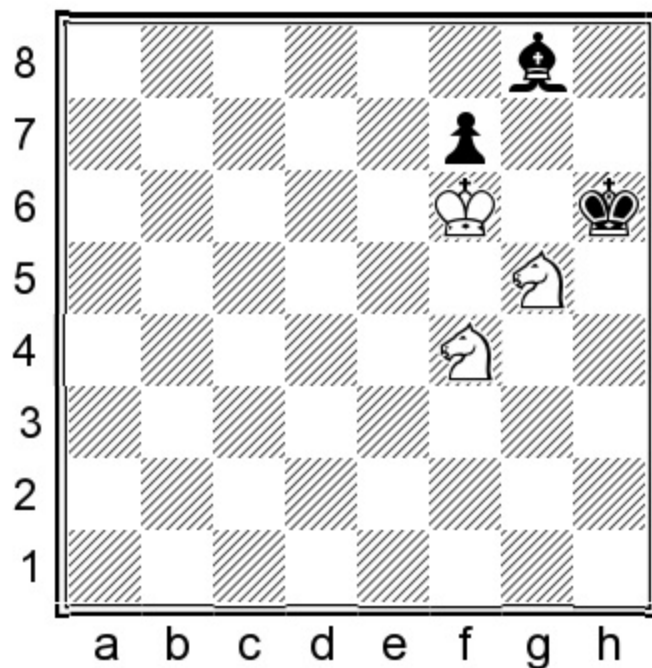
The black bishop is the target of the attack...

1.♔f6! The “obvious” 1.♘f6? ♕h7! 2.♘xh7 f5! 3.♔f4 ♔g2 4.♘d3 ♔f1 5.♔f3 f4! is actually a false try: the pawn is now in the drawing zone.

1.♔f6! ♔g4! The bishop cannot move: 1...♕h7 2.♘g5+ ♔g4 3.♘xh7, with a winning Troitsky endgame.

2.♘g5! ♔h5. Or 2...♔h4 3.♘c4 ♔h5 4.♘d6 ♔h6 5.♘f5+ ♔h5 6.♘e7, curtains.

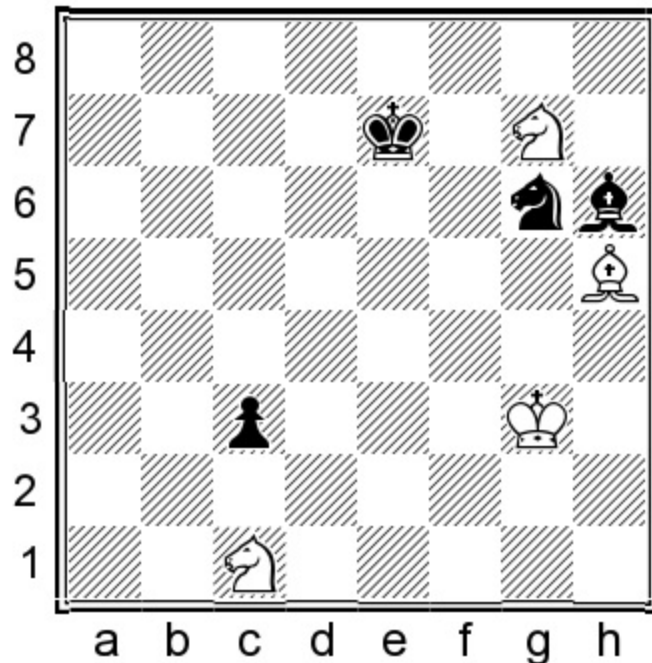
3.♘d3! ♔h6 4.♘f4! Mutual zugzwang!



4...♔h7 5.♞xf7# 1-0

Author A. Troitsky, 1928

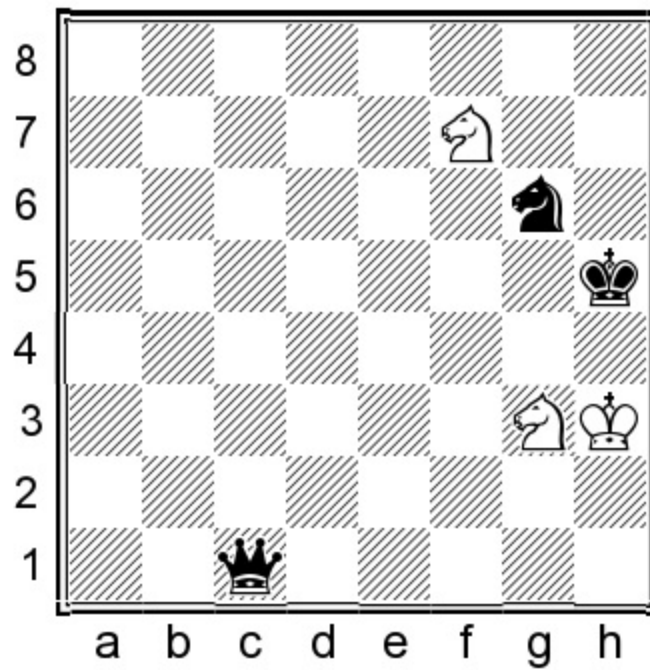
No. 12



White to play and win

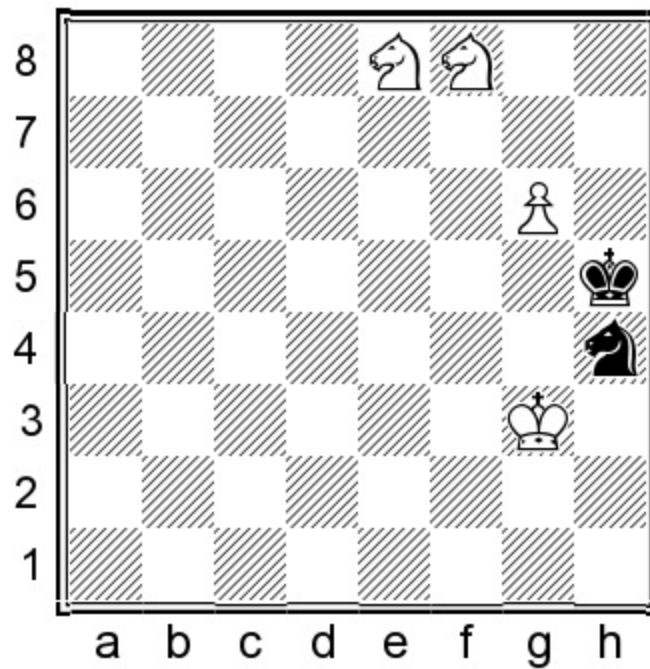
Show/Hide Solution

1.♞f5+ ♔f6 2.♞xh6 ♔g5! Eye for an eye! Black restores the drawing material balance...
But suddenly: 3.♞f7+! ♔xh5 4.♞e2! But not 4.♞d3? c2 5.♔h3 c1=♚, with a draw.
4...c2 5.♔h3! c1=♚ (5...♞e7 6.♞f4#) 6.♞g3#!



Author T. Gorgiev, 1928 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 13



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

The pawn can't move because it runs into a fork: 1.g7? ♖f5+ etc. Can this be prevented somehow?

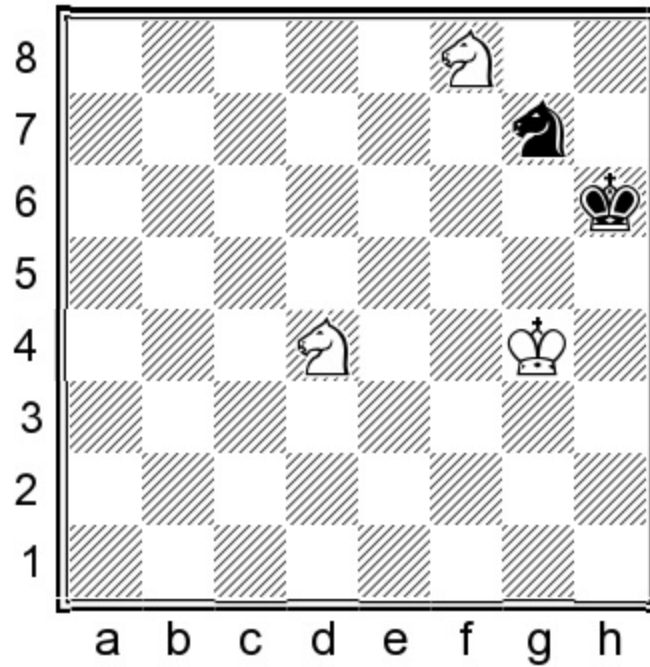
1.♜f6+? is a mistake: 1...♔g5 2.♜e4+ ♔h5 3.♜f6+ ♔g5 4.♜6h7+ ♔h5, and white can't improve his position.

1.♖g7+! ♔g5! 1...♔h6 2.♖xh4 ♖xg7 3.♖g5 ♖xf8 4.♖f6 is no better, with white having the opposition.

2.♖ge6+ ♔h6! There's no sense to protect the knight anymore: 2...♔h5 3.♖f4+ ♔g5 4.♖h7+! ♔h6 5.♖xh4, curtains.

3.g7! But not 3.♖xh4? with a stalemate.

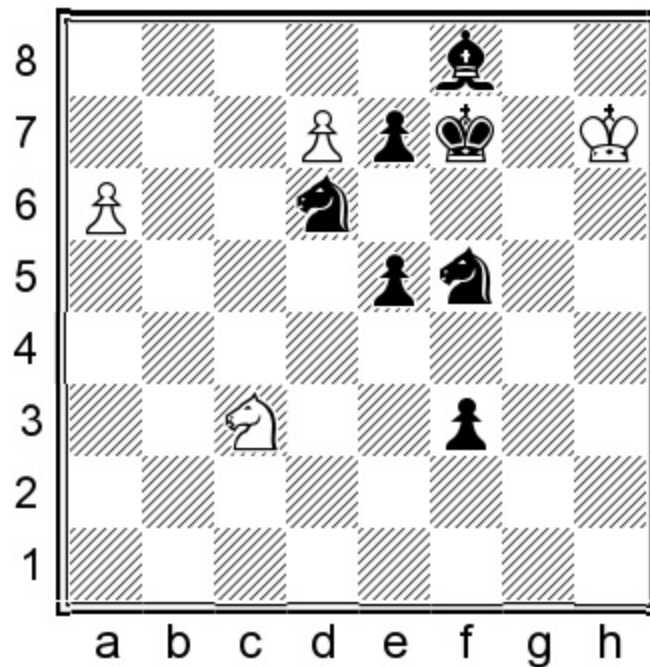
3...♖f5+ 4.♖g4! ♖xg7 5.♖d4! Black is in zugzwang.



5...♖e6 6.♖f5#.

Author T. Gorgiev, 1928 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 14



White to play and win

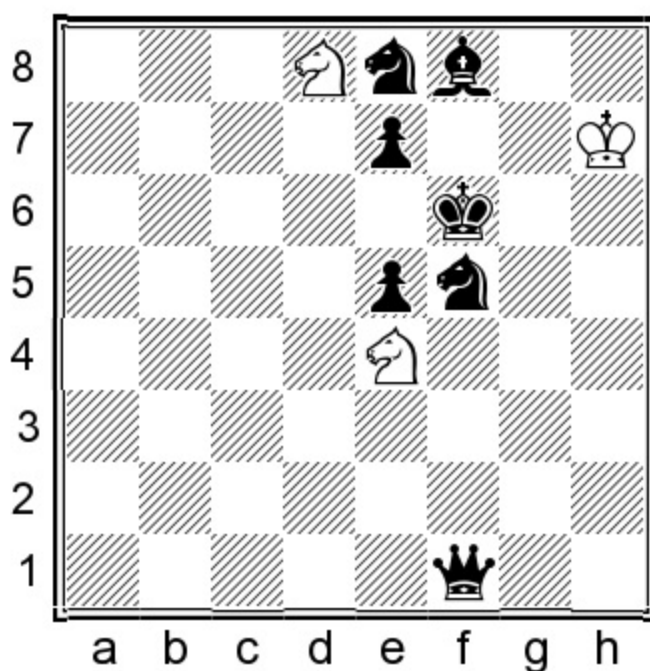
Show/Hide Solution

The promotion 1.d8=♔? is punished with 1...f2, and black wins.

1.♘d1? also loses: 1...♘e4 2.d8=♘+ ♔f6 3.a7 (3.♔g8 ♘g7 4.♘f7 ♔g6 5.♘h8+ ♘xh8 6.♔xh8 ♘f6 7.a7 ♘d6 8.a8=♔ ♘f7#) 3...♘g5+ 4.♔g8 ♘g7 5.a8=♔ ♘h6#.

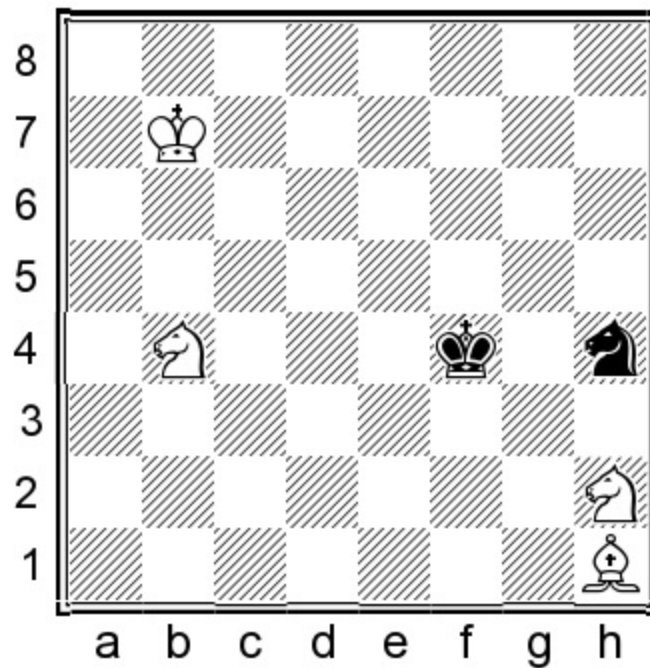
The only way to win is to push the rook pawn: 1.a7 f2 2.a8=♔ f1=♔ 3.♔e8+!! The point.

3...♘xe8 (3...♔e6 4.d8=♘+ ♔f6 5.♔g6#) 4.d8=♘+! ♔f6 5.♘e4#!



Author A. Safonov, 1928

No. 15



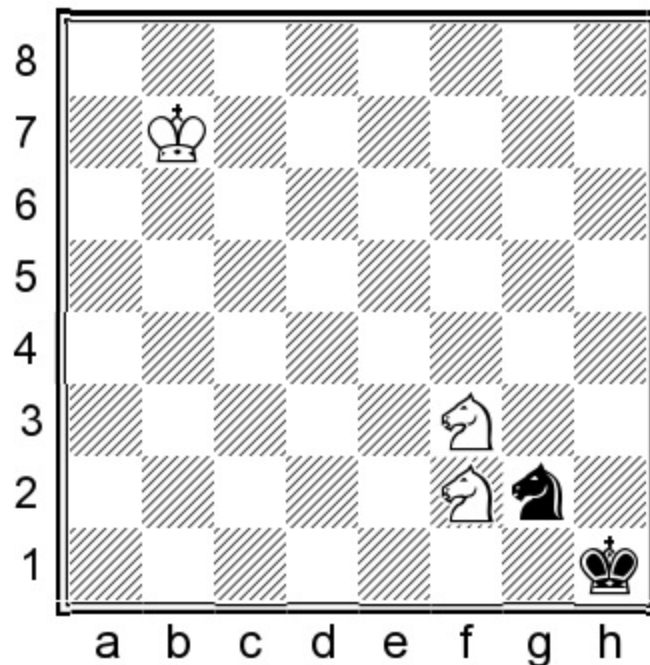
Black to play. White wins

Show/Hide Solution

The lonely knight has no chance against the white trio. But black has a plan to capture the cornered bishop...

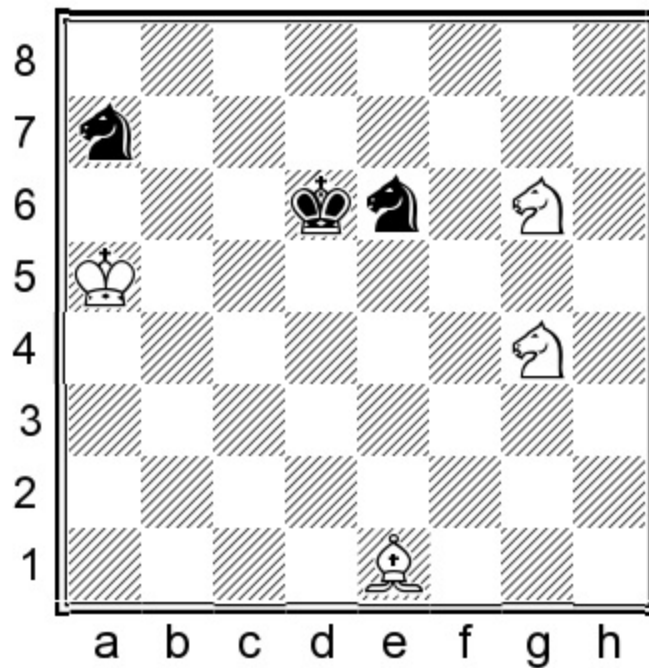
1...♔g3! 2.♘f1+ ♔f2! 3.♘d2 ♘g2! The bishop is out of play and doomed.

4.♘d3+ ♔g1 (4...♔e2 5.♙xg2) 5.♘f3+! ♔xh1 6.♘f2#!



Author A. Gurvich, 1929 (position after white's 5th move)

No. 16



White to play and win

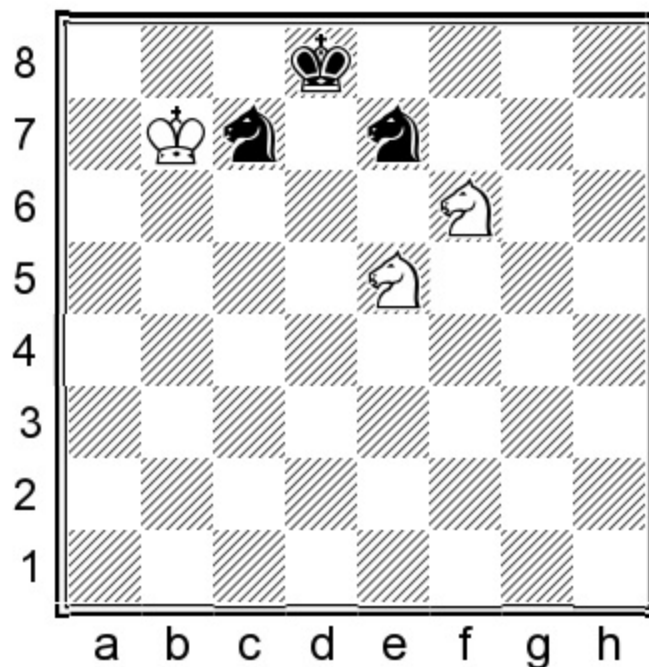
Show/Hide Solution

The material balance looks like it will lead to a draw. But white skillfully exploits the microfractures in black's position...

1. ♖b6! ♜c8+ (1... ♞c6 2. ♙g3+ ♔d5 3. ♞f6+) **2. ♖b7 ♞e7!** 2... ♙d7 quickly loses to 3. ♞f6+ ♔d8 4. ♙a5+, curtains.

3. ♙g3+! (3. ♙b4+? ♞c5+) **3... ♔d7 4. ♞f6+ ♔d8.** It seems that white's attack is repelled. Indeed, after 5. ♞e5? ♞c5+ 6. ♖b8 ♞a6+ 7. ♖b7 ♞c5+ black saves the game.

Suddenly: **5. ♙c7+!! ♞xc7 6. ♞e5!** The key point of the combination!

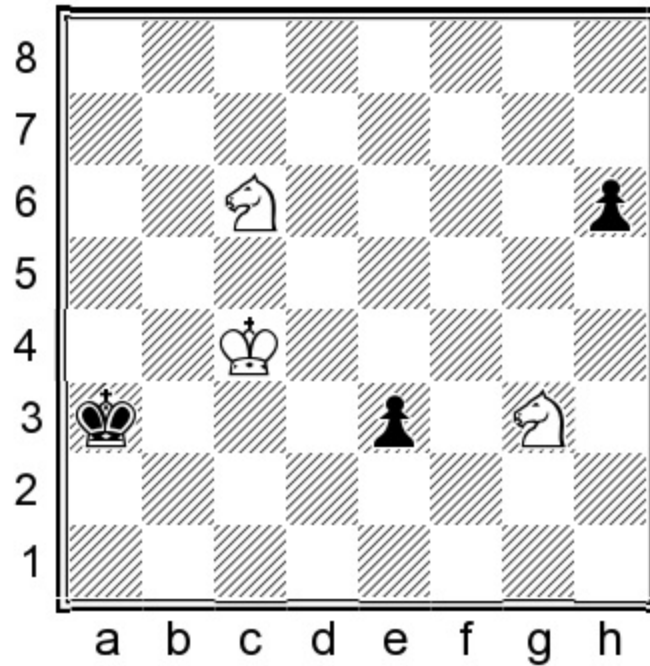


The material on the board is equal, but checkmate can't be prevented: 6... ♞g6 7. ♞c6# or 6... ♞e6

7.♔f7#.

Author T. Gorgiev 1929

No. 17



White to play and win

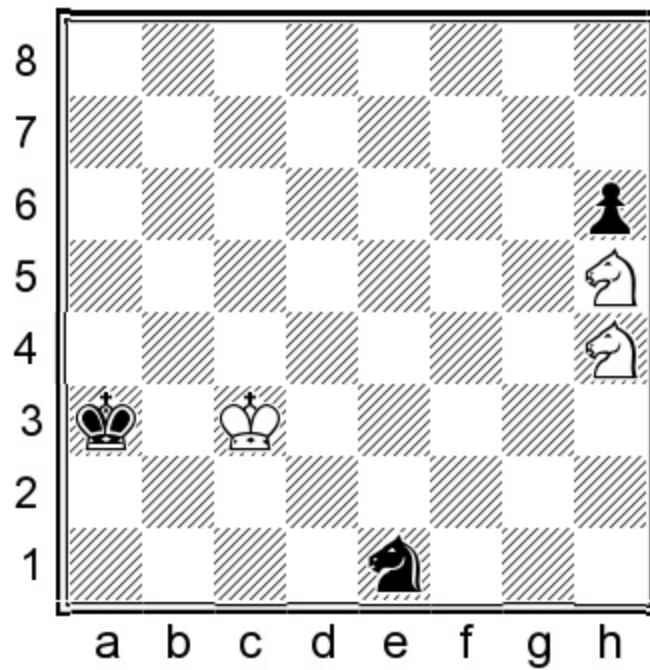
Show/Hide Solution

According to Troitsky's theory, white needs to prevent the black pawn from reaching h3 to win...

1.♘h5! Blocking the pawn immediately! Not 1.♘d4? h5! 2.♘f3 h4, and the pawn gets to the drawing zone.

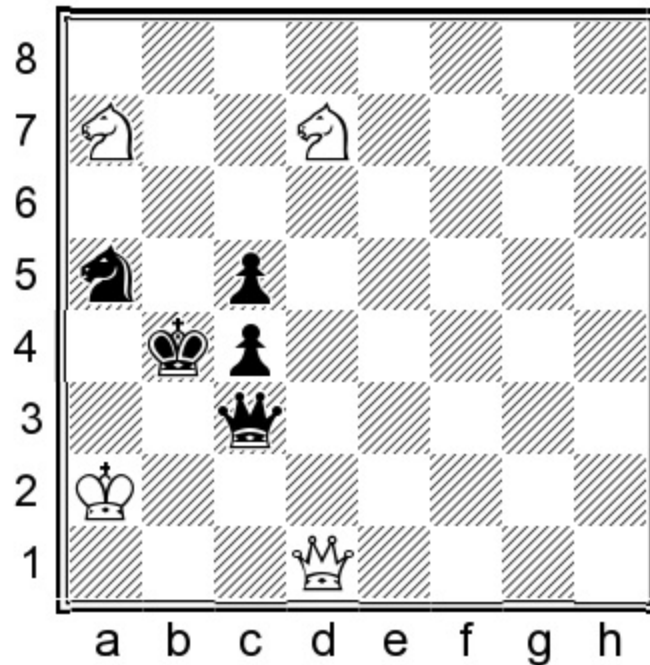
1.♘h5! e2 2.♘d4! e1=♔! (2...e1=♔ 3.♘c2+) **3.♔c3 ♘g2.** Or 3...♔a4 4.♔d2 ♘g2 5.♘f3 ♔b4 6.♔e2 ♔c4 7.♔f2 ♘f4 8.♘xf4 h5 9.♘h4!, winning.

4.♘f5! ♘e1 (4...♔a4 5.♔d2 ♔b4 6.♔e2) **5.♘h4!** The black knight is dominated!



5...♔a2 6.♔d2. White captures the knight and wins the Troitsky endgame.
 Author A. Troitsky, 1930

No. 18



White to play and win

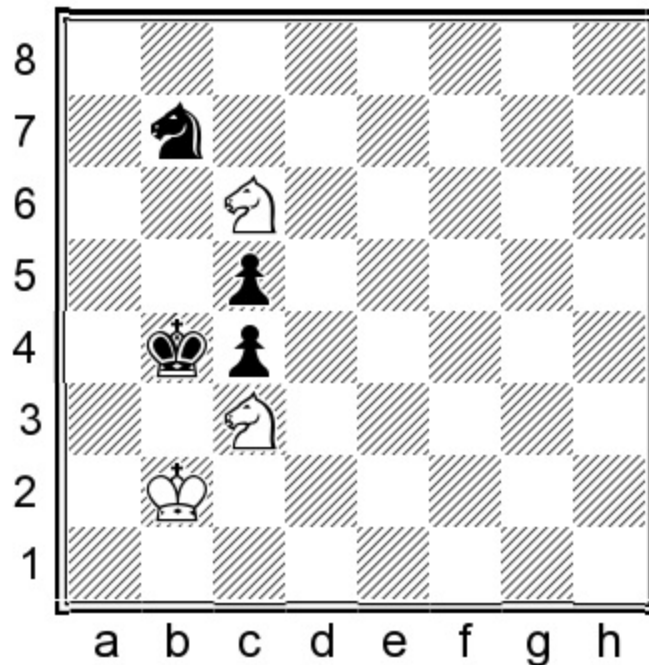
Show/Hide Solution

At first sight, it seems that the black knight is very well-defended.

Suddenly: 1.♞a4+!! (1.♞b1+? ♞b3+)

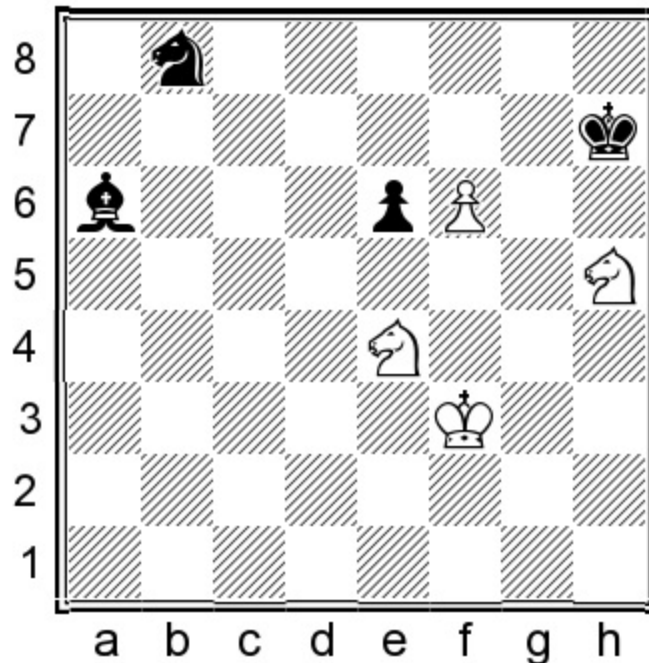
1.♞a4+!! ♔xa4 2.♞b6+ ♔b4 3.♞d5+ ♔a4 4.♞xc3+ ♔b4 5.♔b2! Black is in zugzwang!

5...♖b7 6.♗c6#!



Author A. Gurvich, 1931 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 19



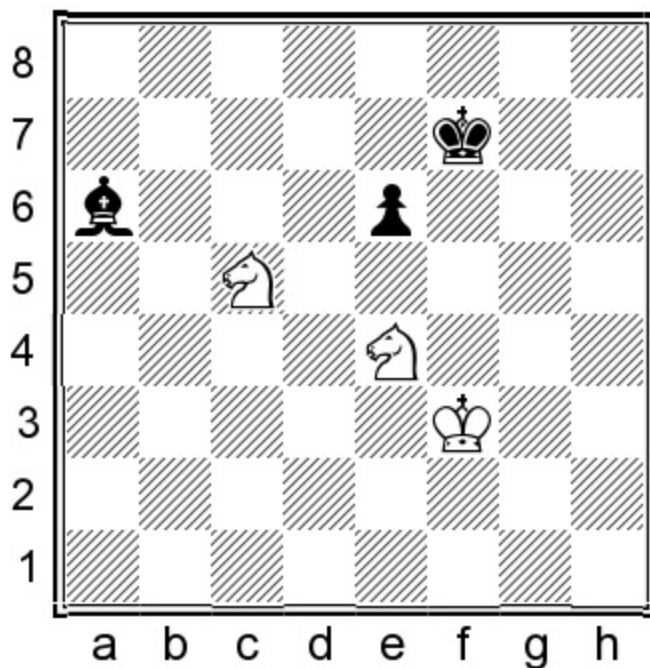
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

1.f7. The pawn should move immediately: 1.♖g4? ♗g6 2.♗f4+ ♖f7 3.♖g5 ♗d7 4.♗d6+ ♖g8 5.f7+ ♖f8 6.♗g6+ ♖g7 7.♗f4 ♖f8, with a draw.

1.f7 ♗d7 2.♗hf6+! The quiet 2.♗c5? fails due to the fork 2...♗e5+.

2...♔g7 3.♘xd7 ♕xf7 4.♘dc5! Domination. The bishop is caught on an almost empty board!

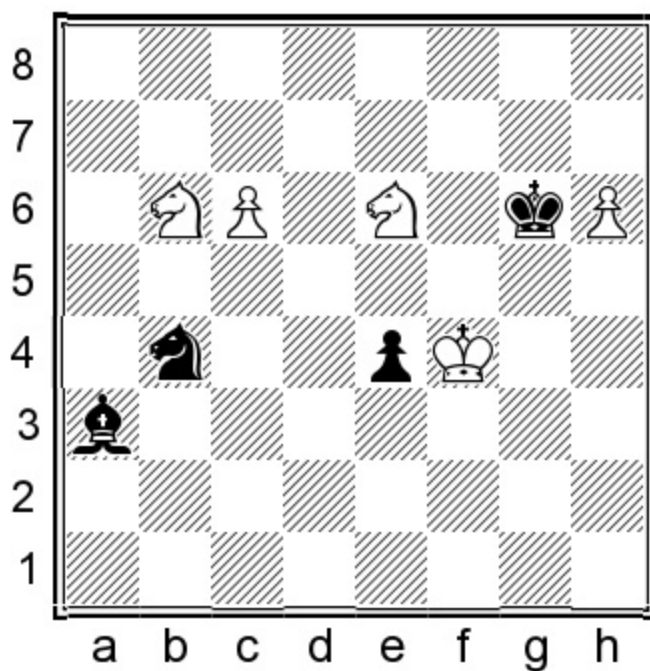


4...♕f1. After 4...♕c8(b5, c4), white forks the bishop with 5.♘d6+.

5.♕f2! ♕h3 6.♘g5+, and the bishop is forked. The rest is simple: 6...♕f6 7.♘xh3 e5 8.♘e4+, winning.

Author A. Troitsky, 1934

No. 20



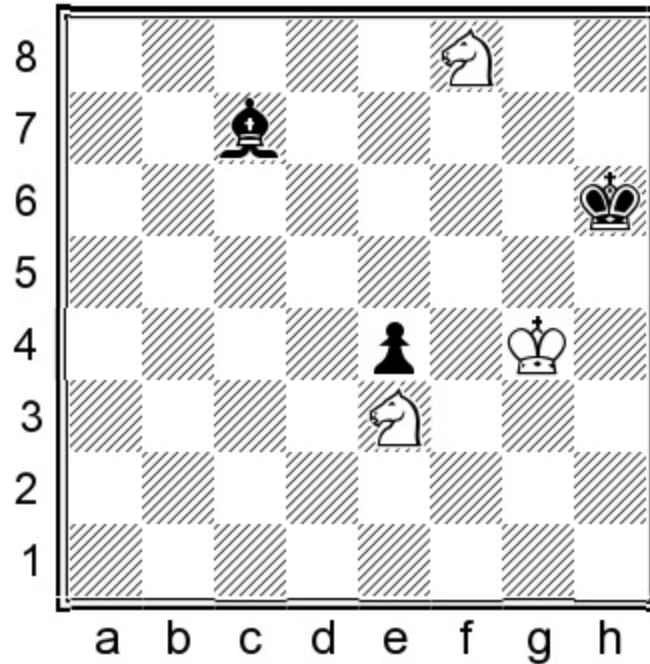
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

White needs to push one of his pawns. But which one? After 1.h7? ♖xh7 2.c7 ♜d5+ 3.♜xd5 ♜d6+ 4.♖g5 ♜xc7 5.♜f6+ ♖h8 6.♖g6 ♜e5, the mating construction is undone.

The correct move is **1.c7! ♜d5+! 2.♜xd5 ♜d6+ 3.♖g4!** After 3.♖e3? ♜xc7 4.♜dxc7 ♖xh6, there's a drawn Troitsky endgame: as soon as the king moves, the black pawn immediately takes its place.

3...♜xc7 4.♜f8+! (4.♜dxc7? e3!) **4...♖xh6 5.♜e3!!** The whole point of the combination. The black king is in a mating net: white threatens 6.♜f5#!

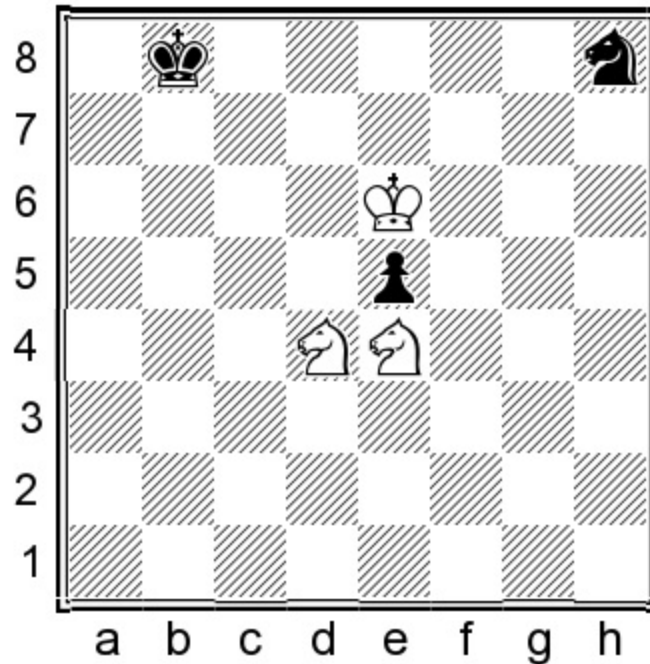


5...♖g7 6.♜e6+, and the bishop falls. White wins.

Author A. Troitsky, 1935 (position after black's 2nd move)

Show in Text Mode

No. 21



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

Thanks to his extra tempo, white goes after the cornered knight.

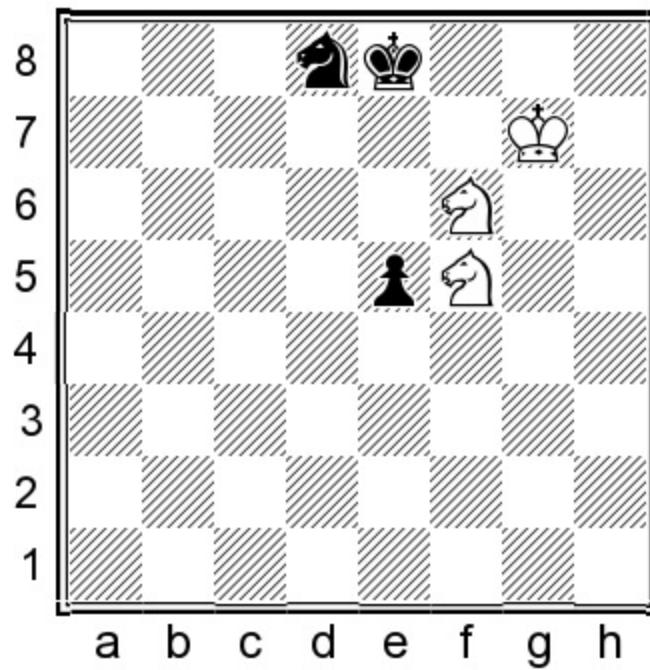
1. ♖c6+ (1. ♖f3? ♜g6 2. ♔f7 ♜f4)

1. ♖c6+ ♔c7 2. ♜e7 ♔d8 3. ♔f6 ♔e8. Black needs to rescue the knight. 3... ♔d7 is weaker due to 4. ♜f5 ♔e8 5. ♔g7 ♜f7 6. ♜f6+, and the knight falls.

4. ♜f5! ♜f7 (4... ♔f8 5. ♜h6 ♔e8 6. ♔g7). The knight is saved, but at a terrible price...

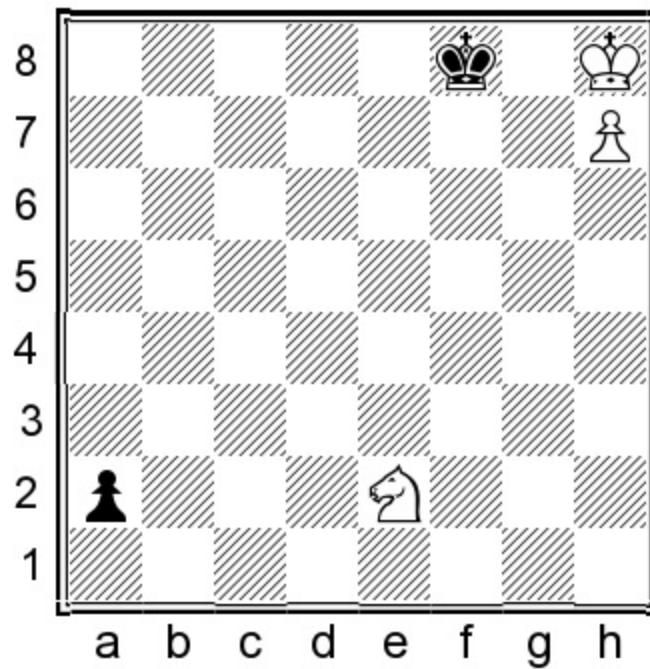
5. ♔g7! ♜d8. Otherwise, white wins a prosaic Troitsky endgame after 5... ♜d6 6. ♜fxd6+.

6. ♜f6#! A spectacular finale!



Author T. Gorgiev, 1935

No. 22



White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

The black pawn is unstoppable, but it's not a reason to panic!

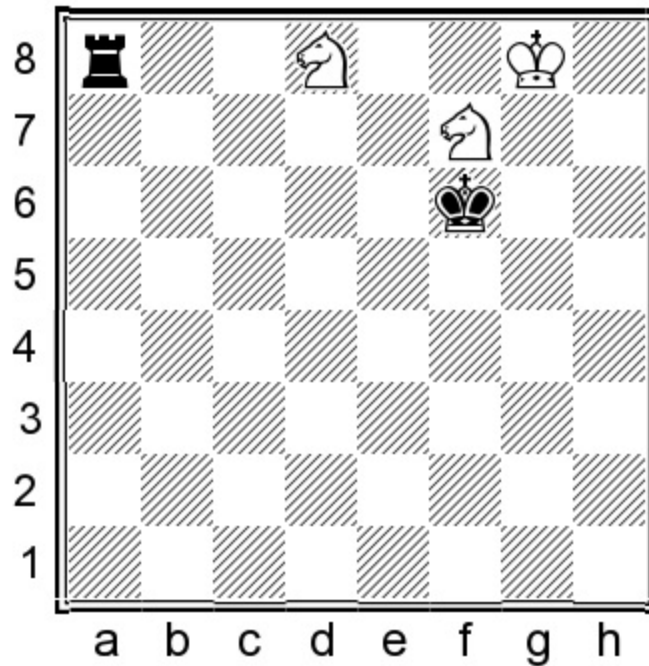
1. ♖d4! But not 1. ♖c3? a1=♖! 2. ♖d5 ♕f7 3. ♖c7 ♖b1, curtains.

1. ♖d4! a1=♖! (1...a1=♖, stalemate) **2. ♖e6+ ♕f7** **3. ♖d8+ ♕g6!** Or 3...♕f8 4. ♖e6+, with a positional draw.

4.♔g8 ♖a8! Counting on 5.h8=♘? ♖xd8#.

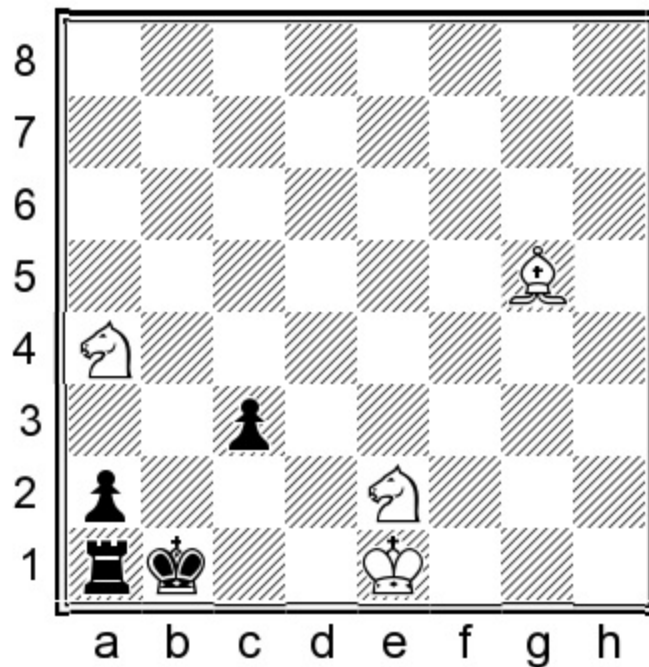
5.h8=♘+! The second knight is born!

5...♔f6 6.♘hf7, and there's no checkmate. Draw.



Author A. Kazantsev, 1926 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 23



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

It seems that the material on the board is only sufficient for a draw, but black's positional

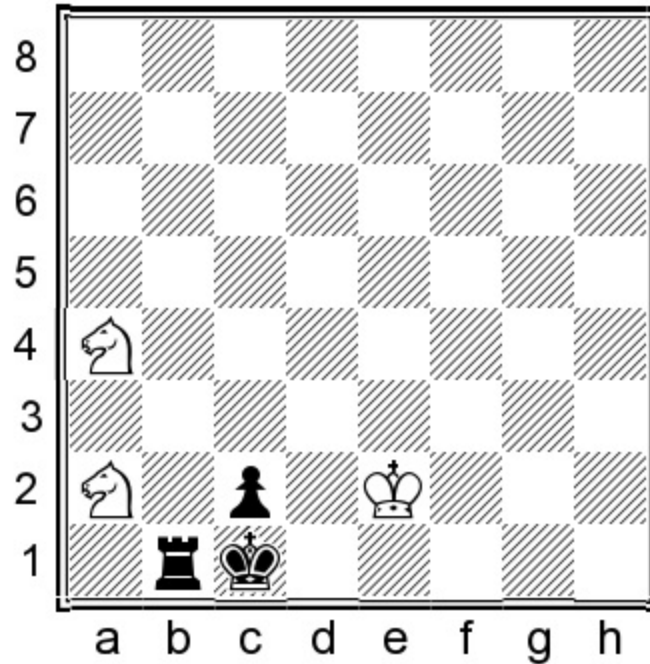
deficiencies allow white to launch a mating attack.

1.♘d4! Not 1.♙d1? c2+ 2.♙d2 c1=♚+ 3.♘xc1, stalemate.

1.♘d4! c2 2.♙c1!! The point! Black doesn't fear positional strangulation: 2.♘b3? c1=♚+ 3.♙xc1 ♙c2 4.♘xa1+ ♙xc1, with a draw.

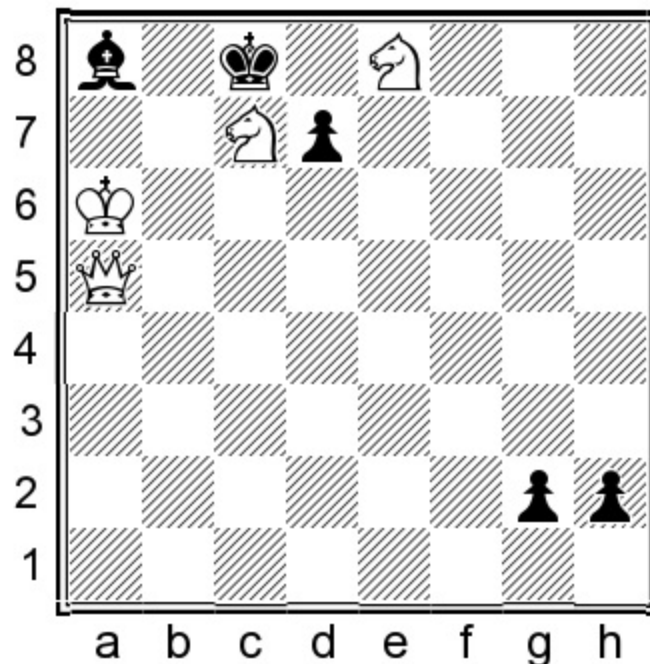
2...♙xc1 3.♘e2+! But not 3.♘b3+? ♙b1 4.♘d2+ ♙c1 5.♘b3+ ♙b1 6.♙d2 c1=♚+ 7.♘xc1, with a stalemate.

3...♙b1 4.♘ec3+ ♙c1 5.♙e2! (black is in zugzwang) **5...♚b1 6.♘xa2#**. An ideal mate!



Author T. Gorgiev, 1937

No. 24



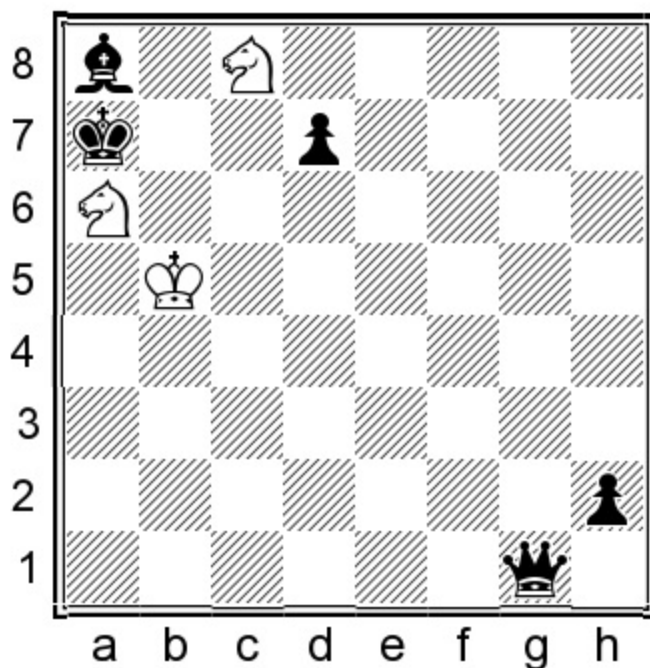
Black to play. White draws

Show/Hide Solution

It's bad to promote the pawn immediately: 1...g1=♚? 2.♘d6+ ♔b8 3.♚b4+! ♔xc7 4.♘b5+ ♔d8 (4...♔c6 5.♚d6#) 5.♚f8#.

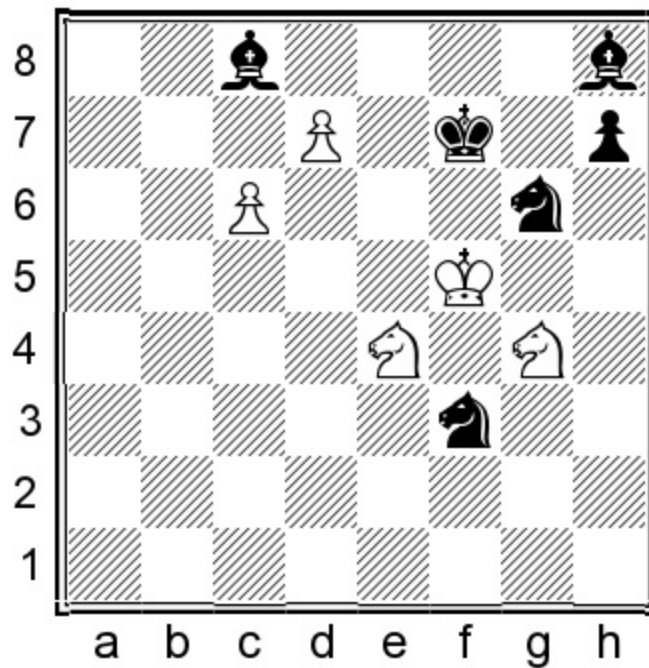
The white king should be chased away first: 1...♙b7+! 2.♔b5 (2.♔a7 g1=♚+) 2...g1=♚ 3.♘d6+ ♔b8! (3...♔d8? 4.♘d5+) 4.♚a8+!! The point, attracting the bishop back to its initial square!

4...♙xa8 5.♘a6+ ♔a7 6.♘c8+.



Despite the huge material advantage, black can't prevent perpetual check: 6...♔b7 7.♘d6+ etc.
Author J. Cumpe, 1938 (version by S. Tkachenko)

No. 25



White to play and win

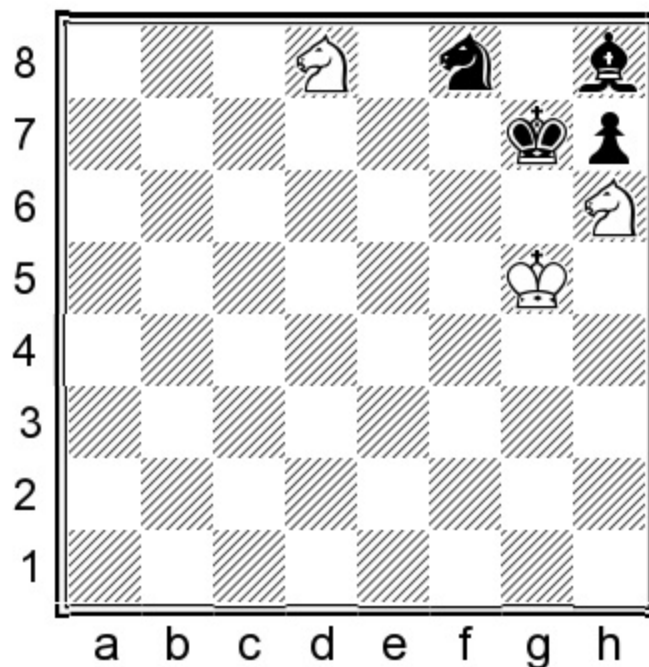
Show/Hide Solution

1. ♖g5+! 1. ♖d6+? is not dangerous: 1... ♔g7 2. dxc8=♚ ♘e7+ 3. ♔e4 ♖g5+ 4. ♔f4 ♖xc8 5. ♖xc8 ♘e6+ 6. ♔e5 ♔f7+ 7. ♔d5 ♖c7+ 8. ♔d6 ♖e6, and black holds.

1. ♖g5+! ♖xg5. Capturing the knight is necessary. 1... ♔g7 2. ♖e6+ ♔f7 3. ♖h6+ ♔e7 4. d8=♚# is bad, and after 1... ♔e7 2. dxc8=♚ black has no fork 2... ♖e7+.

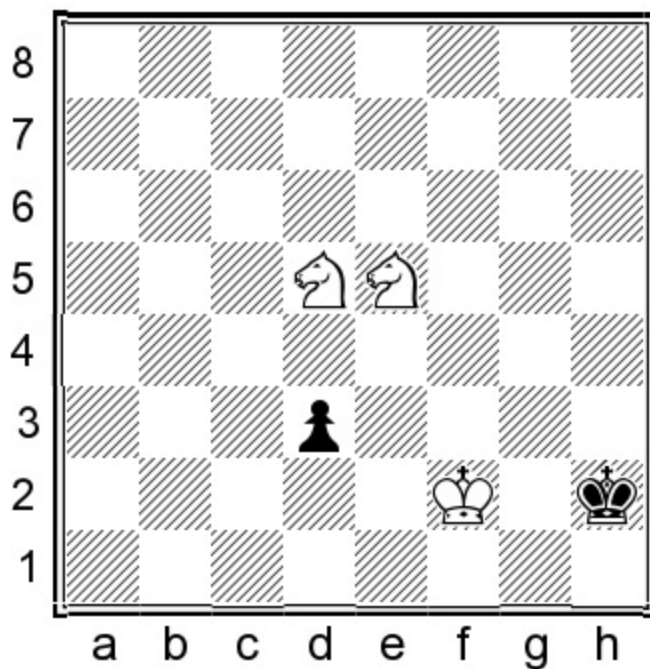
2. ♖h6+ ♔g7 3. ♔xg5 ♙xd7 4. cxd7 ♖f8! Threatening to fork the newborn queen: 5. d8=♚? ♖e6+ etc.

Suddenly: **5. d8=♖!!** (5. ♖f5+? ♔f7). Black is in zugzwang.



5... ♖d7 6. ♖e6#!

No. 26



White to play and win

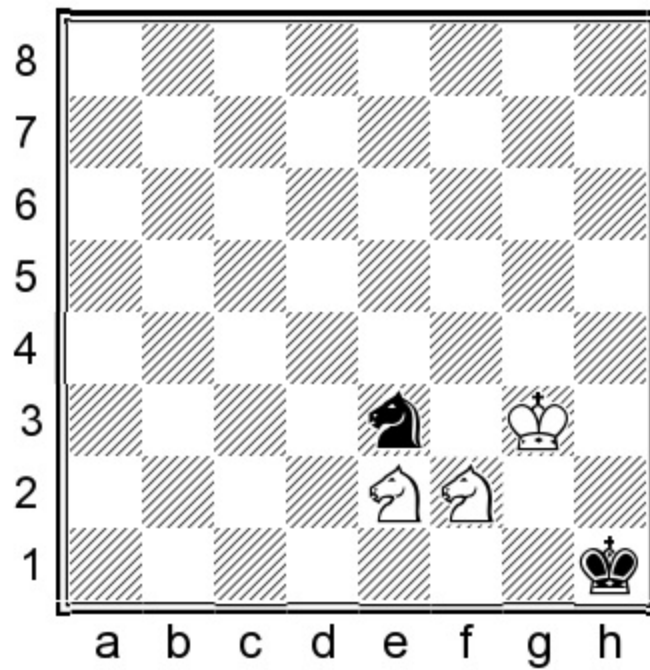
Show/Hide Solution

The black pawn is in the drawing zone, but white still has a way to win...

1. ♖f4! d2 2. ♖g4+! A thematic false try: 2. ♖f3+? ♔h1 3. ♖e2 d1=♖+! 4. ♔g3 ♖c3, and the white king occupies the checkmate zone, getting in the way.

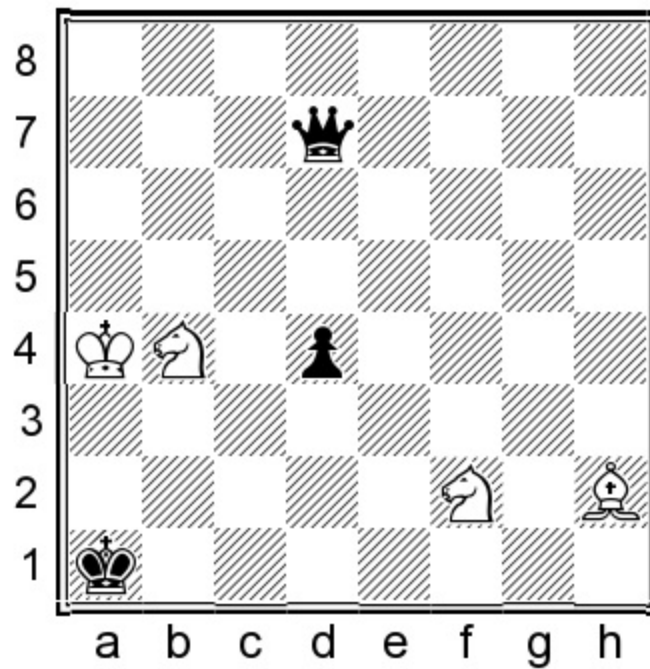
2... ♔h1 3. ♖e2! But not 3. ♖h5? d1=♖+ 4. ♔f1 ♖e3+! 5. ♖xe3, and only two hapless white knights are left on the board.

3... d1=♖+! 4. ♔g3! ♖e3 5. ♖f2#.



Author H. Blandford, 1941

No. 27



White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

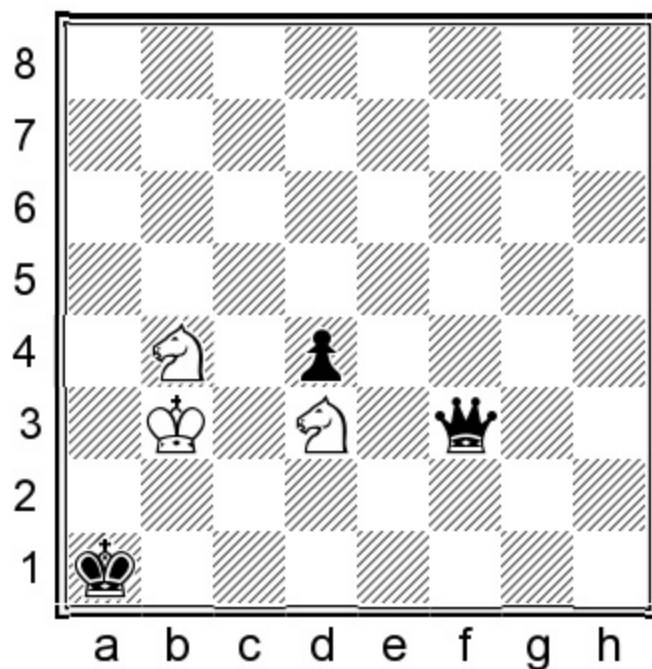
White cannot coordinate his pieces because his king is under attack...

1. ♖a5! After 1. ♖a3? ♜a7+! 2. ♖b3 ♜f7+ 3. ♖a3 ♜xf2 black wins.

1. ♖a5! ♜f5+. The knight is doomed. Is it time to resign?

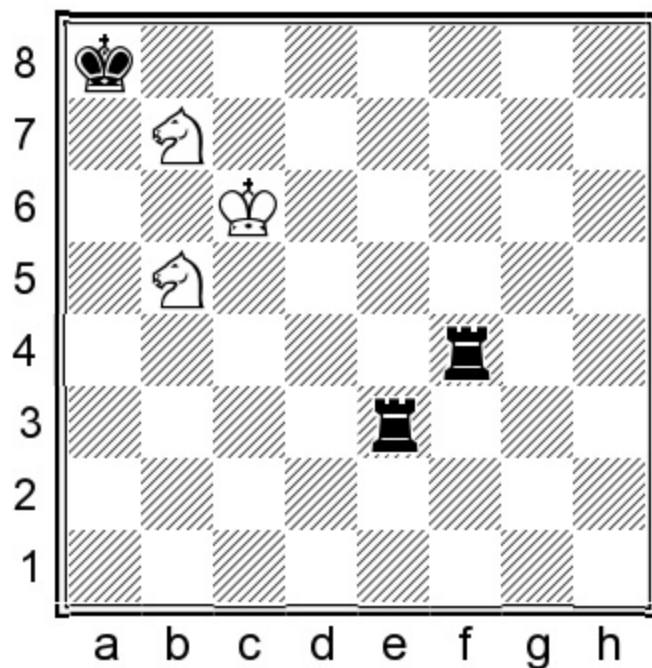
Suddenly: **2. ♙e5!! ♜xe5+.** Or 2... ♜xf2 3. ♙xd4+! ♜xd4 4. ♘c2+, forking.

3.♔a4! ♚e8+ (3...♔b2 4.♘fd3+, a fork) 4.♔a3! (4.♔b3? ♚f7+) 4...♚a8+ 5.♔b3 ♚f3+ 6.♘fd3, and there's a fortress on the board! The black king is securely locked up in the corner, and the queen alone cannot win this.



Author K. Betins, 1941

No. 28



White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

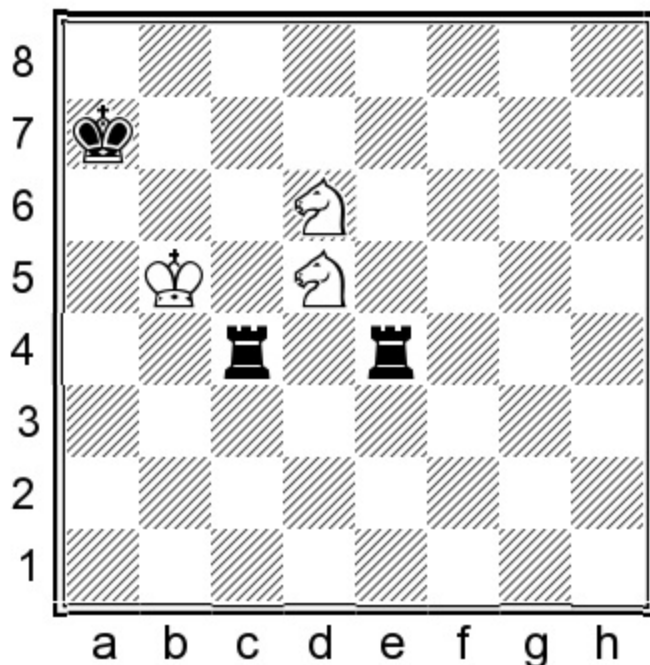
Two knights usually lose to two rooks. But there are some exceptions!

1.♘c7+! The attempt to create a fortress 1.♘7d6? is easily thwarted, for instance: 1...♔b8 2.♕c5 ♖e5+ 3.♕c6 ♜h5 4.♕b6 ♜f6, curtains.

1.♘c7+! ♕a7(b8) 2.♘d5!, forking both rooks. Now there are two branches:

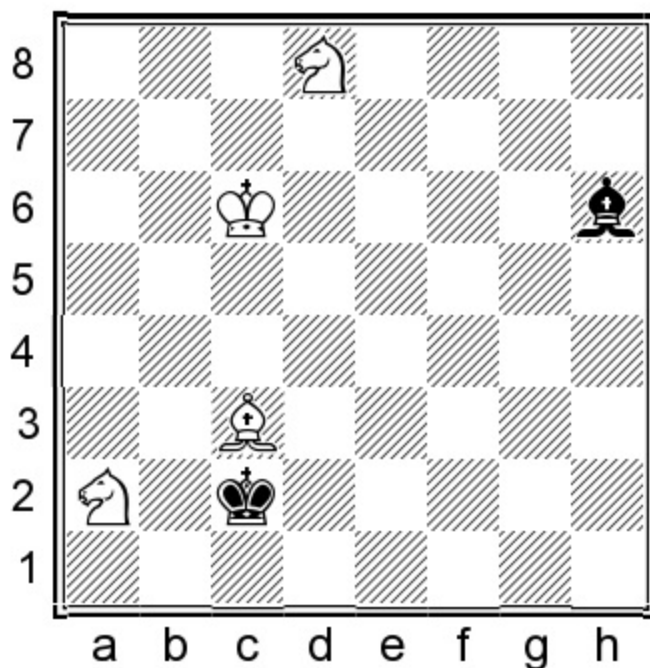
1) 2...♜e6+ 3.♕d7! ♜fe4 4.♘c5! with a new fork that black has no defense against;

2) 2...♜c4+ 3.♕b5! ♜ee4 4.♘d6! with another fork. Two parallel echo variations!



Author H. Rinck, 1945

No. 29



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

It's not that simple for white to convert his material advantage. For instance, after 1.♙f6? (black threatened 1...♖b3) 1...♙d2! 2.♖b5 ♖b3, the knight is doomed.

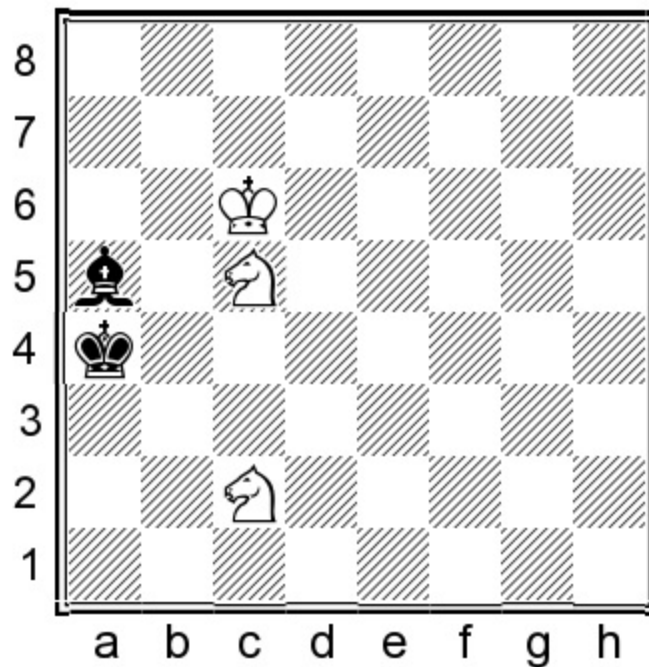
Another dead end is 1.♙e1? ♙d2! 2.♘b4+ ♖d1 etc.

The correct move is **1.♙a5! ♖b3!** Now 1...♙d2 is not enough: 2.♘b4+ ♖b3 3.♖b5, curtains.

2.♘b4! ♖a4! 3.♘b7! After 3.♖b6? ♙d2 4.♘dc6 ♙e3+! 5.♖a6 ♙d2 6.♖b6 ♙e3+, there's a positional draw: white can't untangle his pieces.

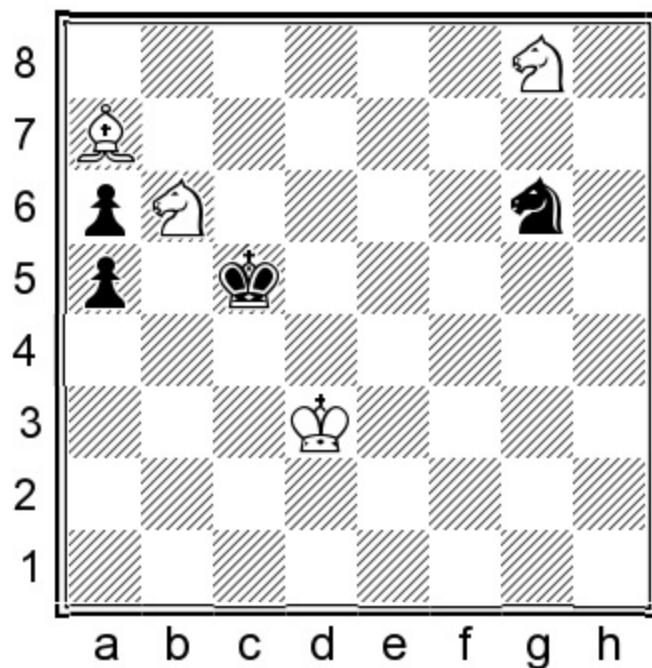
3...♙d2 4.♘c2!! The point! 4.♖c5? ♙e1! 5.♖c4 ♙xb4! 6.♙xb4 only leads to a stalemate.

4...♙xa5 5.♘c5#!



Author P. Keres, 1946 (position after black's 2nd move)

No. 30



Black to play. White wins

Show/Hide Solution

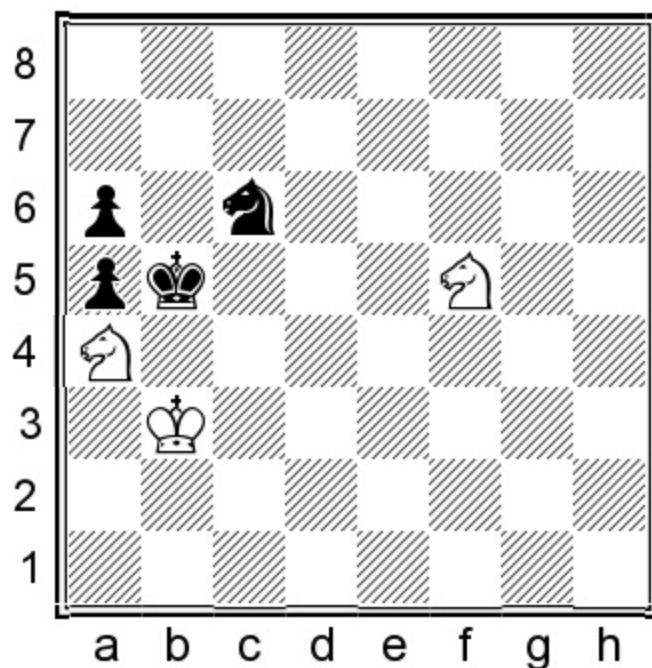
The black knight targets the enemy bishop...

1...♞e5+ 2.♞c3! ♞c6! 3.♞a4+! 3...♞d7+? is bad due to 3...♞d6, and white loses material.

3...♞b5. Draw?

Suddenly: **4.♞b3! ♞xa7 5.♞e7! ♞c6.** Or 5...♞c8 6.♞xc8, winning a Troitsky endgame.

6.♞f5! The point of the combination!

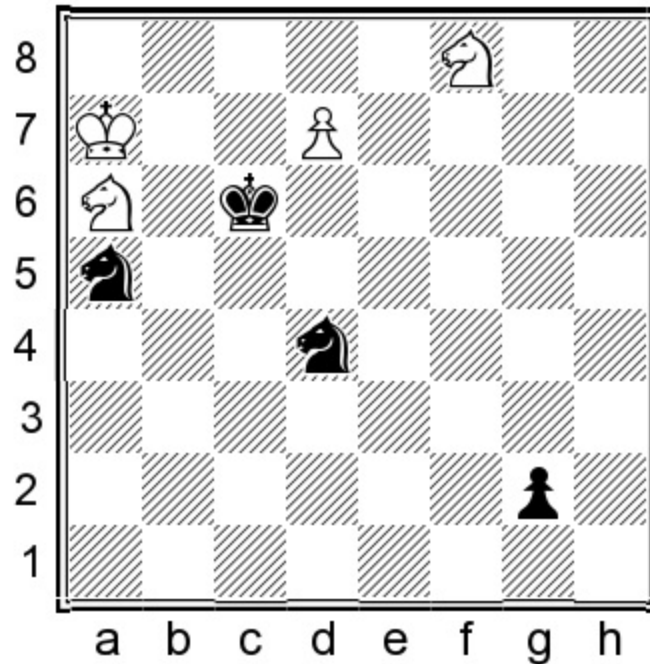


Black is in zugzwang and succumbs to a checkmating blow: **6...♞e5 7.♞d4#.**

Author A. Gurvich, 1947 (position after white's 2nd move)

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No. 31



White to play and win

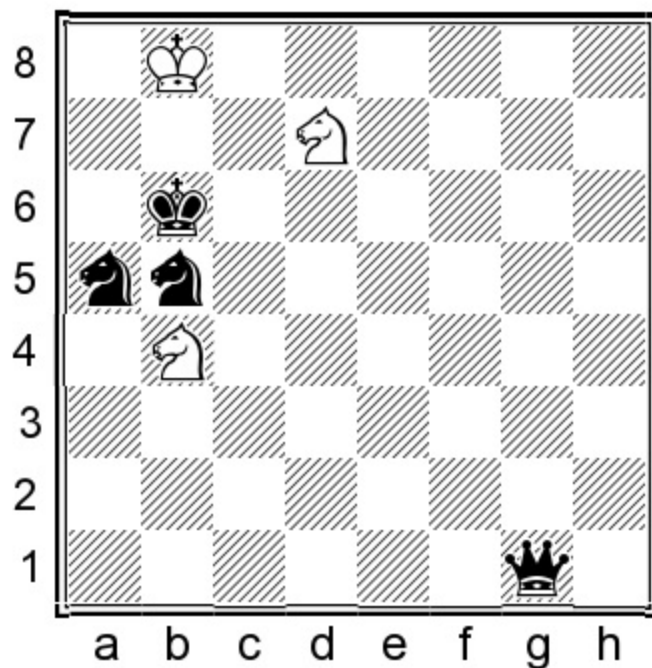
Show/Hide Solution

Even after the pawns promote, the material on the board is still equal. But the right to move is all-important here!

1.d8=♚ ♖b5+! (1...g1=♚ 2.♚d7#) **2.♔b8!** 2.♔a8? is toothless: 2...g1=♚ 3.♚c8+ ♖c7+! 4.♖xc7 (4.♚xc7+ ♔b5) 4...♚g2! 5.♖d7 ♔d6+, and white cannot win.

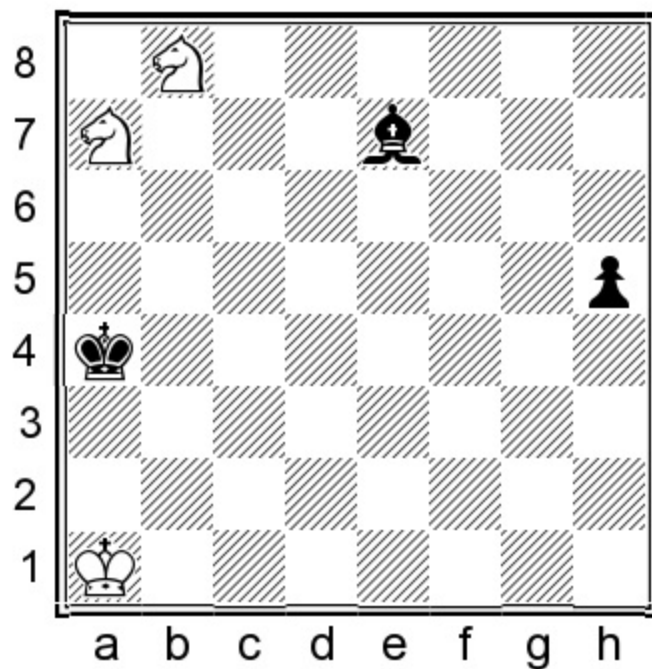
2...g1=♚ 3.♖b4+ ♔c5 4.♚b6+!! The point!

4...♔xb6 (4...♔xb4 5.♚xg1) 5.♖d7#!



Author F. Lazard, 1948

No. 32



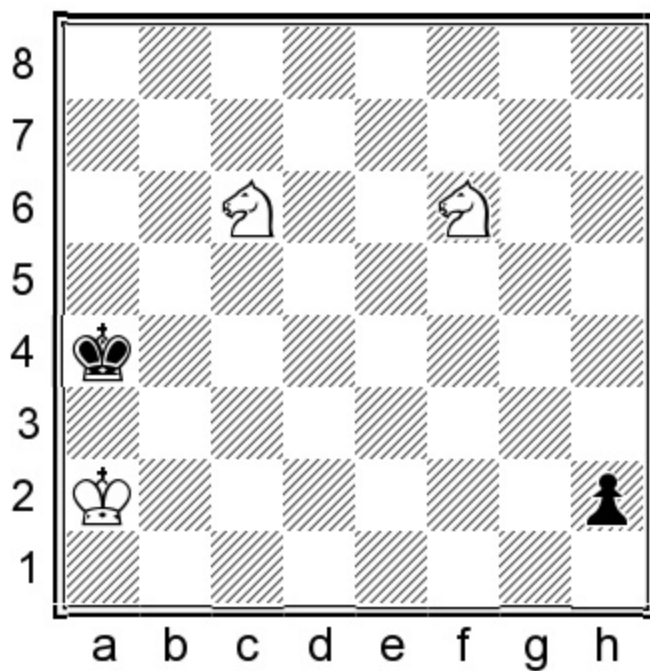
White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

Can the knight pair stop the black pawn? There are several false tries: 1. ♖bc6? ♕f6+! 2. ♔a2 h4 3. ♖c8 h3 4. ♖d6 h2 5. ♖e4 h1=♚ or

1. ♖d7? h4 2. ♖c6 h3 3. ♖xe7 h2 4. ♖c5+ ♔b5 5. ♖e4 h1=♚+, and white is always one tempo short to stop the pawn.

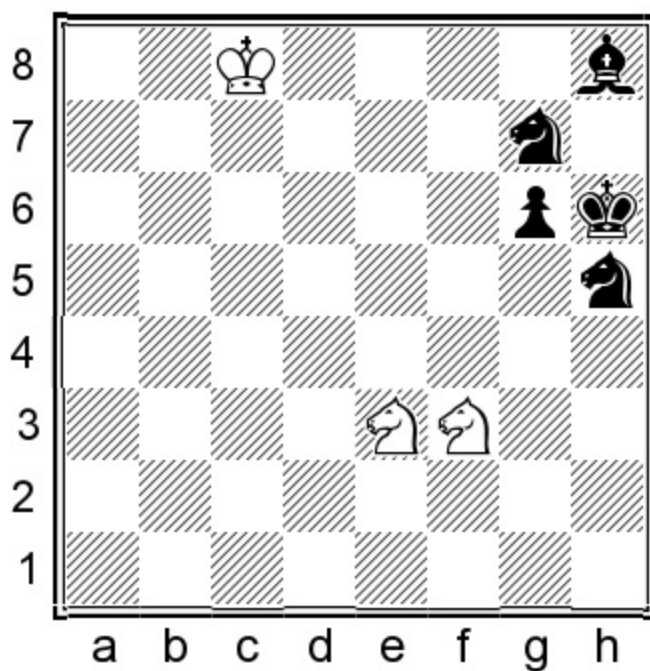
The correct way is **1.♖ac6! ♕f6+ 2.♔a2! h4 3.♜d7! h3** (3...♕c3 4.♜de5) **4.♜xf6 h2**. The pawn is again one step from queening, but this time, everything works out for white!



5.♜e4!, and there's no 5...h1=♚?? due to 6.♜c3#. While after 5...♔b5 6.♜f2(g3), the pawn is stopped. Draw.

Author W. Korteling, 1949

No. 33



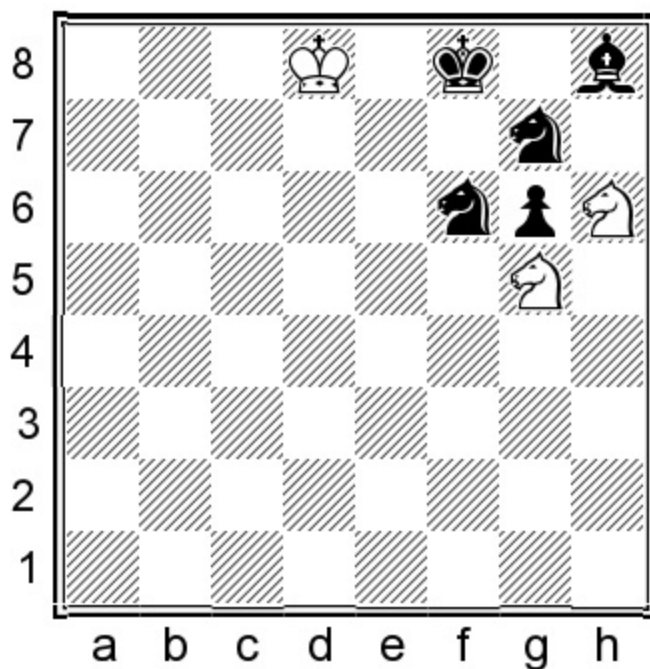
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

It may sound incredible, but two white knights completely dominate the whole black army!

1.♖g4+ ♔h7 2.♖g5+ ♔g8 3.♘h6+ ♔f8 4.♔d7!! The point! After 4.♔d8? ♘f6, white is in zugzwang and... loses.

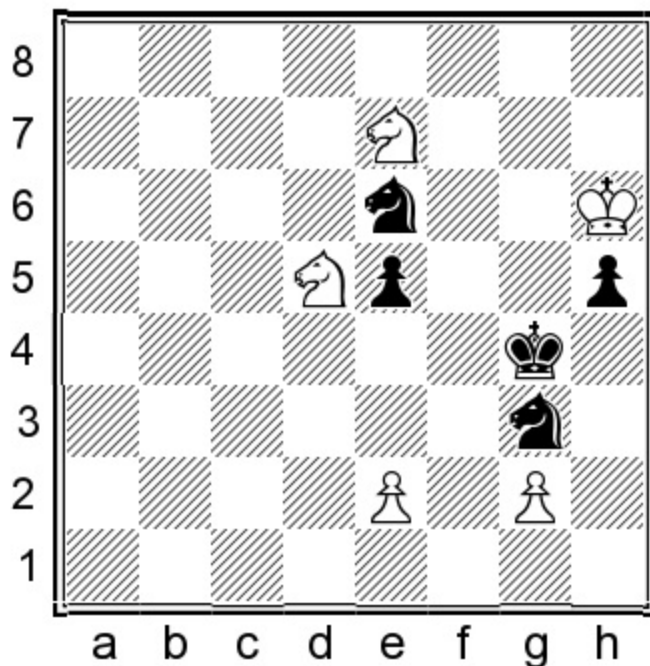
4...♘f6+ 5.♔d8! And now it's black who is in zugzwang.



The rest is simple: 5...♘f5 6.♘e6# or 5...♘d5 6.♘h7#.

Author C. Bent, 1950

No. 34



White to play and win

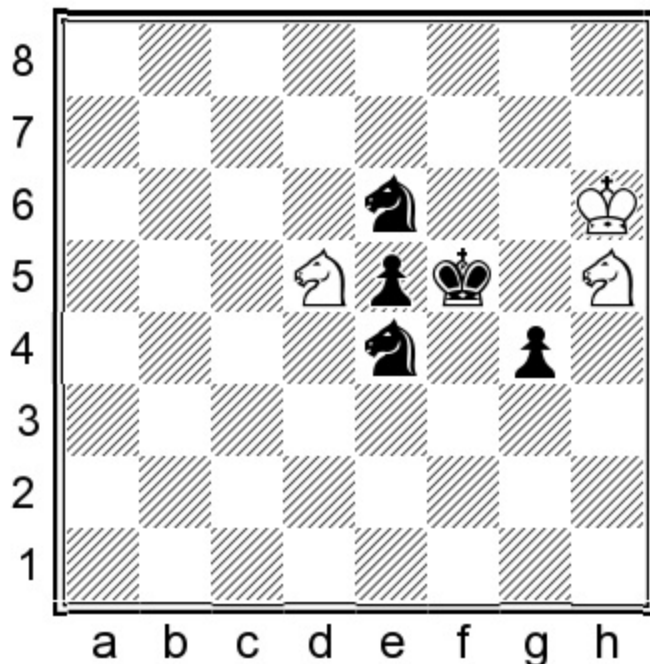
Show/Hide Solution

The material is equal, but a mating attack is already brewing!

1. ♖f6+! ♔f4 (1... ♖h4 2. ♘g6#) 2. ♘ed5+ ♔f5 3. e4+! The first pawn sacrifice!

3... ♘xe4 4. g4+! And now the second pawn gets sacrificed as well!

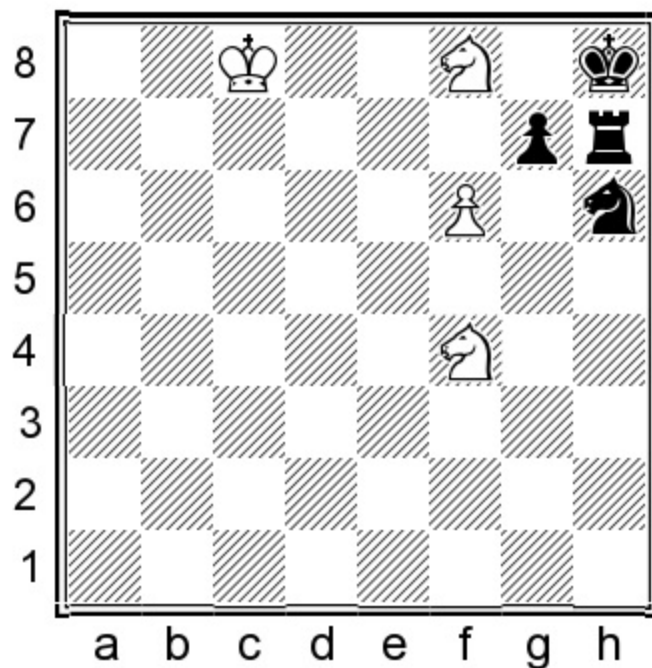
4... hxg4 5. ♘h5!! The key point!



Black can only cry, because he's utterly helpless: 5... g3 6. ♘e3#, 5... ♘c3 6. ♘g3# or 5... ♘c7 6. ♘g7#.

Author C. Bent, 1950

No. 35



White to play and win

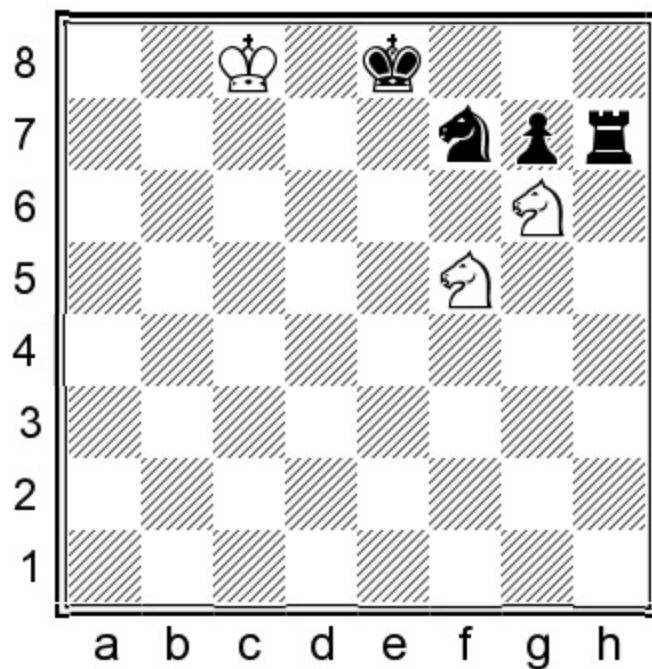
Show/Hide Solution

White is down an exchange, but it's too early to start peace talks!

1.f7!! The move order cannot be changed: 1.♘g6+? ♔g8 2.f7+ ♕xf7!, and black wins.

1.f7!! ♕xf7 (1...g5 2.♘g6+) **2.♘g6+!** ♔g8 **3.♘e7+** ♕f8. Or 3...♔h8 4.♘fg6#.

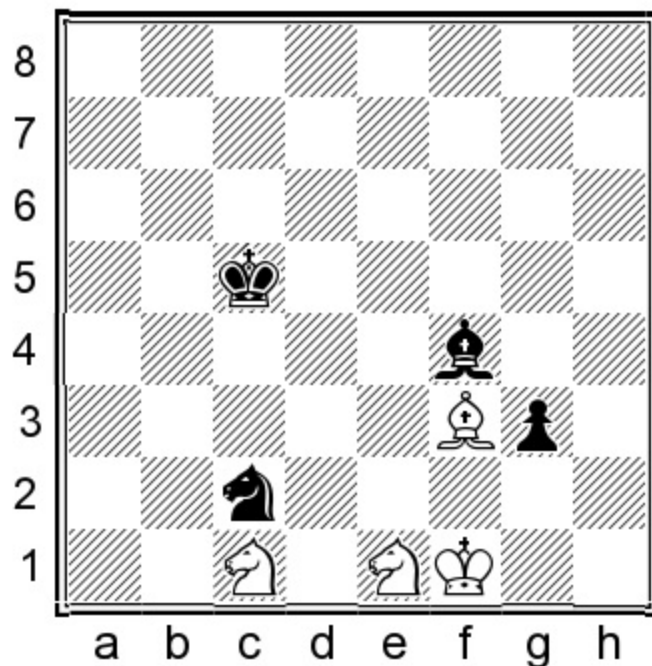
4.♘fg6+ ♕e8 **5.♘f5!** The crucial position!



Black is in zugzwang and cannot prevent the killer blow: 5...♘g5 6.♘d6# 5...♖h5 (~) 6.♘xg7#.

Author M. Perelman, 1950 (edited by S. Tkachenko)

No. 36



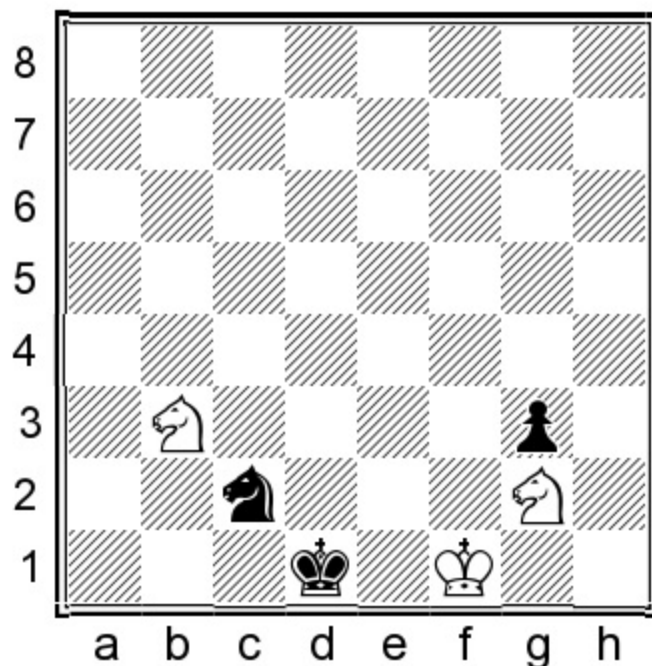
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

Which knight should fork the bishop? 1. ♖cd3+? is bad due to 1... ♔d4! 2. ♖xf4 ♘xe1 3. ♔xe1 ♔e3! with a drawing double attack.

1. ♘ed3+! ♔d4! 2. ♖xf4 ♔e3 (a double attack) 3. ♔d1!! Putting the piece under another double attack!

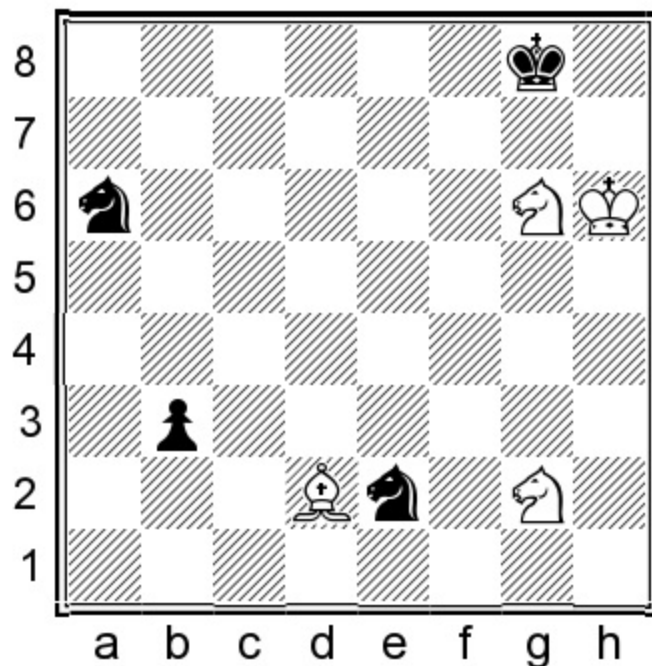
3... ♔d2 4. ♖b3+! ♔xd1 5. ♖g2! But not 5. ♖d5? g2+!, and black breaks the mating net.



Black is in zugzwang and gets checkmated: 5... ♖b4 (~) 6. ♖e3#.

Author M. Perelman, 1950 (edited by S. Tkachenko)

No. 37

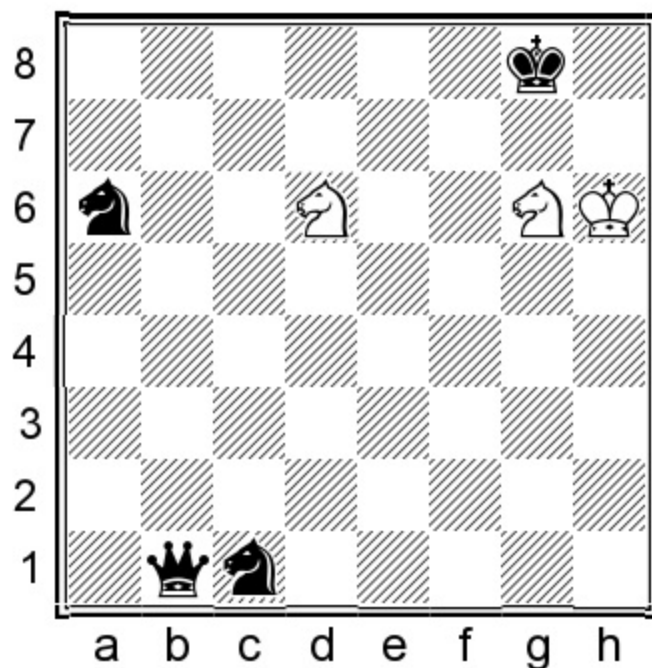


White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

It looks like white's position is falling apart. For instance, after 1. ♖e3? b2 2. ♖c4 b1=♚ 3. ♖d6 ♚h1+ he can resign.

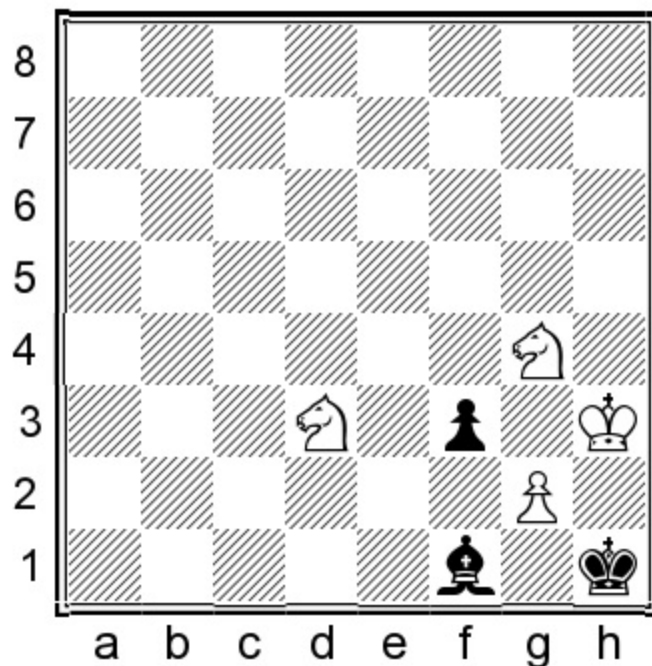
Suddenly: 1. ♕c1!! ♖xc1 2. ♖e3! b2 3. ♖c4! (3. ♖f5? ♔f7) 3...b1=♚ 4. ♖d6!! The key point! Black has a whole extra queen, but he cannot escape the perpetual check.



4... ♚b6 5. ♖e7+ ♔f8(h8) 6. ♖g6+ etc. Draw.

Author Z. Birnov, 1954

No. 38



White to play and win

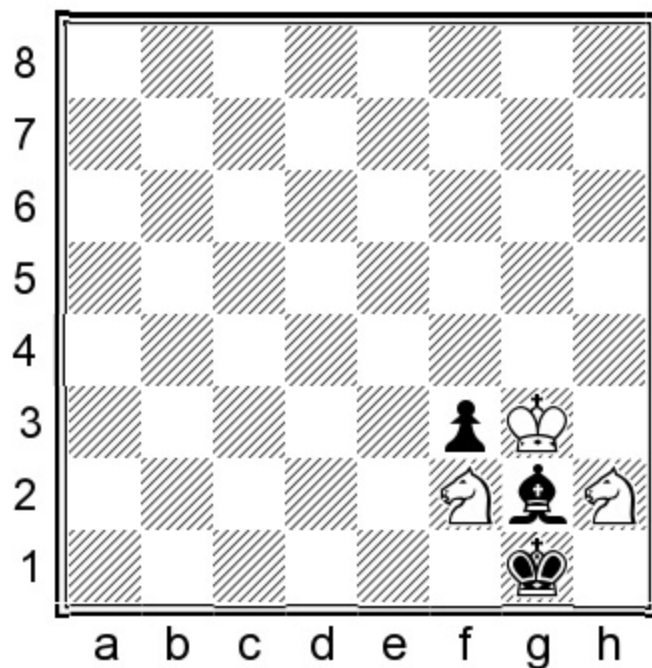
Show/Hide Solution

The white pawn is paralyzed by the pin and doomed...

1. ♖df2+! (1. ♔g3? ♕xd3!)

1. ♖df2+! ♔g1 2. ♔g3! ♕xg2. Other moves 2... ♕e2 3. ♖h3+ ♔h1 4. ♖gf2# or 2... ♕e2 3. ♖h3+ ♔f1 4. ♖h2+ ♔e1 5. ♖xf3+ etc. – cannot save black either.

3. ♖h2!! The point!

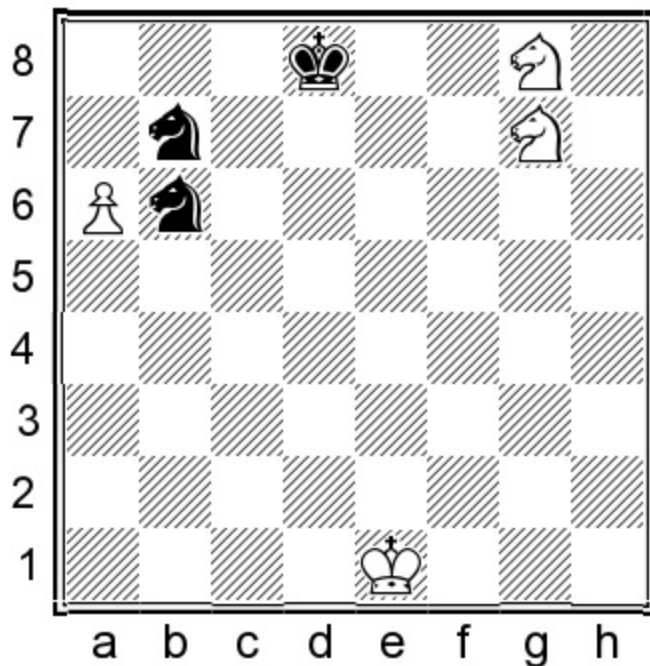


It turns out that black is in zugzwang and cannot escape mate. He has three equally unpleasant choices:

- 1) 3...♔f1 4.♖xf3#;
- 2) 3...♔h1 4.♖h3#;
- 3) 3...♔h3 4.♖xh3+ ♔h1 5.♖g4 f2 6.♖gxf2#.

Author L. Prokes, 1956

No. 39



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

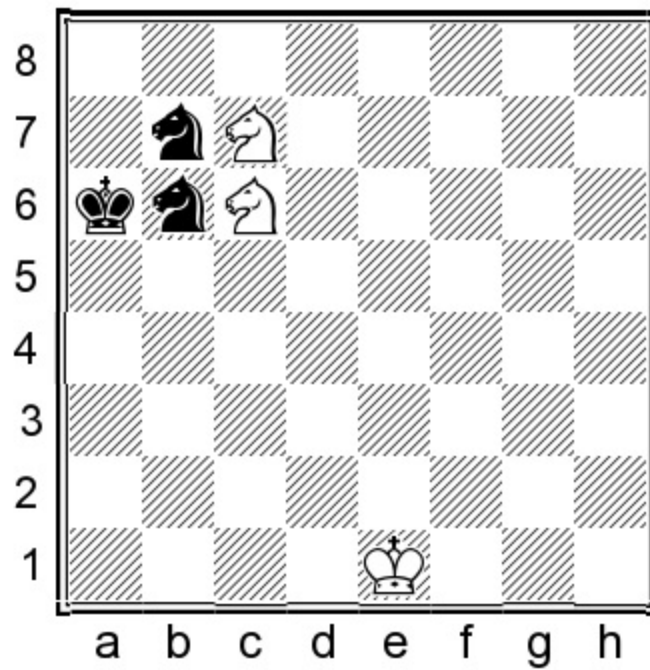
How can white convert his minimal material advantage? Only with a mating attack!

1.♖e6+! (1...axb7? ♔c7)

1.♖e6+! ♔c8 (1...♔d7 2.axb7) **2.♖e7+ ♔b8!** Now, after 3.♖c6+ ♔c8! 4.♖a7+ ♔b8 5.♖c6+ ♔c8, the position repeats. Is it a draw?

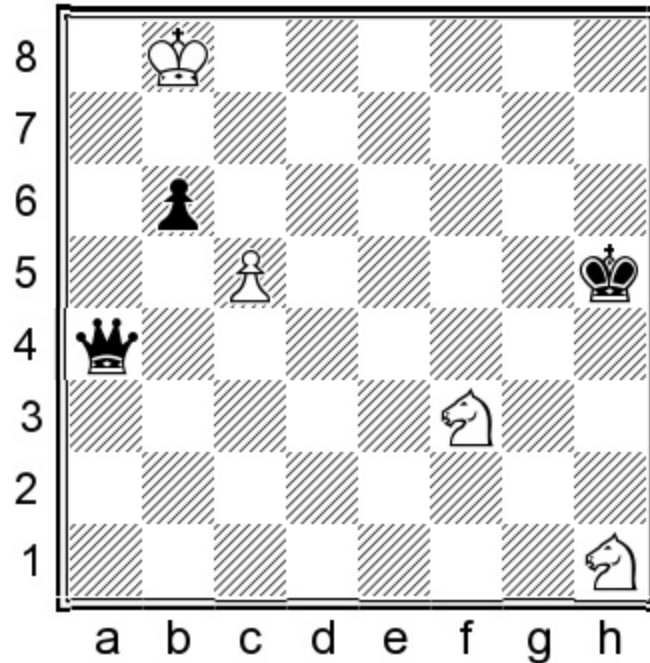
Suddenly: **3.a7+!!** Sacrificing the main asset! There are two echo lines:

3...♔a8 4.♖c7+ ♔xa7 5.♖c6#! or **3...♔xa7 4.♖c6+ ♔a6 5.♖c7#!**



Development of Alexey Troitsky's patent, study No. 1.
 Author M. Mikhailov, 1956

No. 40



White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

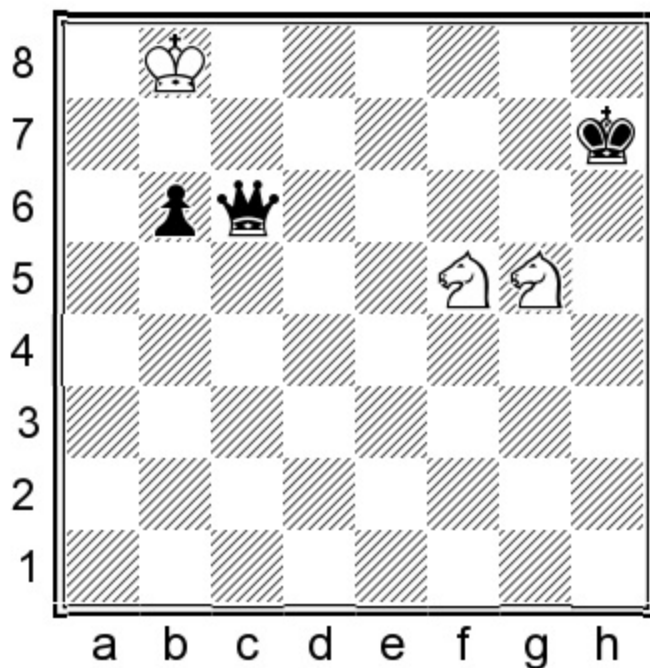
How to consolidate the scattered white forces? Only with a pawn sacrifice!

1.c6!! The immediate 1.♘g3+? is bad due to 1...♔g4! 2.c6 ♕xf3 3.c7 ♖e8+ 4.♔b7 ♕xg3, curtains.

The attempt to conserve material doesn't save white either: 1.cxb6? ♖f4+ 2.♔c8 ♜xf3, curtains.

1.c6!! ♜xc6. 1...♔g4 is toothless: 2.♘e5+ ♔f5 3.c7, with a draw.

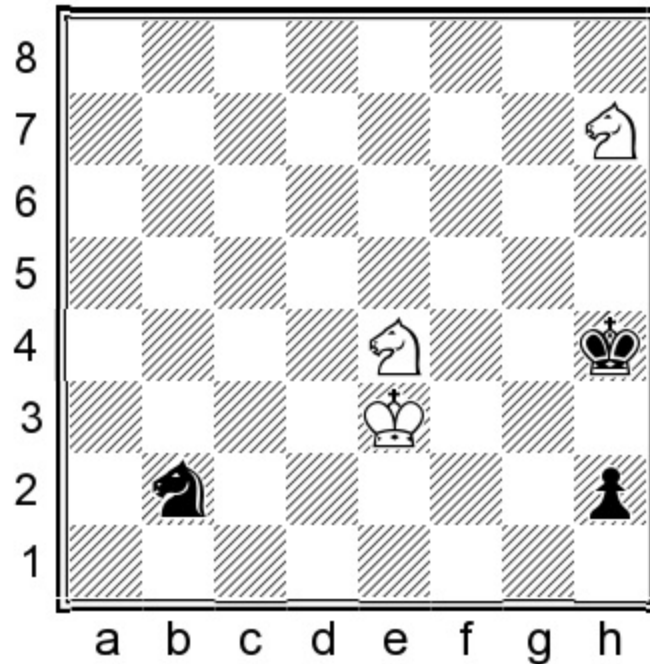
2.♘g3+! ♔h6 (2...♔g4 3.♘e5+, a fork) **3.♘f5+ ♔h7 4.♘g5+ ♔h8** (4...♔g8 5.♘e7+, another fork) **5.♘f7+ ♔h7 6.♘g5+**, and black can only escape perpetual check by giving up his queen. Draw.



Author A. Herberg, 1957

Show in Text Mode

No. 41



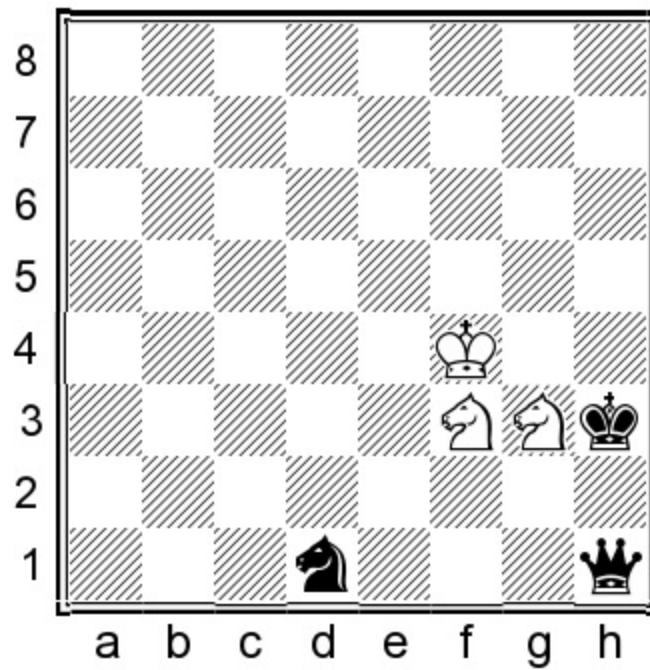
White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

It's not that easy to neutralize the black pawn. 1.♘f2? loses to 1...♘d1+! 2.♘xd1 h1=♚ etc.

White has to get the other knight into play: **1.♘hg5!** ♘d1+! 1...♘c4+ is toothless (1...h1=♚ 2.♘f3+): 2.♙f4 h1=♚ 3.♘f3+, and the queen gets forked next move.

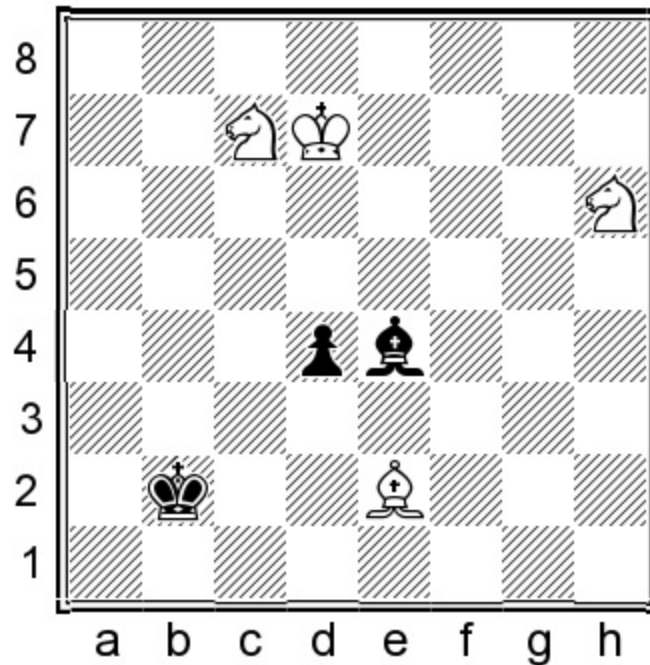
2.♙f4! h1=♚ 3.♘f3+ ♙h3 (3...♙h5 4.♘g3+) **4.♘g3!!** A unique position: a queen and a knight cannot fend off the pair of knights, even though it's their move!



4...♔g2 5.♘g5+ ♕h2(h4) 6.♘f3+ with a perpetual check.

Author V. Yakimchik, 1957 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 42



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

The black pawn hurries towards the promotion square...

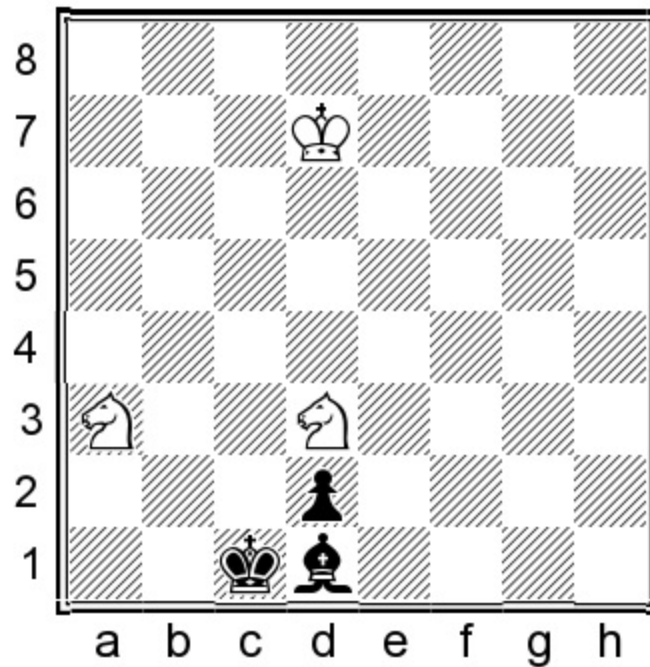
1.♘g4! d3. Or 1...♕c2 2.♘f2 d3 3.♕d1+ ♕c1 4.♕g4 d2 5.♘b5 ♕c2 6.♘c3, curtains.

2.♕d1 ♕c1! 2...♕f5+ gives black no chances: 3.♕d6 ♕xg4 4.♕xg4 d2 5.♘d5! ♕c2 6.♘e3+,

stopping the pawn.

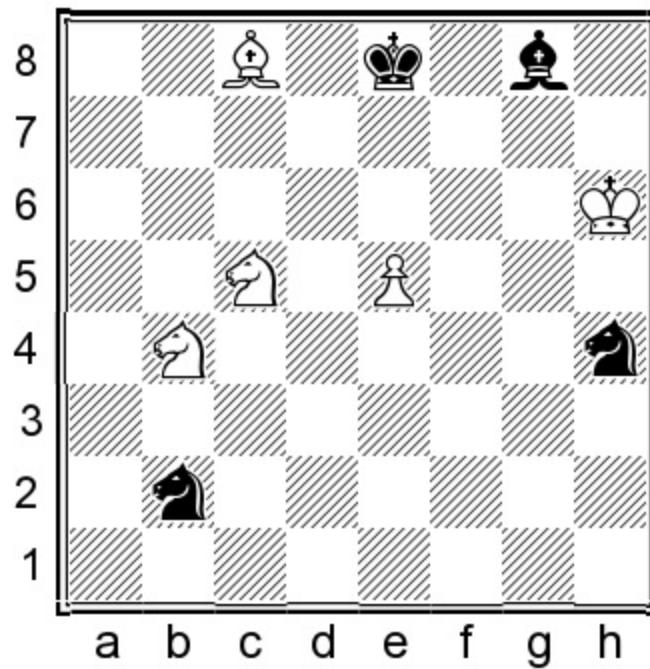
3.♘f2 d2 4.♗b5! ♕c2. Did black's strategy prevail after all? No!

5.♗a3! ♕xd1 6.♗d3#!



Author A. Sarychev, 1958 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 43



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

1.♔g7! ♗f3! 1...♗c4 is toothless: 2.♕d7+ ♖d8 3.♗c6+ ♖c7 4.♔xg8, and the pawn is well-

defended.

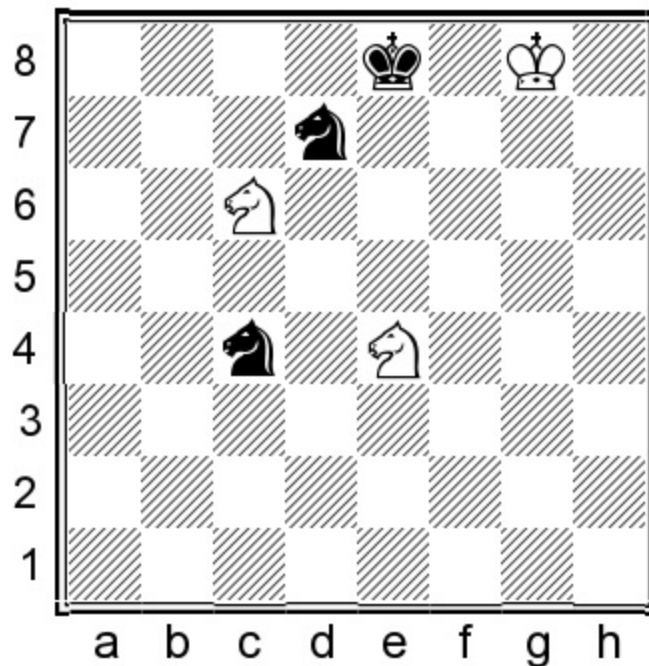
The counterattack 1...♔d8 is met with 2.♙b7!! ♙c4 3.♚f6 ♚c7 4.♙e4 ~ 5.♚g5, and the knight falls.

2...♞c4 also fails: 3.♞bd3! ♞xe5 4.♞xe5 ♙a2 5.♚f6 ♙b1 6.♞e6+ ♚e8 7.♙c6#.

2.♞c6! But not 2.♙d7+? ♚d8 3.♞c6+ ♚c7 4.♚xg8 ♞xe5 5.♞xe5 ♚d6, with a draw.

2...♞xe5 3.♙d7+!! (3.♞xe5? ♙d5) 3...♞xd7 4.♞e4! White is attacking despite being down material! He threatens 5.♞d6#.

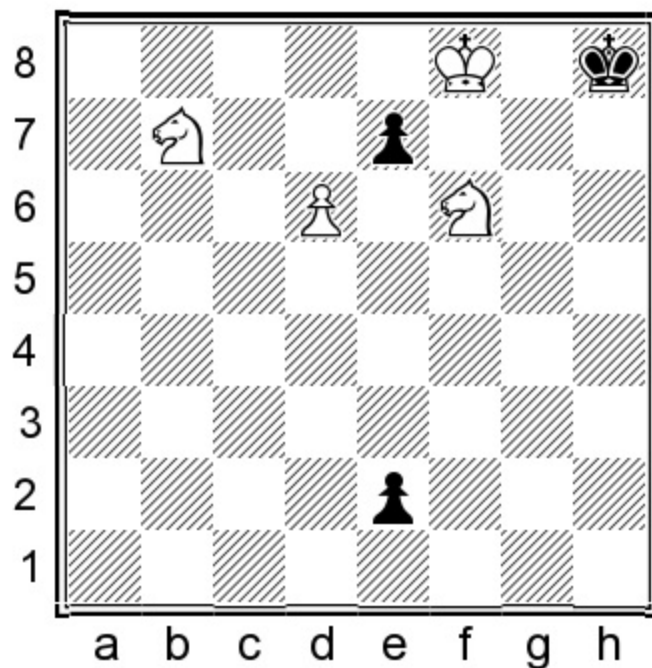
4...♞c4 5.♚xg8. Black is in zugzwang.



5...♞de5 6.♞f6# or 5...♞cb6 6.♞d6#. A classical finish!

Author E. Lazarev, 1959

No. 44



White to play and win

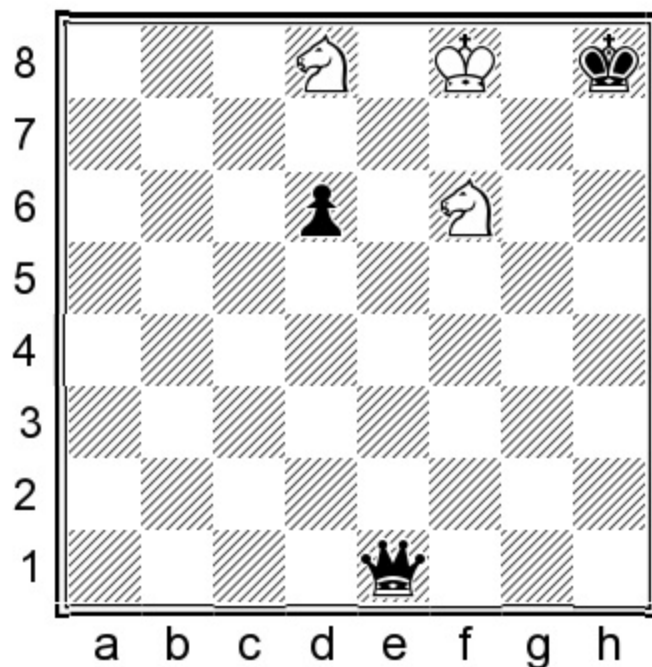
Show/Hide Solution

1.d7! Not 1.♘d8? exf6 2.d7 e1=♔ 3.♘f7+ ♔h7 4.d8=♔ ♔b4+ with a draw.

1.dxe7 e1=♔

1.d7! e1=♔ 2.♘d6!! The first point! But not 2.d8=♔? ♔e6!, and white cannot win.

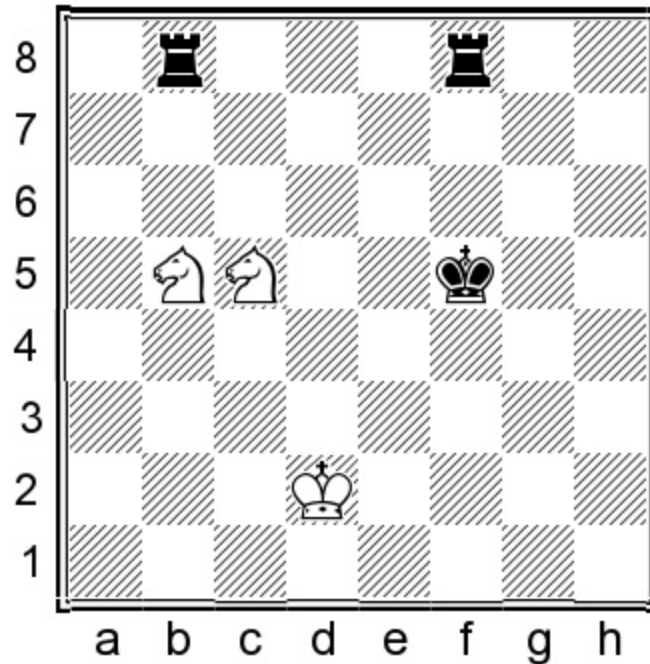
2...exd6 3.d8=♘!! The second point! 3.d8=♔? is met with the same refutation: 3...♔e6!, drawing.



Black is to move, but he cannot prevent checkmate with the promoted knight: **3...♔b4 4.♘f7#.**

Author V. Yakimchik, 1961

No. 45



White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

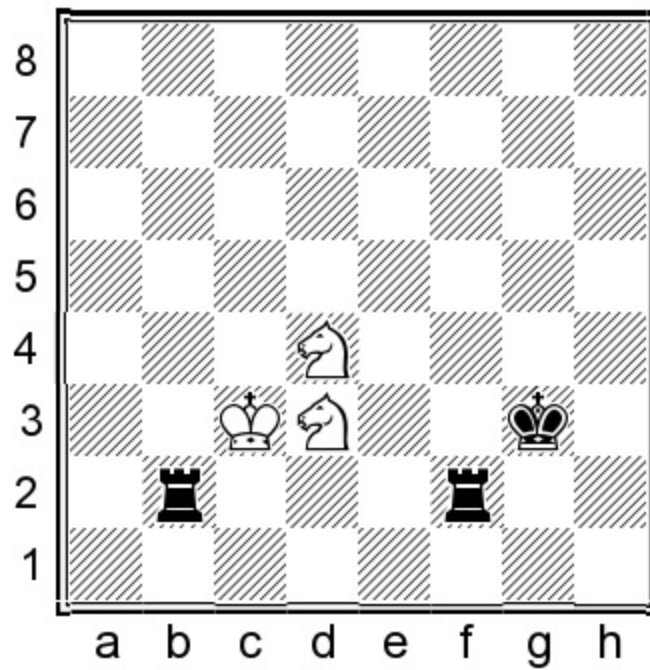
White's only chance is to somehow trade one of black's rooks for a knight. But how to do that? The fork 1.♖d7? doesn't work due to 1...♜xb5 2.♘xf8 ♜b7, and the knight is doomed.

Therefore, the black king should first be kicked away: **1.♘d4+! ♜g4**. Getting close to the knights is no option: 1...♜e5 2.♘c6+ ♜d5 3.♘xb8 ♜xc5 (3...♜xb8 4.♘d3) 4.♘d7+, fork.

2.♘d7! Now 2...♜bd8 3.♘xf8 ♜xd4+ can be met with 4.♜e3! ♜d6 5.♜e4 ♜g5 6.♜e5, and the knight is saved. So, the rooks must escape the attack:

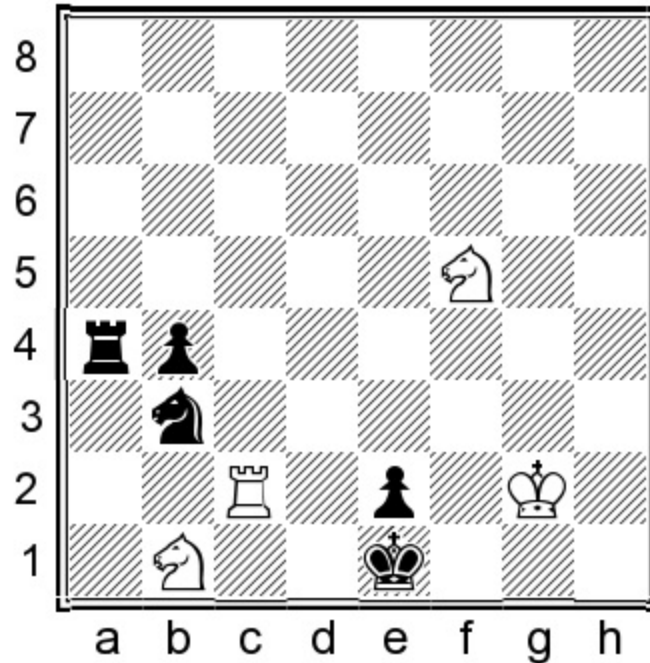
1) 2...♜f2+ 3.♜e3! ♜bb2 4.♘e5+ ♜g3 5.♘d3;

2) 2...♜b2+ 3.♜c3! ♜ff2 4.♘e5+ ♜g3 5.♘d3,



and black can't prevent the trade. Draw.
 Author A. Dall'Ava, 1962

No. 46



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

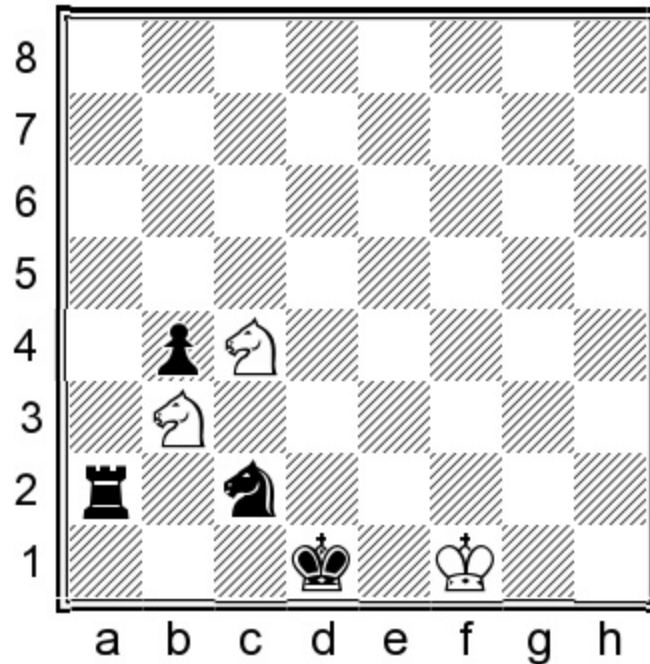
White can win the menacing black pawn, but not the game: 1. ♖f3? ♜a1 2. ♞xe2+ ♔d1 3. ♘e3+ ♕c1 4. ♞e1+ ♖b2 5. ♘c4+ ♖a2, with a draw.

1. ♘d2! ♘d4! White threatened 2. ♘f3+ ♔d1 3. ♘e3#. The gift cannot be accepted: 1... ♘xd2

2.♖c1#!

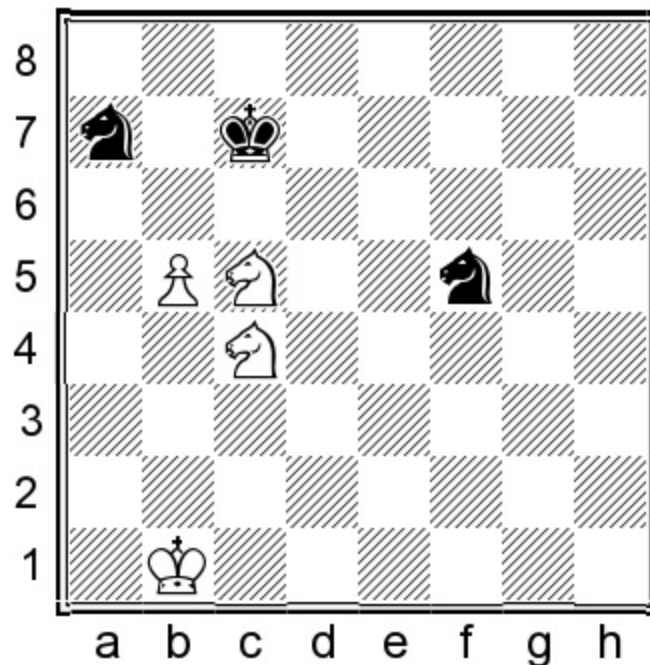
2.♘xd4 ♕d1 3.♘c4! e1=♚+! (3...e1=♖ 4.♘b2#) 4.♔f2!! But not 4.♔f1? ♘xc2 5.♘b3?! ♖a2 (white is in zugzwang) 6.♔f2 ♘d4+, and black wins.

4...♘xc2 5.♘b3! ♖a2 6.♔f1! And now zugzwang helps white! Black can't escape checkmate: 6...♘a3 (~) 7.♘e3# 6...♖a8 (~) 7.♘b2#.



Author P. Perkonoja, 1962 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 47



White to play and win

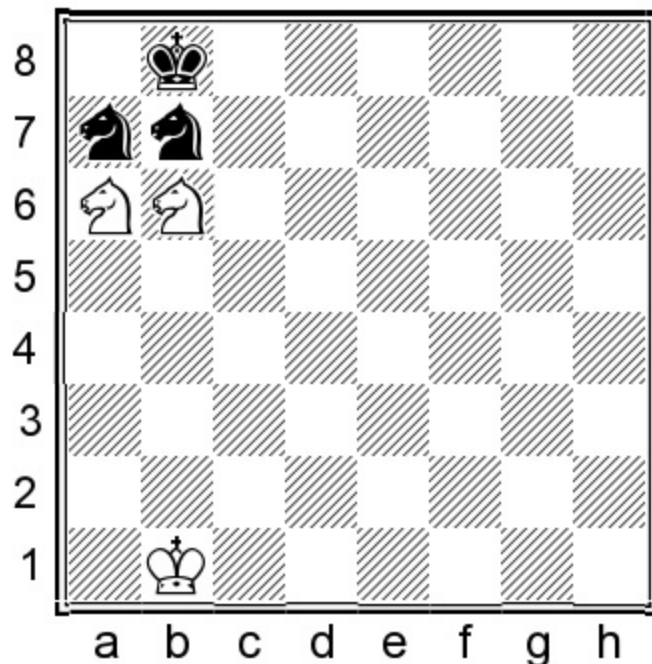
Show/Hide Solution

Black is ready to give up both his knights for the pawn...

1.b6+ ♖b8 2.♘e5! ♘d6! White threatened 3.♘ed7+ ♖a8 4.b7#.

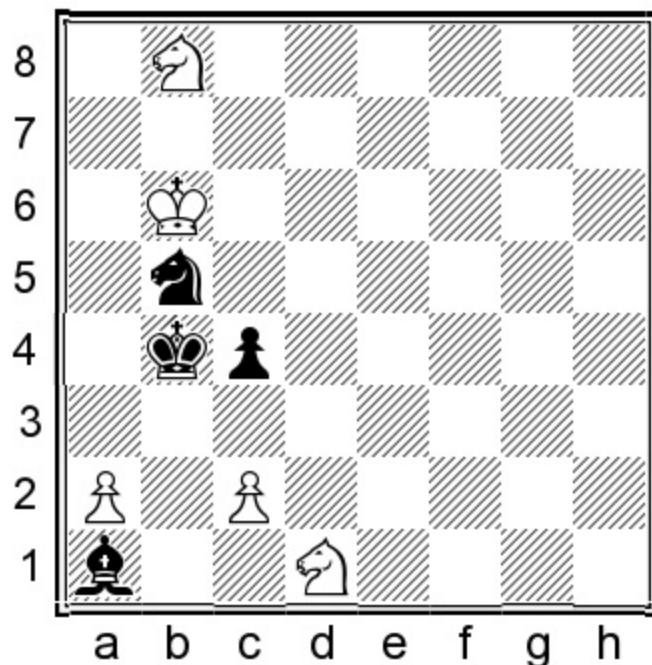
3.♘ed7+ ♖a8 (3...♖c8 4.bxa7) **4.b7+!!** White gives up his pawn!

4...♘xb7 5.♘b6+ ♖b8 6.♘a6#! Another beautiful development of study No. 1's theme!



Author L. Olmutsky, 1962 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 48

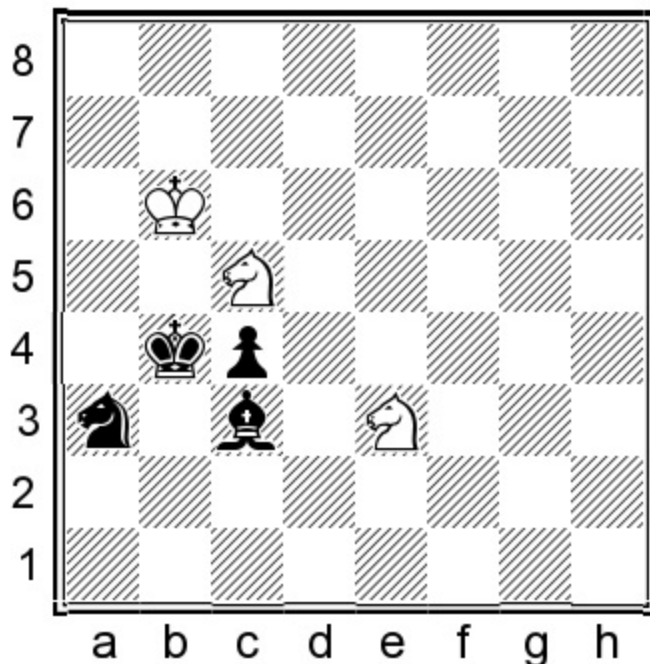


White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

Trying to win the black pawn does not lead to success: 1.♖c6+? ♔a4 2.♕c5 ♙g7 (the simplest) 3.♕xc4 ♜d6+ 4.♕d5 ♜c8 5.♜e3 ♔a3 6.♜f5 ♙f8 7.♜fd4 ♔xa2, and a draw. Thus, white needs to... give up all his pawns!

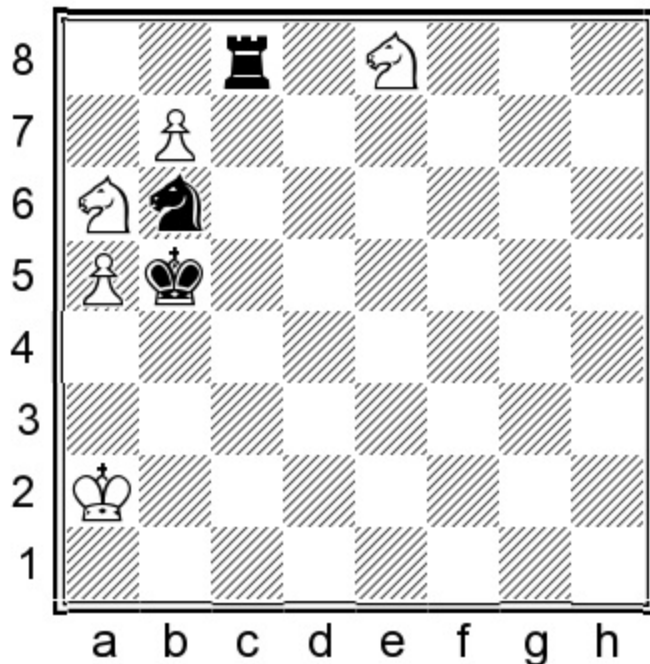
1.♜a6+! ♔a4 2.♜c5+ ♔b4 3.a3+!! ♜xa3 4.c3+! ♙xc3 5.♜e3! The key point of the combination!



Black cannot prevent mate: 5...♙d4(~) 6.♜d5# or 5...♜b5(~) 6.♜c2#.

Author T. Gorgiev, 1964 (position after black's 2nd move)

No. 49



White to play and win

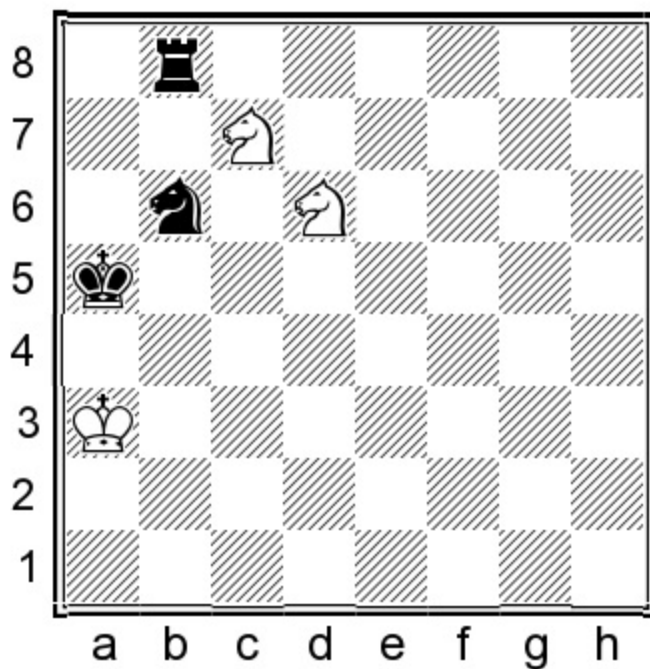
Show/Hide Solution

1. ♖ac7+! But not 1. ♖d6+? ♕xa6 2. ♖xc8 ♖d7, with a draw.

1. ♖ac7+! ♕xa5. After 1... ♖c6 2. bxc8=♖ ♖xc8 3. ♖b3 ♖b6 4. ♖b4! etc., white rather prosaically converts his material advantage.

2. ♖d6! ♖b8 3. ♖b3!! The point! Of course, not 3. ♖a3?

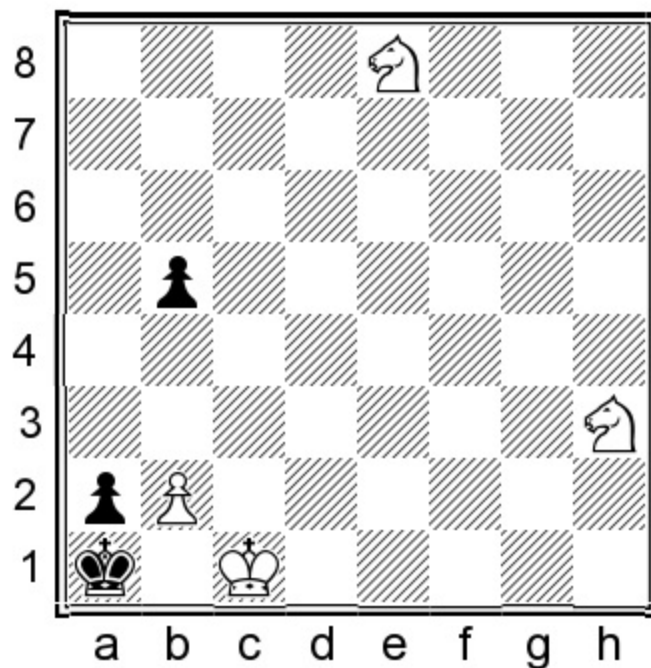
3... ♖h8 4. b8=♖! ♖xb8 5. ♖a3! Mutual zugzwang. Had white played 3. ♖a3? ♖h8 4. b8=♖ ♖xb8, he would be in zugzwang now: after 5. ♖b3? the black knight would have vacated the “cursed square” with a tempo: 5... ♖c8+, winning.



Black is in zugzwang and gets checkmated: 5... ♖d7(~)6. ♖c4# or 5... ♖h8(~)6. ♖b7#.

Author T. Gorgiev, 1963 (edited by S. Tkachenko)

No. 50

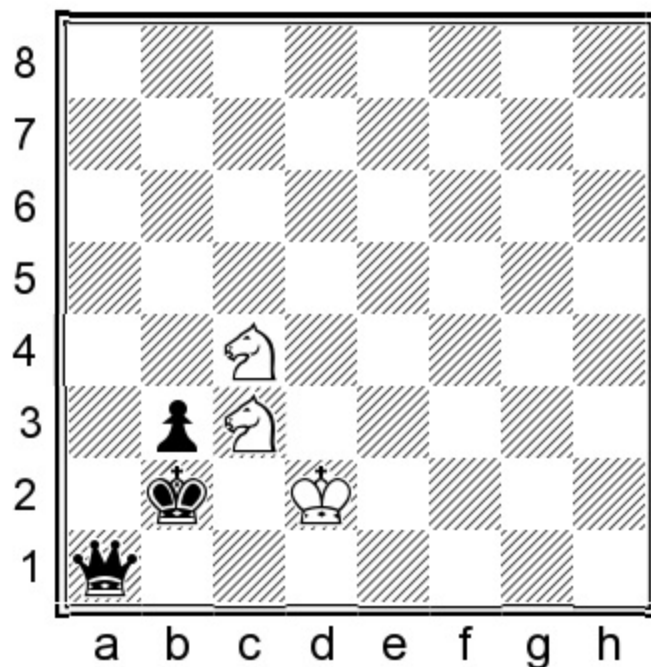


White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

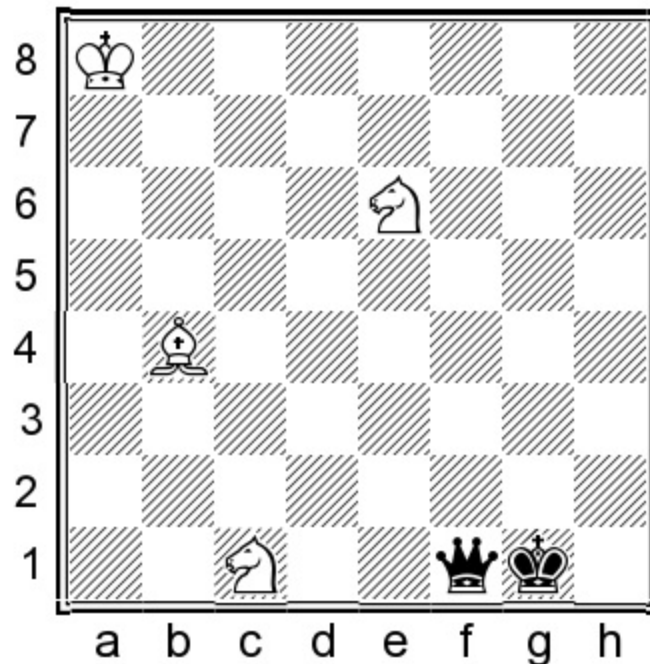
Not the false try: 1. ♖d6? b4 2. ♗f2 b3 3. ♔d2 ♕xb2 4. ♗c4+ ♔b1 (or 4... ♕a1) 5. ♗a3+ ♔b2 (but not 5... ♕a1? 6. ♗d1! b2 7. ♗c2+ ♔b1 8. ♗c3#!) 6. ♗c4+, with a draw.

It's necessary to get the other knight closer to the king first: **1. ♗f2!! b4 2. ♗d1! b3 3. ♔d2! ♕b1 4. ♗d6!** (it's time!) 4... a1=♚ 5. ♗c3+ ♕xb2 6. ♗c4#!



Author V. Yakimchik, 1965 (position after black's 4th move)

No. 51



White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

The scattered white pieces look like easy prey for the queen...

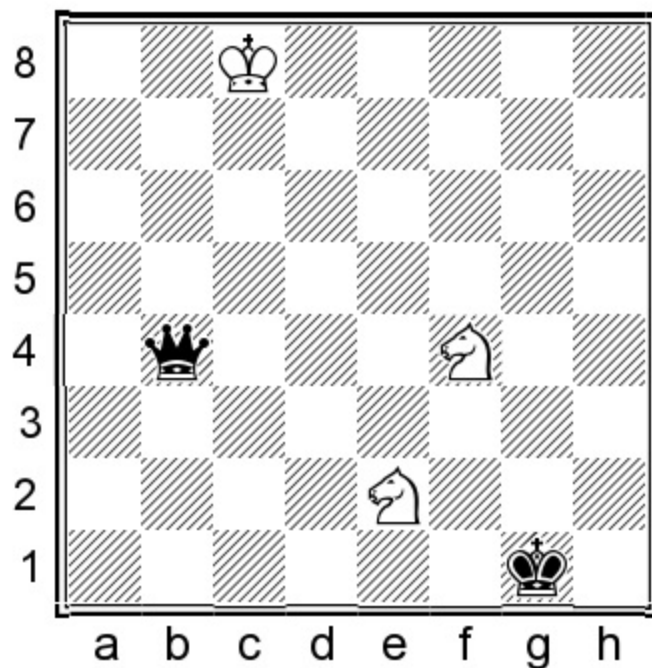
1. ♖f4!! The seemingly tempo-winning 1. ♖c5+? loses after 1... ♔h1 2. ♖b3 ♕a6+ 3. ♖b8 ♕b5+, and white loses material.

1. ♖f4!! ♕a6+! The knights protect each other: 1... ♕xf4 2. ♖e2+ or 1... ♕xc1 2. ♖e2+ etc.

2. ♖b8 ♕b6+ 3. ♖c8! Not 3. ♖a8? ♕xb4 4. ♖ce2+ ♔h2 5. ♖a7 ♕b5 6. ♖a8 ♕b6, and the white knights are forced to break the blockade of the black king.

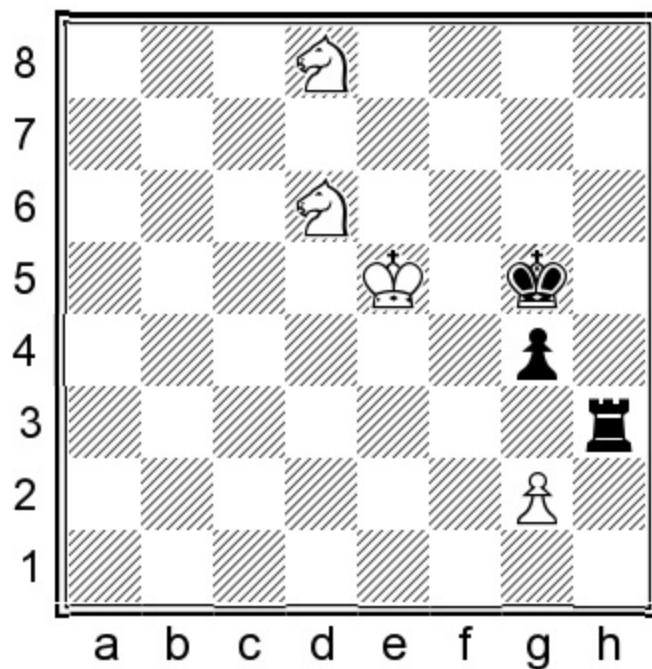
3... ♕xb4 4. ♖ce2+! ♖f1. Or 4... ♖f2 5. ♖d3+, forking; 4... ♖h2 5. ♖c7(d7)!, with a fortress.

5. ♖g3+ ♖g1 6. ♖ge2+. Positional draw.



Author G. Nadareishvili, 1965 (edited by S. Tkachenko)

No. 52



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

White cannot grab the black rook immediately. He needs to find the right moment to capture it!

1. ♖e6+! (1... ♜8f7+ ♔g6)

1. ♖e6+! ♜g6. 1... ♜h6 is too weak: 2. ♗f5+ ♜h7 3. ♖g5+ ♜g6 4. ♖xh3! gxh3 5. gxh3, curtains.

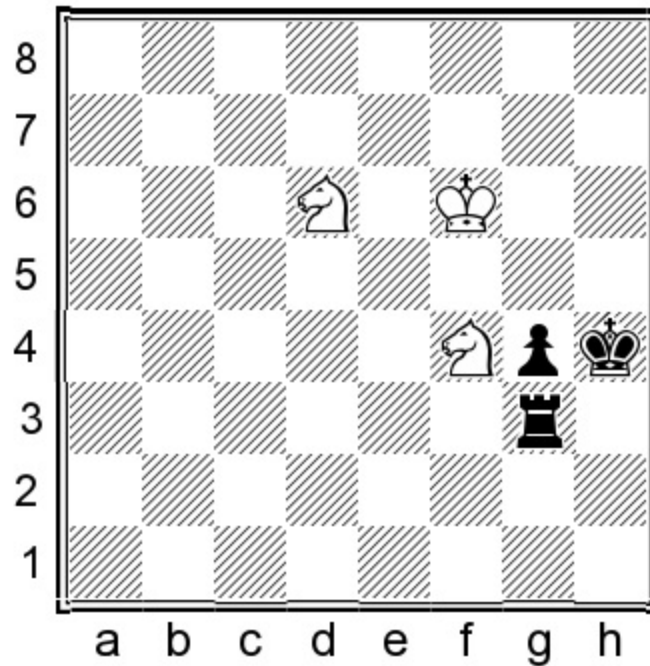
2. ♗f4+! ♜g5 (2... ♜h7 3. ♖xh3) **3. ♖e4+ ♜h4!** Offering a draw after 4. ♖g6+ ♜h5 5. ♗f4+ ♜h4

etc.

4.♔f6!! Stalemating the king and letting the rook go free.

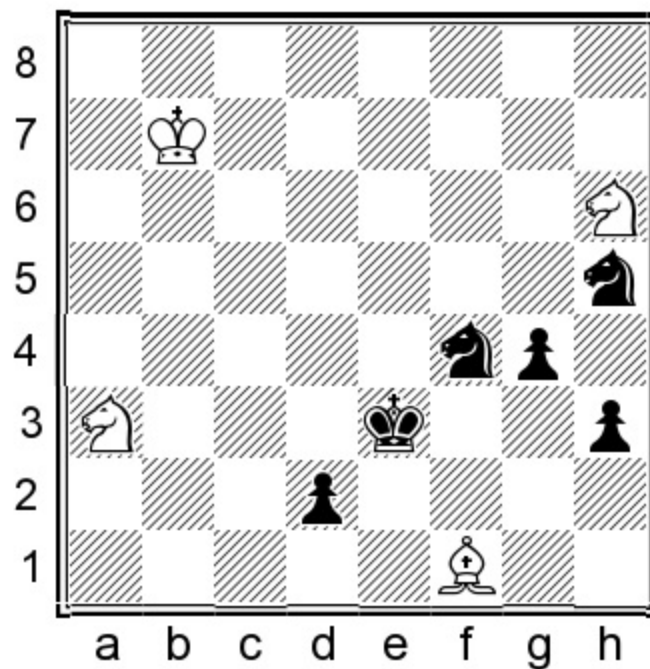
4...♖a3 5.g3+!! And then forcing the rook to return!

5...♖xg3 6.♘d6! The point of the combination. Black cannot stop 7.♘f5#.



Author T. Gorgiev, 1965 (edited by S. Tkachenko)

No. 53



White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

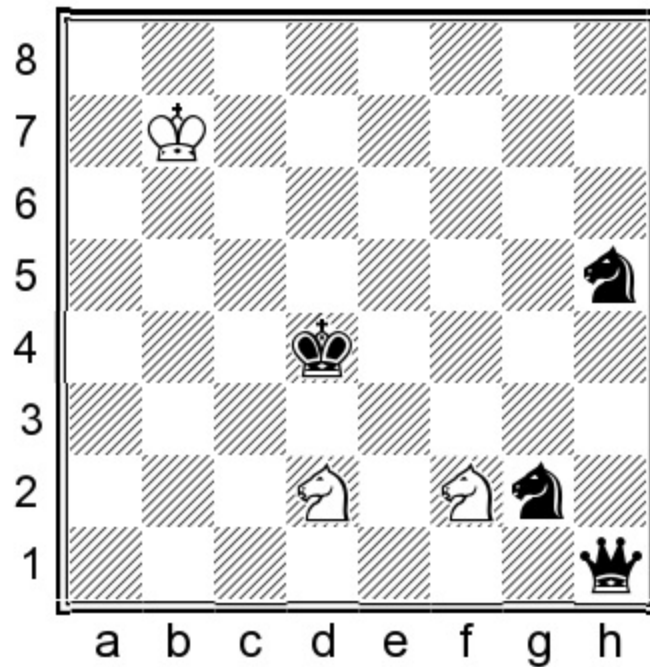
How to stop the black pawns from promoting?

1.♖c4+! Other moves lose: 1.♖xg4+? ♕f3 2.♖h2+ ♕g3 or

1.♖f5+? (c2) 1...♕f2, curtains.

1.♖c4+! ♕d4! Other attempts lead to loss of all the pawns: 1...♕f2 2.♖xg4+ ♕xf1 3.♖xd2+ ♕e2 4.♖e4 or 1...♕e4 2.♖xd2+ ♕e3 3.♖xg4+ etc.

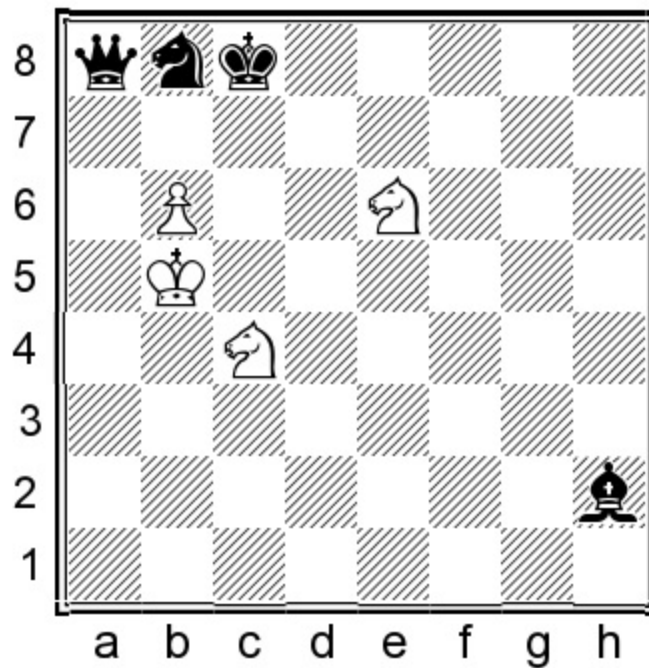
2.♖xd2 h2 3.♙g2! ♖xg2 4.♖xg4 h1=♚ 5.♖f2! The key point!



You might laugh when you learn that the queen has literally zero good squares: 5...♚a1(c1) 6.♖b3+; 5...♚e1(g1) 6.♖f3+; 5...♚h2(h4) 6.♖f3+, with a fork on every move.

Author C. Bent, 1965

No. 54



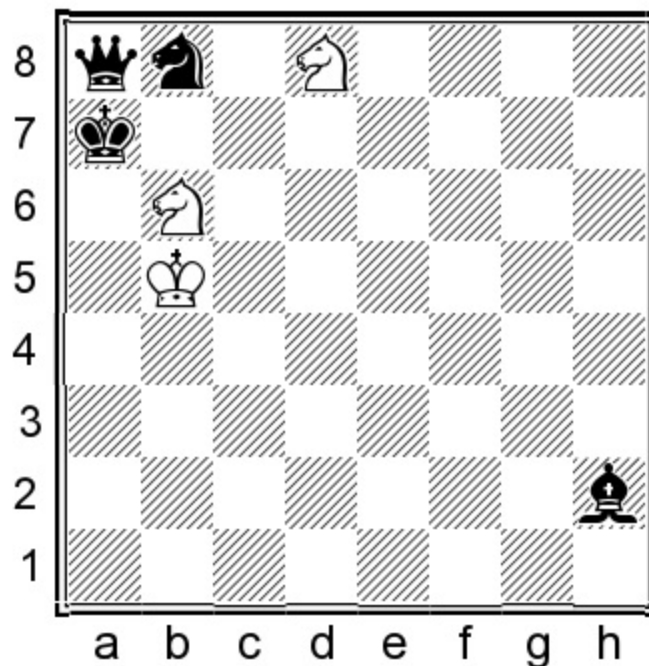
White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

A pawn is not exactly good compensation for the queen, but you can always... sacrifice it for your own benefit!

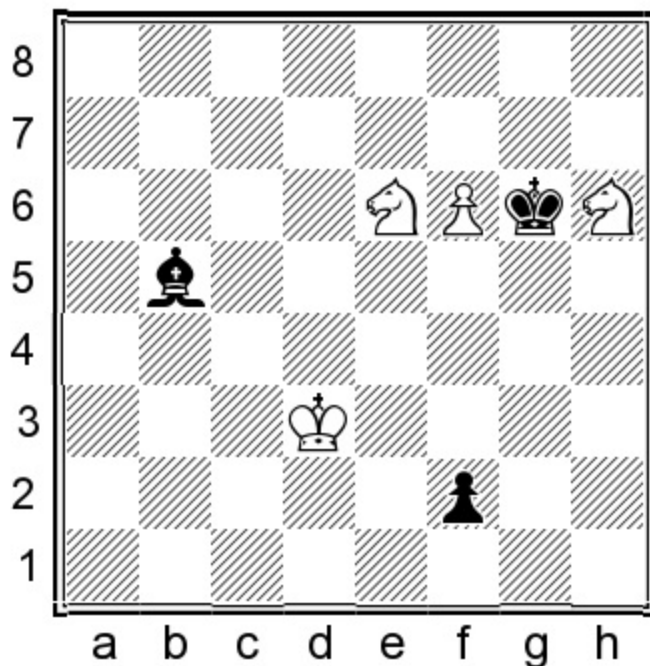
1.b7+!! ♔xb7. The game is defused completely after 1...♙xb7+ 2.♘b6+ ♙xb6+ 3.♕xb6 etc.

2.♘d8+ ♕c7 (2...♕c8 3.♘b6+, a fork) **3.♘e6+** ♕b7 (3...♕d7 4.♘b6+, another fork) **4.♘d8+** ♕a7 **5.♘b6!** The quiet point of the combination!



After **5...♙g2** **6.♘c8+** the black king cannot escape perpetual check: 6...♕a8 7.♘b6+. Draw.
Authors T. Gorgiev and A. Kakovin, 1966 (position after black's 3rd move)

No. 55



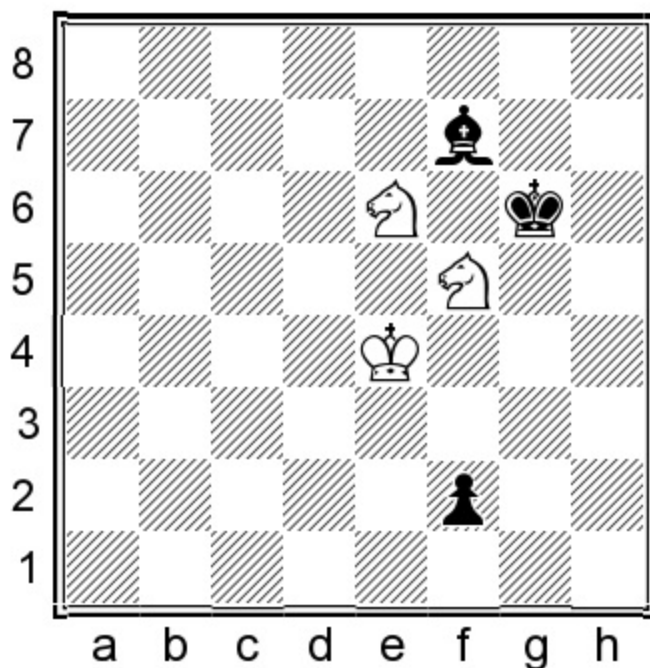
White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

Where should the white king go? **1.♔e4!** Anticipating the finale!

1...♙e8! It's better to take time with pawn promotion: **1...f1=♚** **2.f7 ♚d3+** **3.♔e5!** ♚e3+ **4.♔d6!**, and the white pawn is unstoppable.

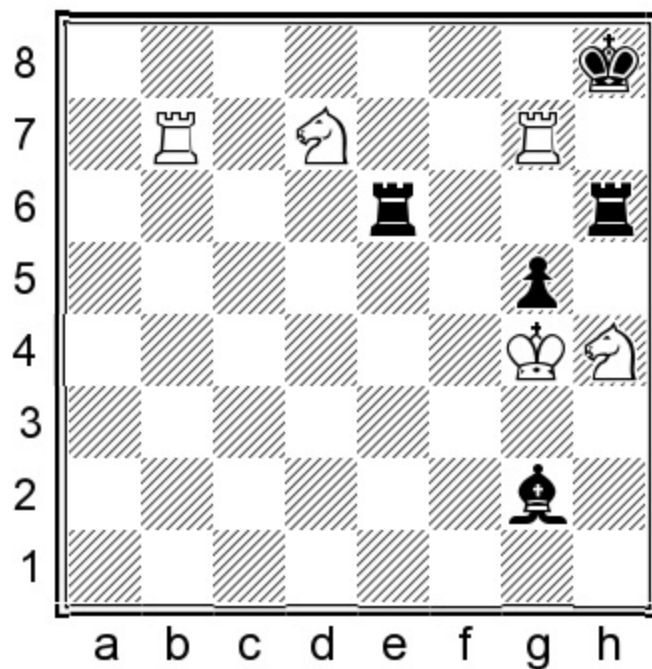
2.f7!! ♙xf7 **3.♘f5!!** The point of white's idea!



3...f1=♚ (3...♙xe6 4.♘g3) **4.♘f8+ ♔f6**. The king cannot go down the board: **4...♔g5** **5.♘h7+** ♔g6 (5...♔g4 6.♘e3+; 5...♔h5 6.♘g3+) **6.♘f8+** etc.

5.♘h7+ ♔e6 **6.♘f8+**. Perpetual check.

No. 56



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

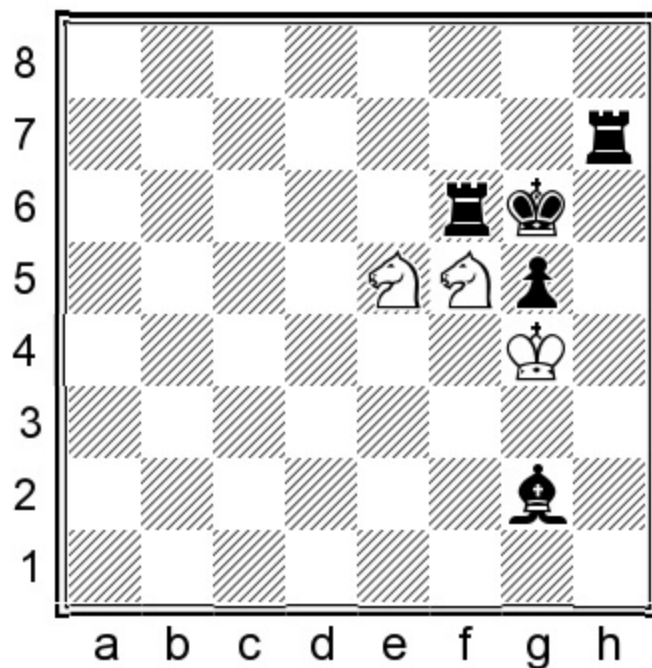
You can't win here with standard means. For instance: 1. ♖xg2? ♜xg7 2. ♖c5+ ♜f8 3. ♖xe6+ ♜xe6, draw.

1. ♜h7+!! The first rook sacrifice!

1... ♜xh7. Or 1... ♜xh7 2. ♖f6+ ♜h8 3. ♖g6+ ♜xg6 4. ♜h7#! 1... ♜g8 is toothless: 2. ♜xh6 ♜xh6 3. ♖xg2, curtains.

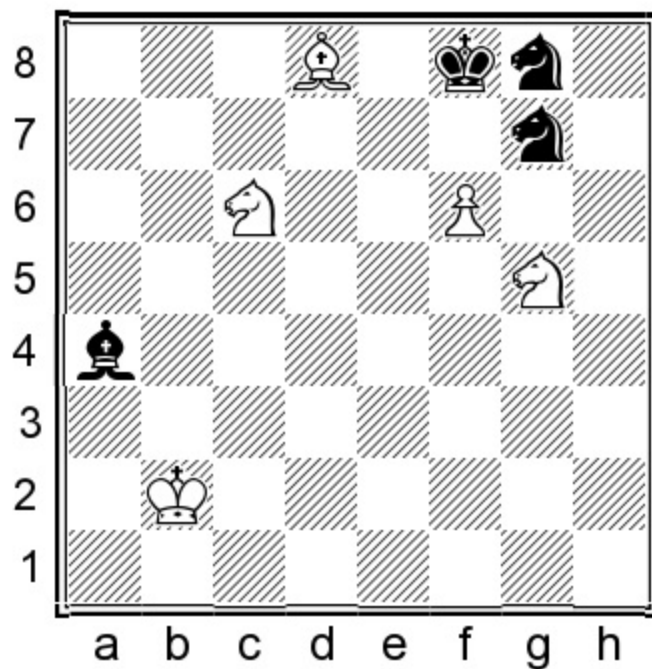
2. ♜b8+ ♜g7 3. ♖f5+ ♜f7 (3... ♜g6 4. ♜g8+ ♜f7 5. ♜f8+ etc.) **4. ♜f8+ ♜g6 5. ♜f6+!!** And now the second sacrifice!

5... ♜xf6 6. ♖e5#!



Author G. Sonntag, 1967

No. 57



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

You can't explode black's position without sacrifices!..

1. ♖e7+!! Both 1.f7? ♖xc6 and

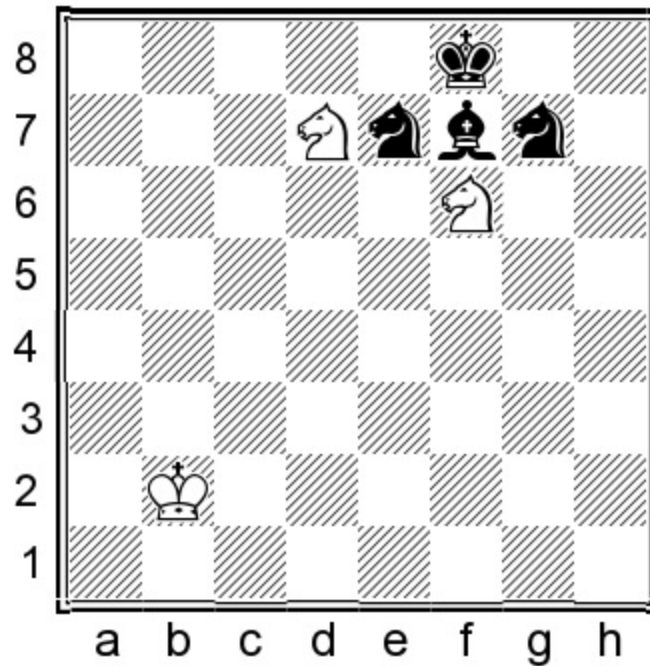
1. ♘h7+? ♖e8! 2. ♘e5 ♘xf6 3. ♖xf6 ♘e6 lead to prosaic draws.

1. ♖e7+!! ♘xe7 (1... ♖e8 2.f7+) **2. ♘e5!!** As we know, war is won with skill, not with numbers!

2...♔e8! There's no other way to stop the pawn: 2...♖d5 3.♘g6+ ♔e8 4.f7+ or 2...♗h5 3.♘e6+ ♔g8 4.f7+, winning.

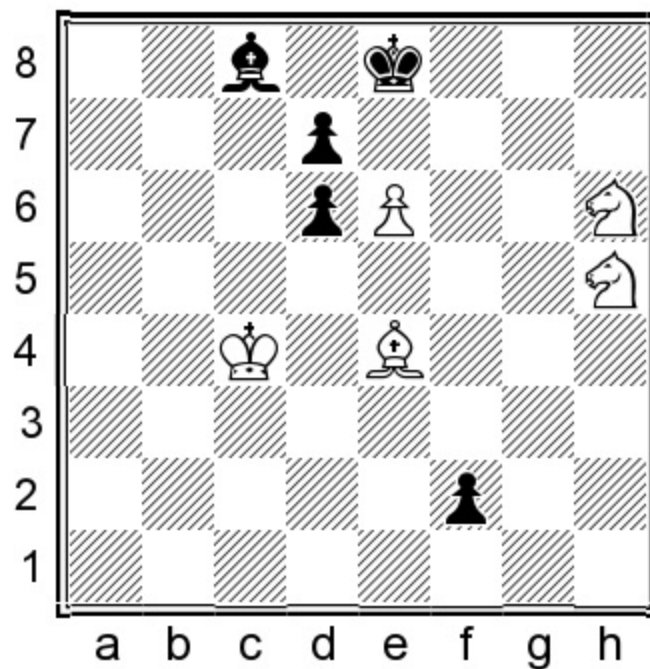
3.♗h7+ ♔g8 4.f7+!! The main asset is sacrificed for the attack!

4...♔xf7 5.♗f6+ ♔f8 (5...♔h8 6.♗xf7#) 6.♗ed7#!



Author J. Glaser, 1967

No. 58



White to play and win

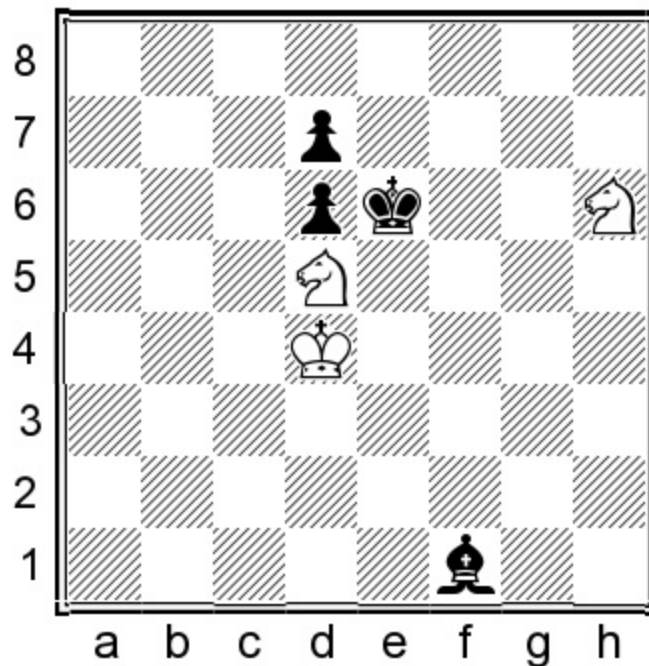
Show/Hide Solution

1.♔g2! 1.♖f6+? is too early: 1...♕f8 2.e7+ ♕xe7 3.♗d5+ ♕e6 4.♗e3 ♔a6+ 5.♕d4 f1=♚, with a draw.

1.♔g2! ♔a6+ (1...dxe6 2.♗g3) 2.♕c3!! The point! After 2.♕d4?! f1=♚ 3.♔xf1 ♔xf1 4.♗f6+ ♕e7 5.♗d5+ ♕xe6 white is in zugzwang and has to agree to a draw.

2...f1=♚ 3.♔xf1 ♔xf1 4.♗f6+ ♕e7 (4...♕d8 5.exd7) 5.♗d5+! (5.exd7? ♔h3) 5...♕xe6. 5...♕e8 doesn't help either: 6.e7 ♔g2 7.♗e3! ♔e4 8.♗ef5 d5 9.♕d4 d6 10.♕e3, and white gradually wins, for instance: 10...♔b1 11.♕f4 ♔c2 12.♕g5 ♕d7 13.♕f6, curtains.

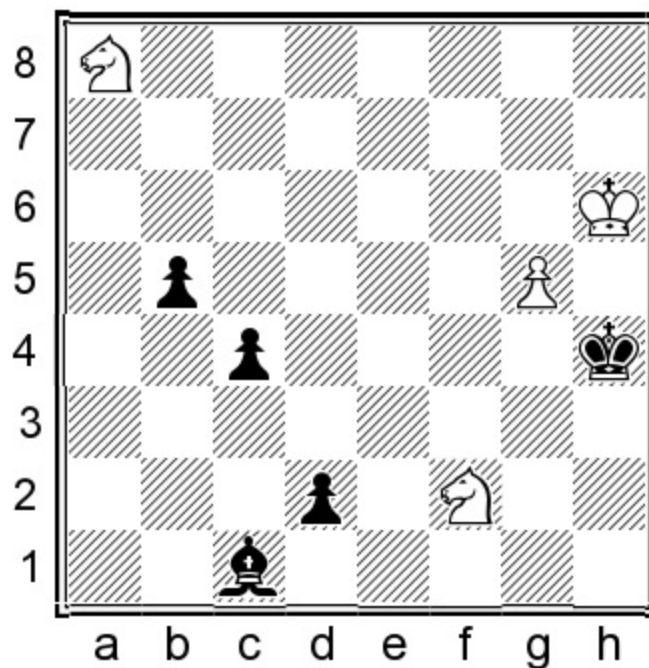
6.♕d4! Black is in zugzwang and... loses his bishop!



6...♔h3(g2) 7.♗f4+ or 6...♔a6(b5) 7.♗c7+, with a won Troitsky endgame.

Author E. Pogosiants, 1968

No. 59



White to play and draw

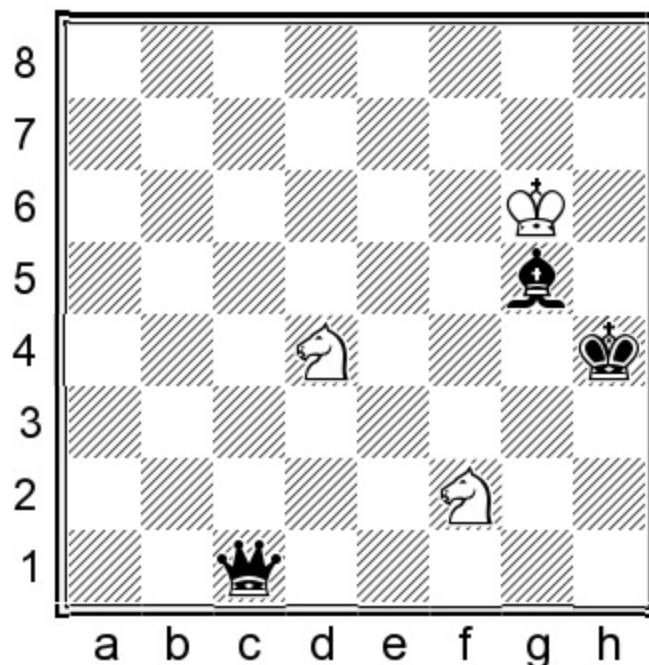
Show/Hide Solution

1. ♖c7! Not 1. ♖d1? ♙b2 2. g6 ♙d4 3. g7 ♙xg7+ 4. ♔xg7 b4 5. ♖b6 c3, curtains.

1. ♖c7! c3! 1...b4 is not dangerous: 2. ♖d5 c3?! (2...d1=♚ 3. ♖xd1 ♙xg5+ 4. ♔g6 b3 5. ♖b2 leads to a draw) 3. ♖e3! ♔g3 4. ♖fd1 ♙b2 5. ♖xb2 b3 (5...cxb2 6. ♖f1+) 6. g6 c2 7. g7 c1=♚ 8. g8=♚+, and white even wins.

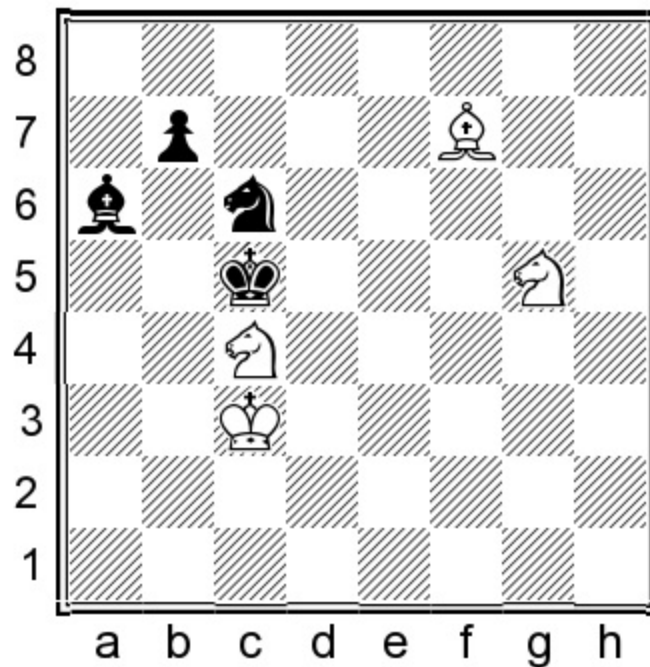
2. ♖xb5 d1=♚! Or 2...c2 3. ♖d4! ♔g3 4. ♖e4+ ♔f4 5. ♖xd2, with a draw.

3. ♖xd1 c2 4. ♖f2! ♙xg5+ 5. ♔g6! c1=♚ 6. ♖d4! The point! White threatens 7. ♖f5#.



It turns out that the two knights are as strong as black's formidable duo: 6...♔g3 7. ♖e2+, with a drawing fork.

No. 60



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

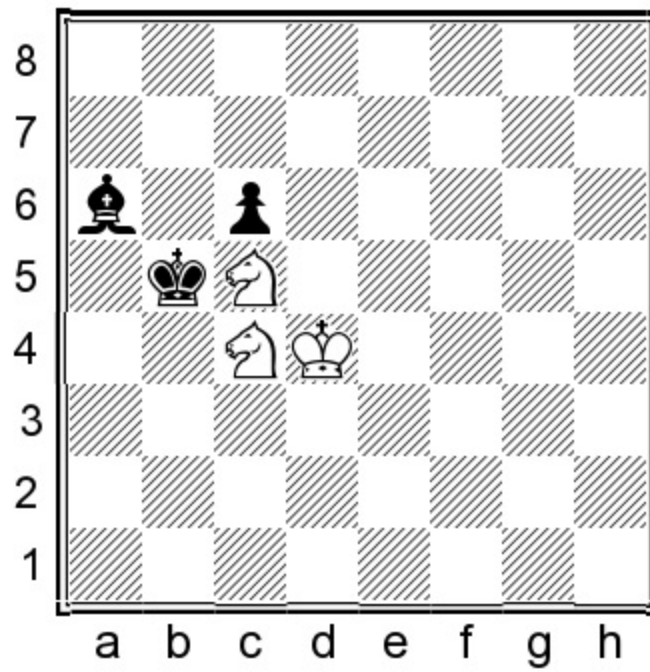
Black pieces defend each other pretty well. But there's still a weakness in his position!

1. ♖e4+! (1. ♖e6+ ♔d5!)

1. ♖e4+! ♕b5 2. ♜e8! ♖a4! 2...b6 is toothless: 3. ♖cd6+ ♔a5 4. ♜xc6, curtains.

3. ♜xc6+! A sudden trade of the active bishop! Knight checks don't improve the position: 3. ♖c5+ ♕b5 4. ♖b3 ♖a4 5. ♜xc6+, as in the main line.

3...bxc6 4. ♖c5+ ♕b5 5. ♜d4! Black is in zugzwang.

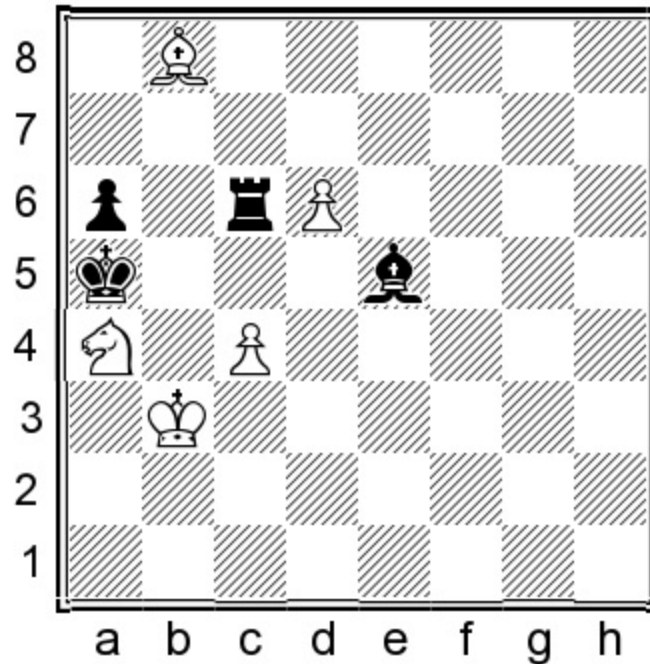


5...♗c8 6.♘d6+, forking and winning.

Author C. Bent, 1970 (position after black's 1st move)

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No. 61



White to play and win

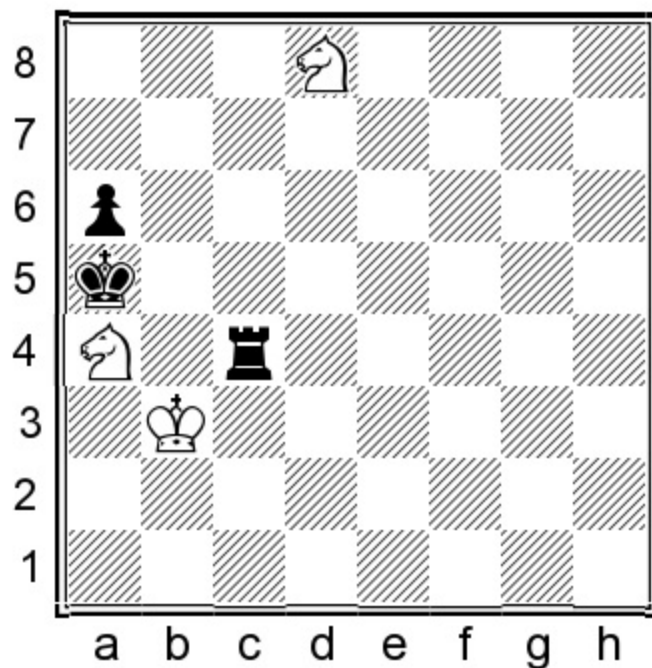
Show/Hide Solution

1.d7. But not 1.c5? ♖c8 2.♙c7+ ♜xc7 3.dxc7 ♙xc7, with a draw.

1.d7 ♙c7! After 1...♙f6, white has 2.♙e5! ♙d8 (2...♜xc4 3.♙xf6) 3.♙c3#.

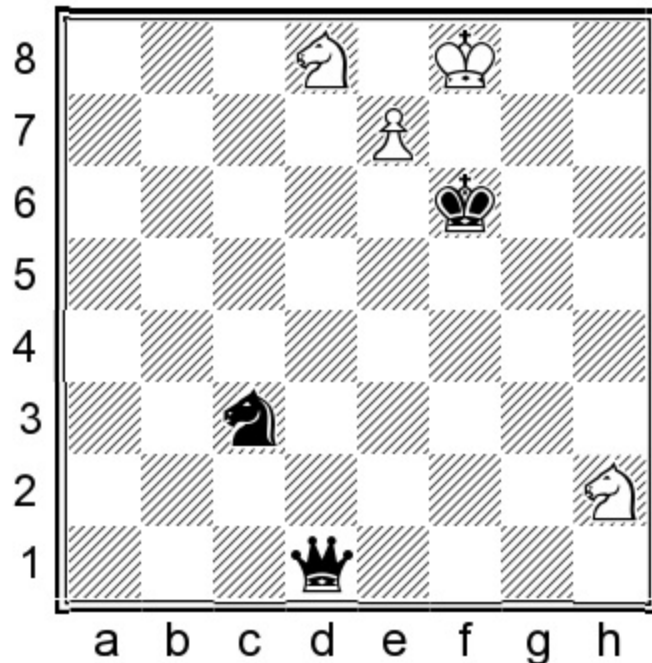
2.♙xc7+ ♜xc7 3.d8=♘!! The point! Other moves lead to stalemate: 3.d8=♚?; 3.d8=♞? ♜b7+ 4.♙a3 ♜b3+! 5.♙xb3 and 3.♘c5? ♜xd7! 4.♘xd7.

3...♜xc4 (3...♜d7 4.♘c6#)



4. ♖b7+! ♔b5 5. ♘d6+ ♔c6 6. ♘xc4, with a won Troitsky endgame.
 Author E. Pogosiants, 1971

No. 62



White to play and draw

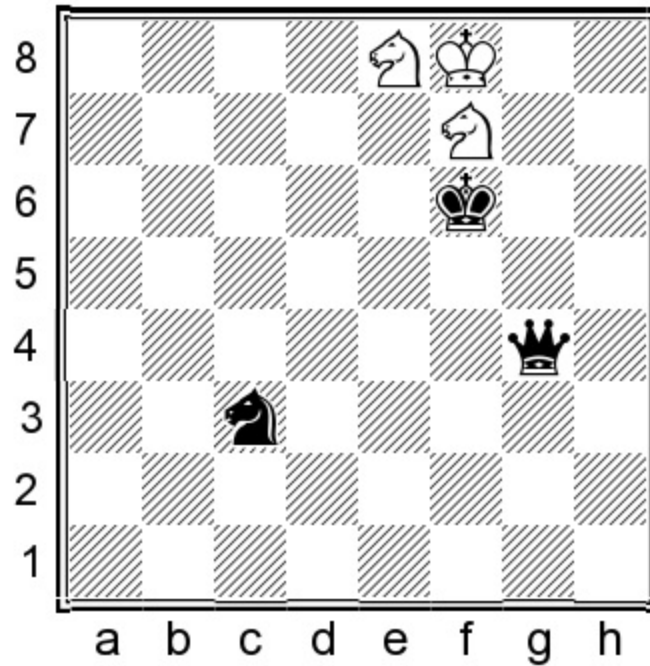
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Pawn promotion loses: 1. e8=♚? ♔d6+ 2. ♔g8 ♚g3+ 3. ♔h7 ♚g7#.

1. ♘c6? is no better: 1... ♚h5 2. e8=♘+ ♔g5, curtains.

White saves the day with 1. ♘f7! ♚h5 2. ♘g4+!! 2. e8=♘+? ♔g6! is too early and black wins.

2...♔xg4 3.e8=♘+!! The point!

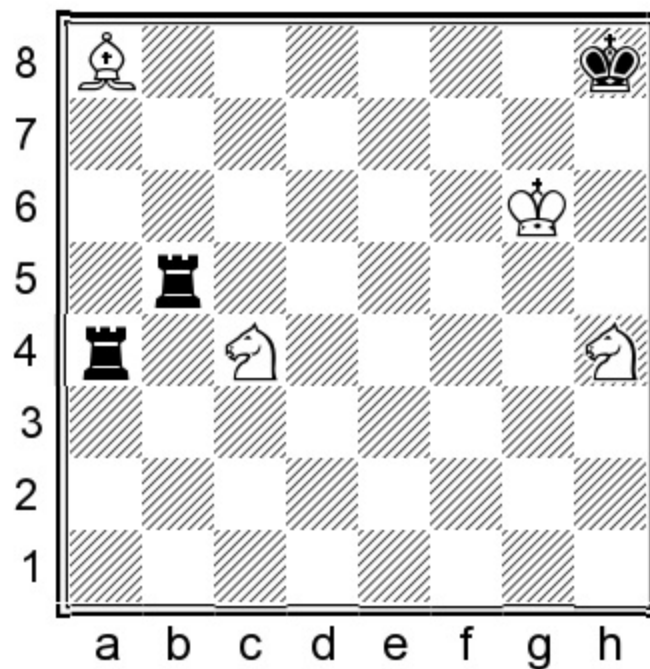


It turns out that the black king cannot escape knight checks: 3...♔e6. Otherwise, the queen is forked: 3...♔g6 4.♘e5+ or 3...♔f5 4.♘h6+.

4.♘c7+ ♔f6 (4...♔d7 5.♘e5+) 5.♘e8+. Perpetual check.

Author A. Kakovin, 1971 (position after black's second move)

No. 63



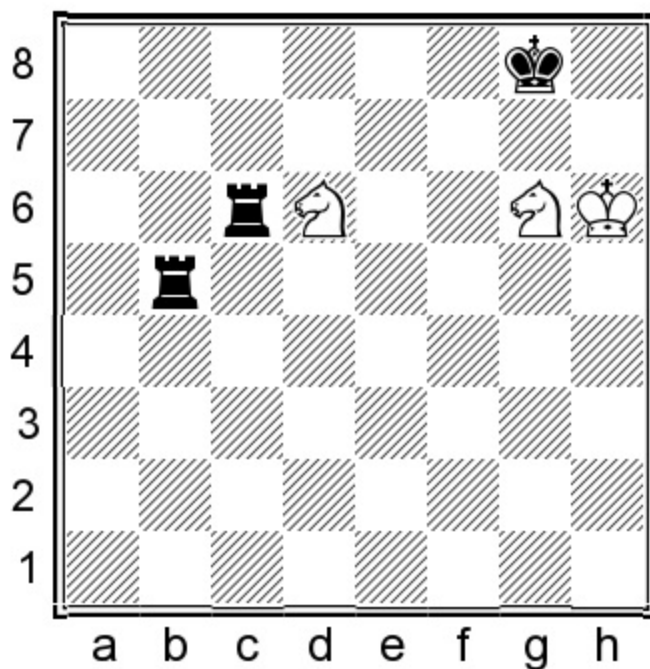
White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

If white loses any of his minor pieces, his chances of saving the game are minuscule. Not the thematic false try: 1.♔h6? ♖xc4! (but not 1...♖xa8? 2.♘g6+ ♔g8 3.♘d6! ♖b6 4.♘e7+ ♔f8 5.♘g6+, with perpetual check) 2.♘g6+ ♔g8 3.♘d5+ ♖xd5 4.♘e7+ ♔f7 5.♘xd5 ♖c6+ 6.♔h7 ♖c5 7.♘f4 ♖f5, curtains.

Eureka: 1.♘c6! ♖a6, and only now 2.♔h6!! But not 2.♘d6? ♖xc6 3.♔h6 ♖xd6+ 4.♘g6+ ♖xg6+!, and there's no stalemate.

2...♖xc6+ 3.♘g6+ ♔g8 4.♘d6!! The point!

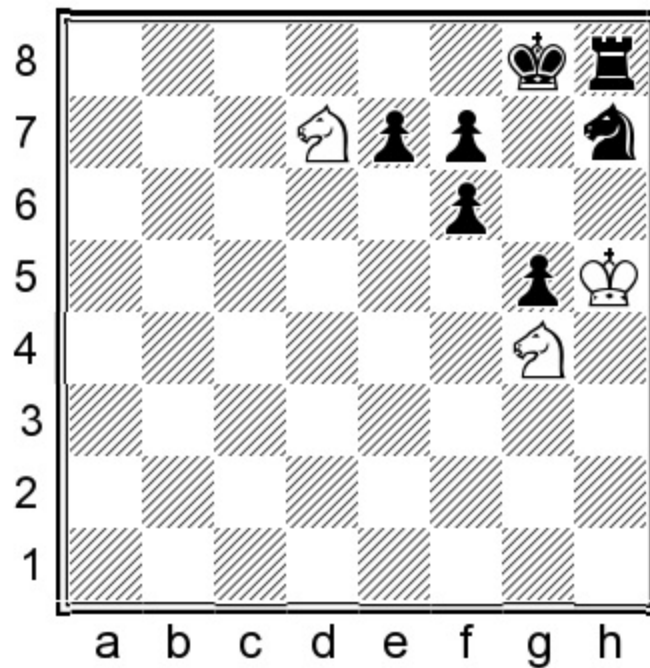


4...♖bb6. Or 4...♖xd6, stalemate.

5.♘e7+ ♔f8 6.♘g6+. Perpetual check.

Authors M. Lokker and V. Neidze, 1972

No. 64



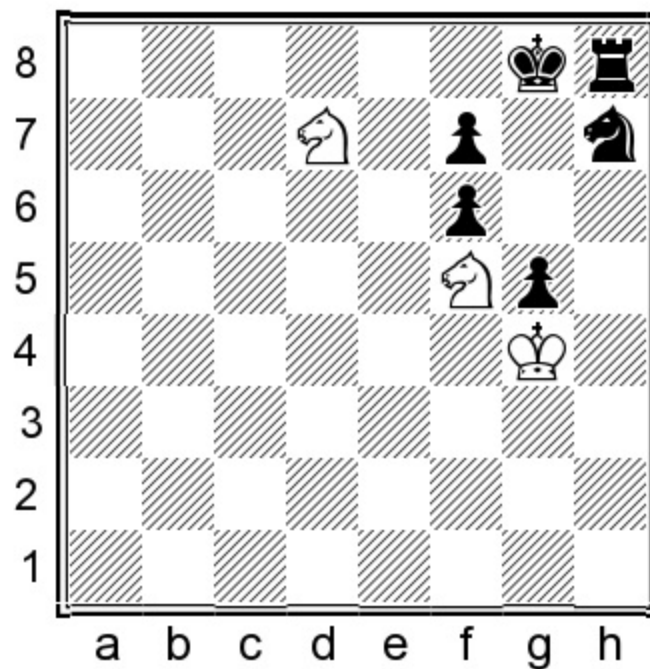
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

The black king is hiding behind a pawn wall. This is... exactly the thing that leads to its downfall!

1. ♖h6+ ♔g7 2. ♘f5+ ♔g8 3. ♘xe7+ ♔g7 4. ♘f5+ ♔g8. Perpetual check? Nothing of the sort!

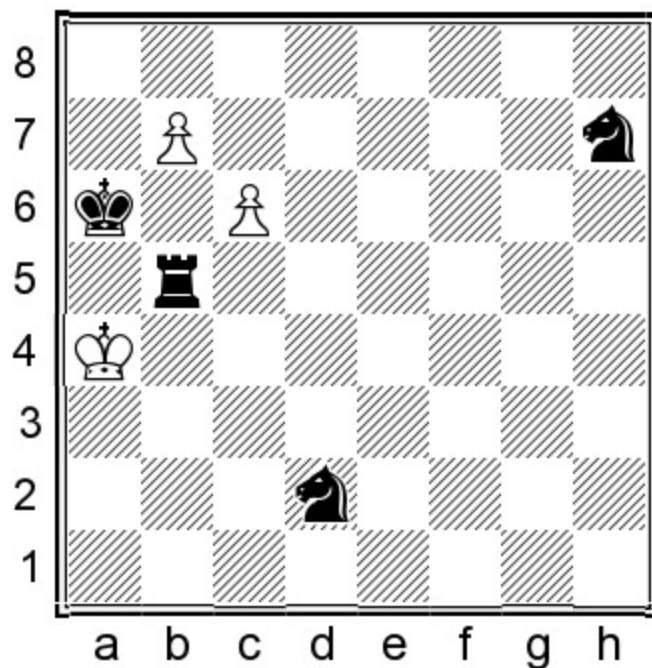
5. ♖g4!! Black is in zugzwang.



5... ♘f8 6. ♘xf6#!

Author E. Pogosiants, 1972

No. 65



White to play and draw

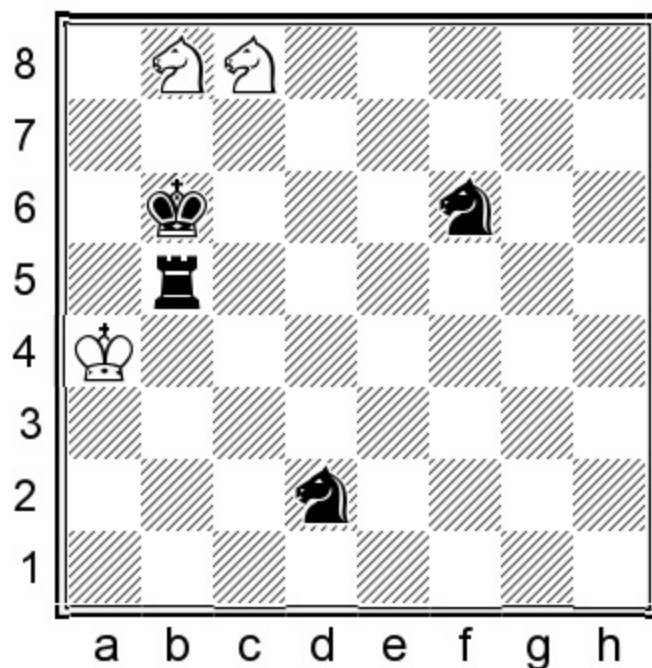
Show/Hide Solution

Where are the white knights? Oh, just you wait!..

1.c7 ♖f6! After 1...♖a5+ 2.♔b4 ♖b5+ 3.♔a4 etc., black can only settle for perpetual check.

2.b8=♘+! The first knight is born! 2.b8=♙? loses to 2...♖a5+ 3.♔b4 ♘d5#!

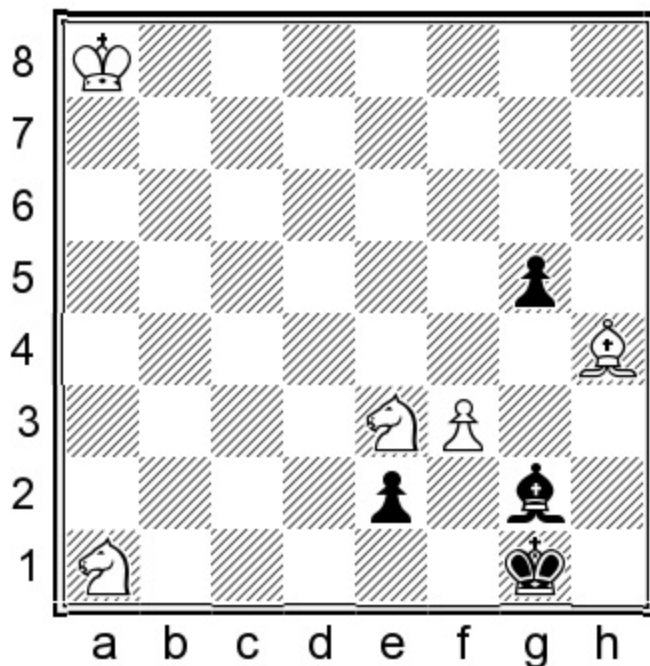
2...♔b6 3.c8=♘+! And the second one too! The desperate sacrifice 3.♘d7+? loses to 3...♘xd7 4.c8=♙ ♘c5+ etc.



3...♔c5 4.♘a6+ ♔c4 (4...♔c6 5.♘a7+) **5.♘d6+**, and the rook is forked. Draw.

Author A. Kakovin, 1973 (position after black's 3rd move)

No. 66



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

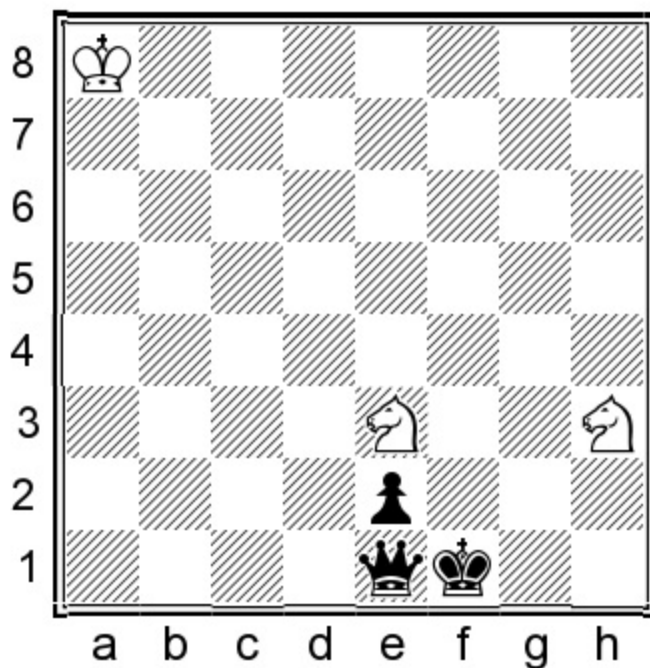
The white bishop is under attack and must retreat...

1.♔e1! But not 1.♔g3? g4 2.♖xg2 ♕xg2 3.♔h4 gxf3 4.♖c2 f2, with a draw.

1.♔e1! g4! Or 1...♔xf3+ 2.♖a7 g4 3.♔g3, curtains.

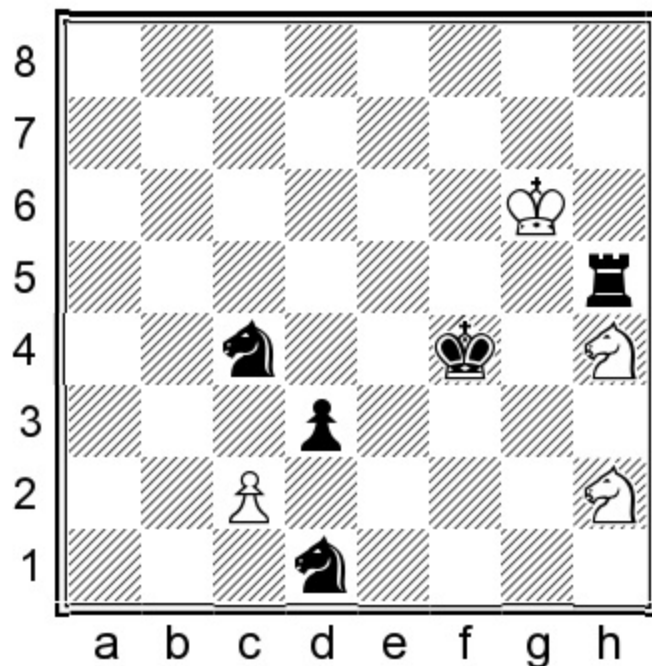
2.♖xg2. The pawn is poisoned: 2.♖xg4? ♔xf3+ 3.♖a7 ♔xg4 with a draw.

2...gxf3 3.♖f4! f2 4.♖h3+ ♕f1 5.♖c2! fxe1=♔ 6.♖e3#!



Author S. da Silva, 1973 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 67



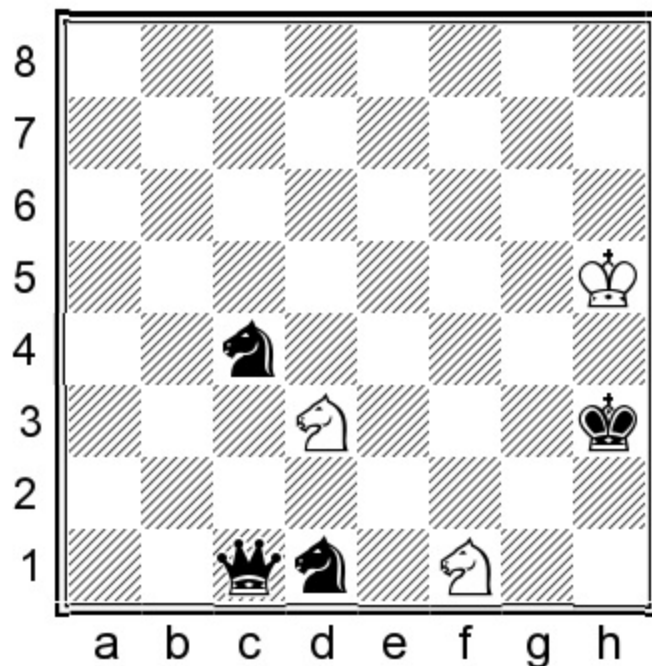
White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

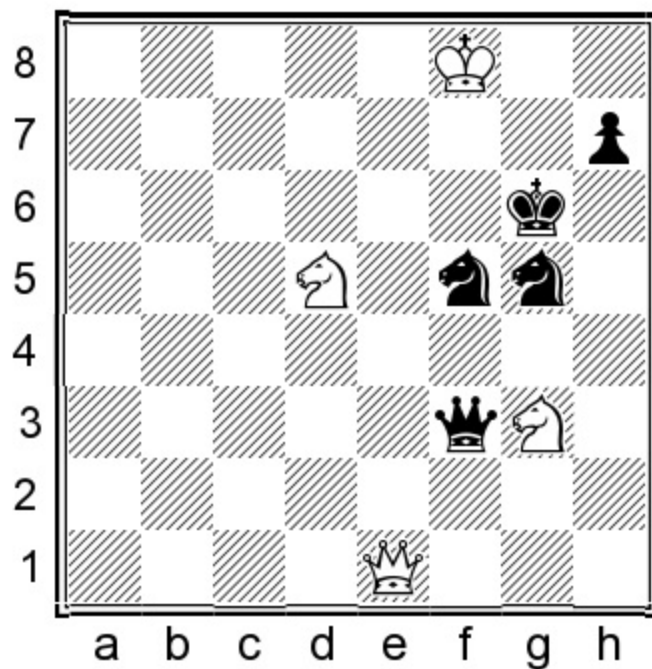
White cannot capture the rook immediately: 1.♔xh5? dxc2 2.♖g2+ ♔e4!, and the pawn is unstoppable.

But even after the preliminary check 1.♖g2+ ♔g3 (1...♔e4 2.cxd3+) 2.♔xh5 dxc2, it's unclear how to stop the pawn. Eureka: 3.♖e1!! c1=♔ 4.♖f1+ ♔h3. After 4...♔f2(f4), there's a fork 5.♖d3+ etc.

5.♖d3! The key point! The queen is under attack and cannot leave the c1-h6 diagonal on account of 6.♖f4#. Draw.



No. 68



White to play and win

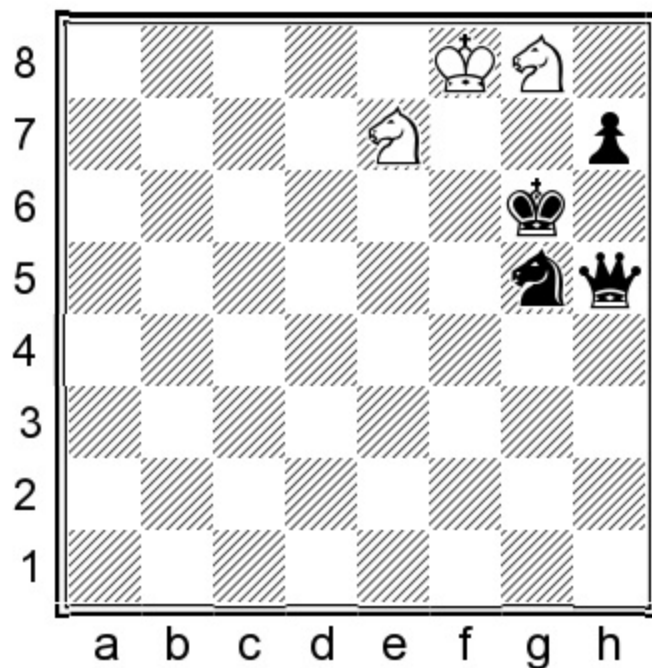
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In such positions, the right to move is the main prerequisite to win!

1. ♖e8+ ♔h6! Sacrificing the knight doesn't help: 1... ♖f7 2. ♖xf7+ ♔g5 3. ♖f6+ ♔g4 4. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 (4... ♖xd5 5. ♖e3+) 5. ♖e3+ with a fork.

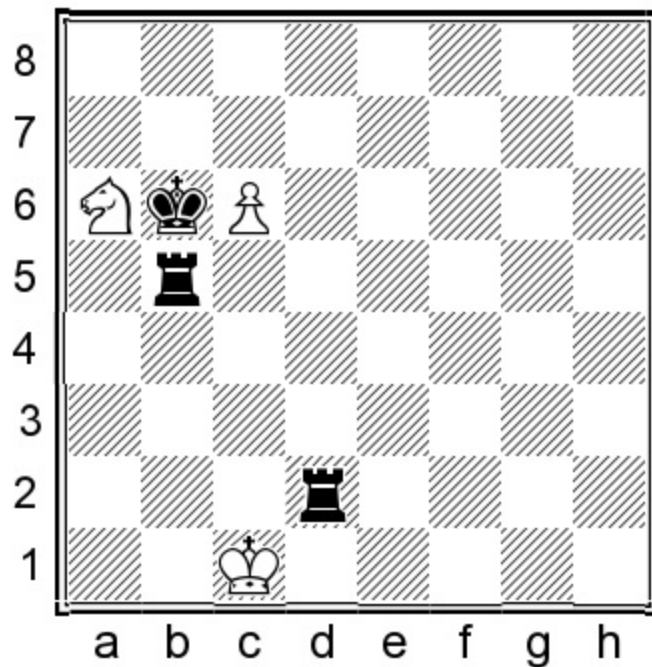
2. ♖h5+!! The point! Not 2. ♖c6+? ♖d6+! 3. ♔e7 ♖xg3, and white's attack fizzles out.

2... ♖xh5 3. ♖xf5+ ♔g6 4. ♖fe7+ ♔h6 5. ♖g8+ ♔g6 6. ♖de7#!



Author V. Kalandadze, 1974 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 69



White to play and draw

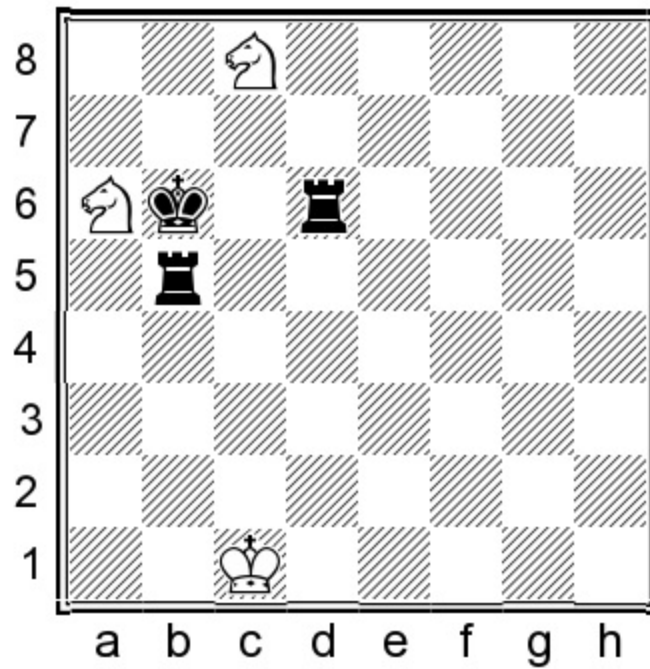
Show/Hide Solution

The humble pawn is white's only chance to draw...

1.c7 ♖d6! 2.c8=♞+!! Promotion to a major piece loses: 2.c8=♞? ♖c6+ 3.♞xc6+ ♔xc6 4.♔c2 ♔b7, curtains.

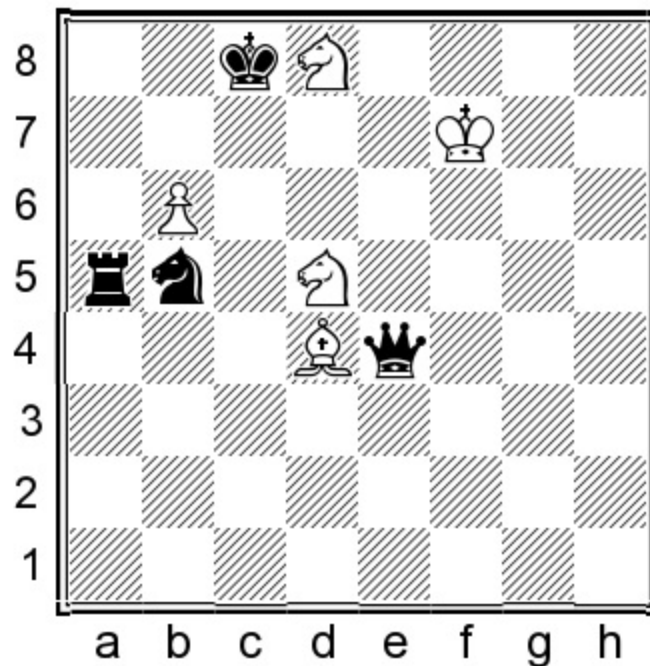
2...♔c6 3.♞a7+! The rook cannot be captured: 3.♞xd6? ♔xd6 4.♔c2 ♖b6, and the knight falls.

3...♖b6 4.♘c8+! And the second rook is poisoned, too: 4.♘xb5? ♜c6+ 5.♖b2 ♖xb5 6.♘b8 ♜c7 7.♖b3 ♜b7, curtains.



A positional draw with a perpetual fork and refusal to capture the rooks. An original mechanism!
 Author J. Fritz, 1974 (position after black's 4th move)

No. 70



White to play and draw

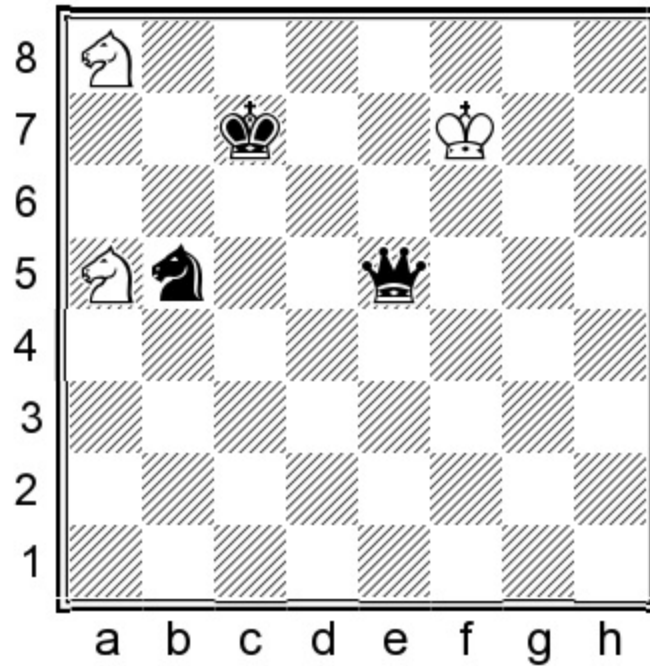
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The black king is exposed to an attack...

1.b7+ ♖b8. After 1...♔d7? black can even lose: 2.♟f6+! ♕c7 3.♙b6+ ♖xb6 4.b8=♚+, curtains.

2.♙e5+! ♜xe5 3.♞c6+ ♖xb7 4.♞xa5+! The queen is taboo: 4.♞xe5? ♞d4, and one of the knights falls.

It turns out that the king cannot escape the forking net: **4...♔c8** (4...♔a6 5.♞b4+! ♖b6 6.♞c4+; 4...♔a7 5.♞c6+ or 4...♔a8 5.♞b6+ ♖b8 6.♞c6+) **5.♞b6+ ♖c7** (5...♔d8 6.♞c6+) **6.♞a8+.**

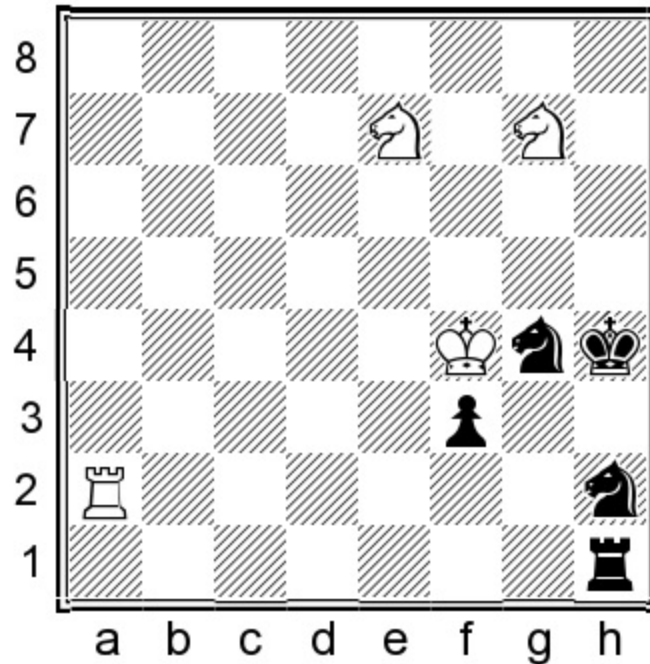


A positional draw: 6...♔d7 7.♞b6+ etc.

Author N. Eremadze, 1975

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No. 71



White to play and win

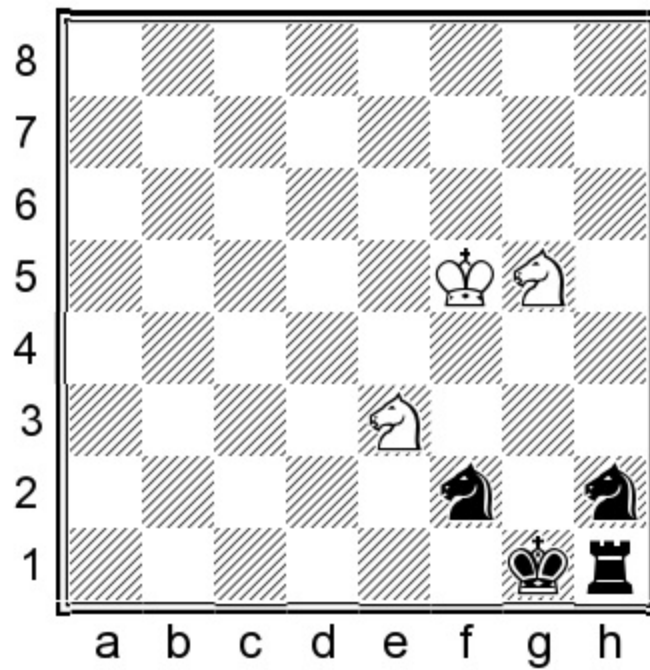
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The black king's position looks safe, but this is only an illusion!

1. ♖ef5+! Not **1. ♖g6+?** ♔h3 **2. ♖e6** f2 **3. ♖g5+** ♔g2 **4. ♖h4+** ♔g1 **5. ♖h3+** ♔f1 **6. ♖a1+** ♔e2 **7. ♖xh1** f1=♚+, with a draw.

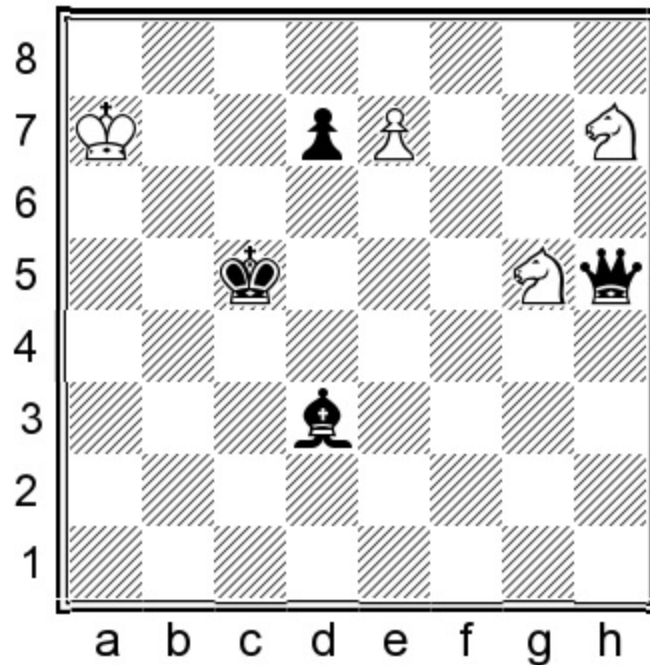
1. ♖ef5+! ♔h3 **2. ♖e6!** (threatening **3. ♖g5#**) **2...f2** **3. ♖xf2!!** The point! **3. ♖g5+?** ♔g2 **4. ♖h4+** ♔f1 **5. ♖a1+** ♔e2 **6. ♖xh1** f1=♚+ leads to the draw from the line above.

3...♖xf2 **4. ♖g5+** ♔g2 **5. ♖e3+** ♔g1 **6. ♖f5!!** The quiet winning blow!



There's no defense from the execution: 6...♘d3(~) 7.♘h3# or 6...♘f1(~) 7.♘f3#.
 Author E. Pogosiants, 1975 (edited by S. Tkachenko)

No. 72



White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

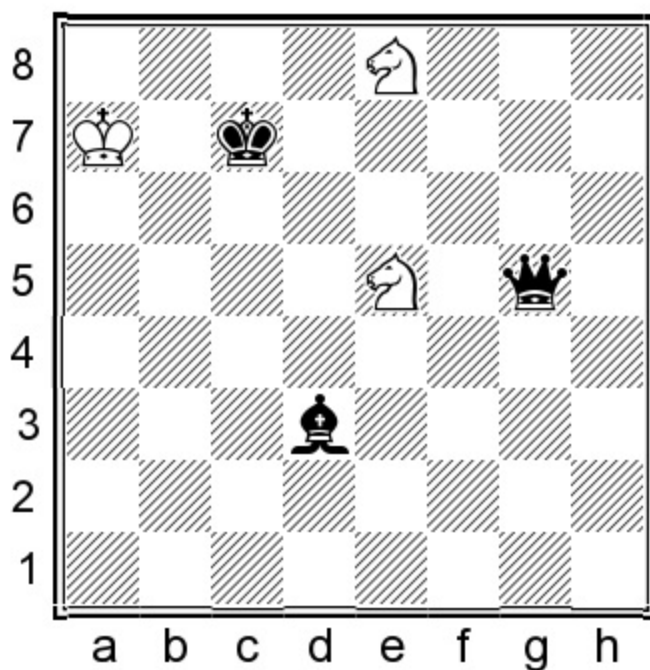
The pawn can only be promoted after sacrificing some material...

1.♘f6! ♔xg5 2.♘d7+! There's a tragedy after 2...e8=♔? ♔xf6 3.♔xd7 ♔b6+ 4.♔a8 ♔e4+, curtains.

2...♔c6! 3.♘e5+! The promotion has to be delayed again: 3.e8=♞? ♞a5+ 4.♔b8 ♞c7+ 5.♔a8 ♞b7#.

3...♔c7! Still believing in the mating attack! Not 3...♞xe5 4.e8=♞+! ♞xe8, stalemate.

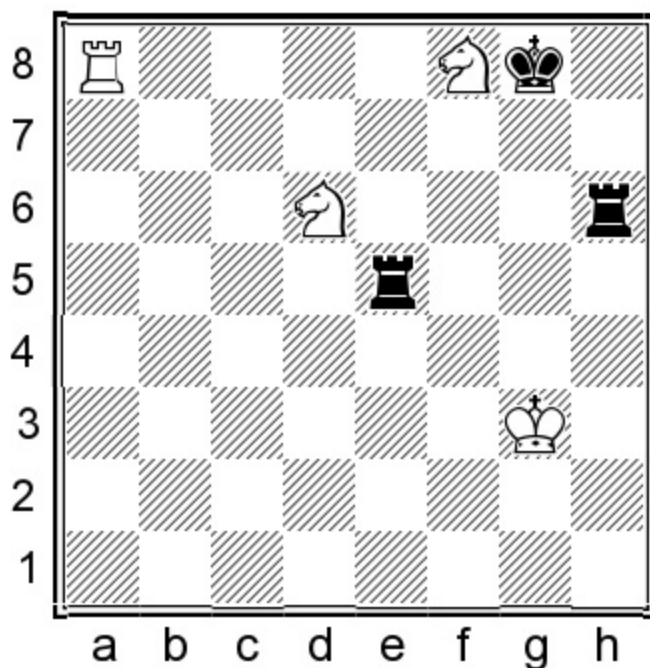
4.e8=♘+!! The point! After 4.e8=♞? ♞g1+ 5.♔a8 ♞a1+, white gets checkmated quickly.



4...♔c8 (4...♔d8 5.♘f7+, a fork) 5.♘d6+ ♔c7 6.♘e8+. Perpetual check.

Author E. Dvizov, 1976

No. 73



White to play and win

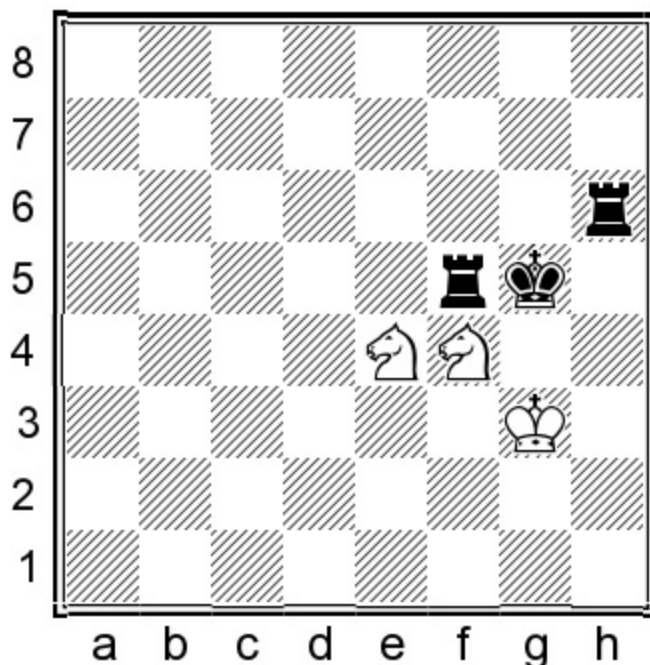
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With a discovered attack, white would capture a rook but miss the win: 1.♘g6+? ♔g7 2.♘xe5 ♖xd6, draw.

1.♘e6+! ♔h7 2.♖a7+ ♔g6. After 2...♔h8 3.♘f7+ ♔h7, the black rook is lost with a tempo – 4.♘xe5+ etc. 2...♔g8 loses to 3.♖g7+ ♔h8 4.♘f7#.

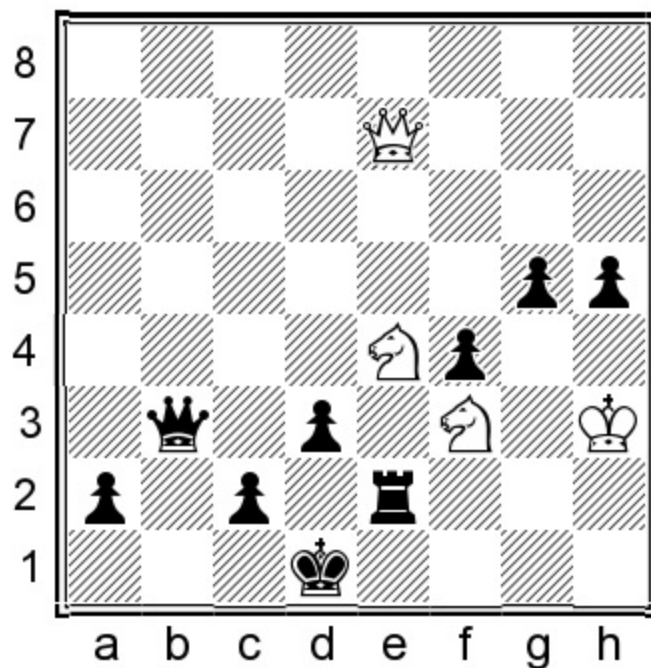
3.♘f4+ ♔f6 4.♖f7+ ♔g5 5.♖f5+!! The point! 5.♖g7+ ♔f6 6.♖f7+ ♔g5 only leads to perpetual check.

5...♖xf5 6.♘e4#!



Authors D. Gurgenidze and G. Nadareishvili, 1980 (position after black's 3rd move)

No. 74

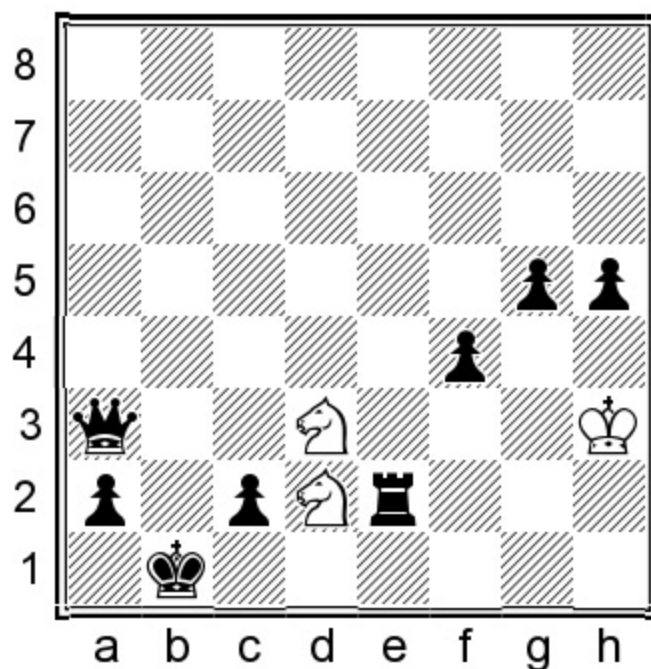


White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

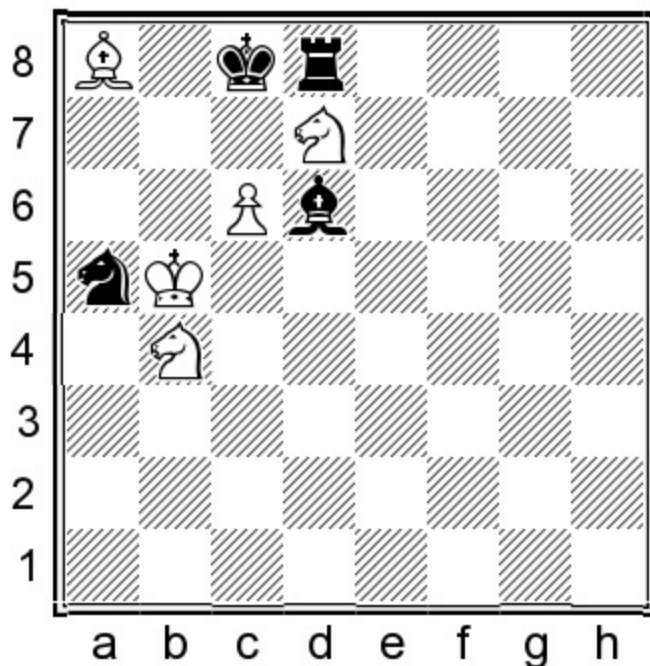
At first sight, it's unclear how can white salvage the game...

1. Nf2+! Kc1 (1... Rxf2?? 2. $\text{Qe1\#}$) 2. Qa3+!! White can't immediately play 2. Nxd3+? Kb1!
 3. Qxe2 c1=Q 4. Nxc1 Qxf3+ 5. Qxf3 g4+ , curtains.
 2... Qxa3 (2... Qb2?? 3. Nxd3+) 3. Nxd3+ Kb1 . There's a perpetual check after 3... Kd1 4. Nf2+ or
 stalemate after 3... Qxd3 .
 4. Nd2+ Ka1 (4... Rxd2 , stalemate) 5. Nb3+ Kb1 (5... Qxb3 , stalemate) 6. Nd2+ . Perpetual check.
 A romantic struggle!



Author V. Pachman, 1981 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 75



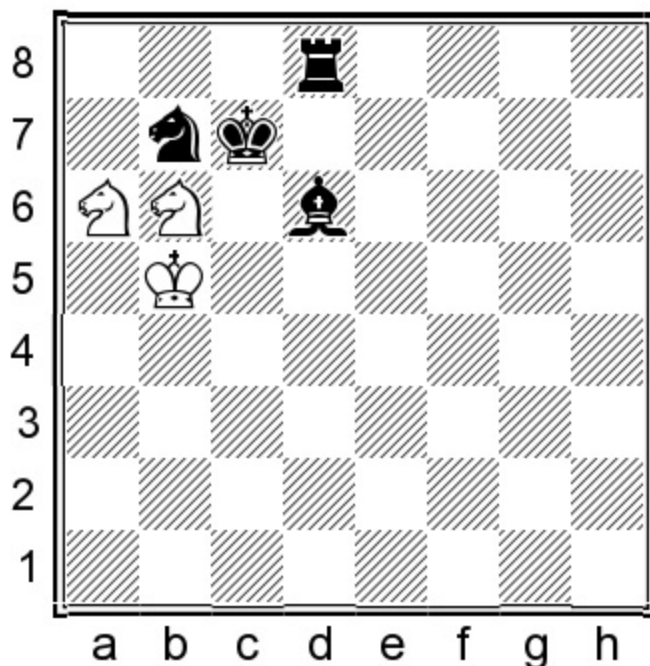
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

1. ♖b7+!! 1. ♘b6+? is too early: 1... ♔b8 2. ♘a6+ (2. ♖xa5 ♙xb4+ 3. ♖xb4 ♖d1) 2... ♖a7 3. ♖xa5 ♖xa8 (the simplest) 4. ♘xa8 ♖xa8 with a draw.

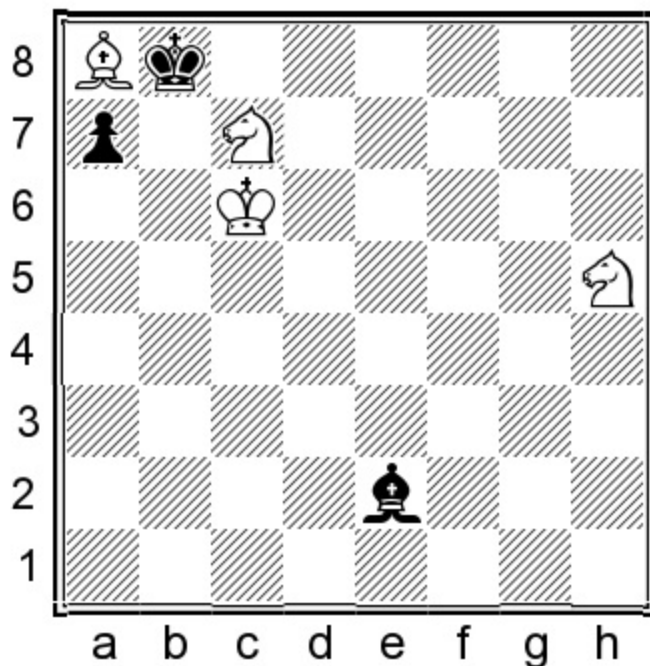
1. ♖b7+!! ♘xb7. Or 1... ♖c7 2. ♘d5(a6)#.

2. ♘b6+ ♖b8 (2... ♖c7 3. ♘a6#) **3. c7+!** ♖xc7. The alternatives are no better: 3... ♖a7 4. ♘c6# or 3... ♙xc7 4. ♘c6#. **4. ♘a6#!** An ideal mate.



Author E. Pogosiants, 1981

No. 76



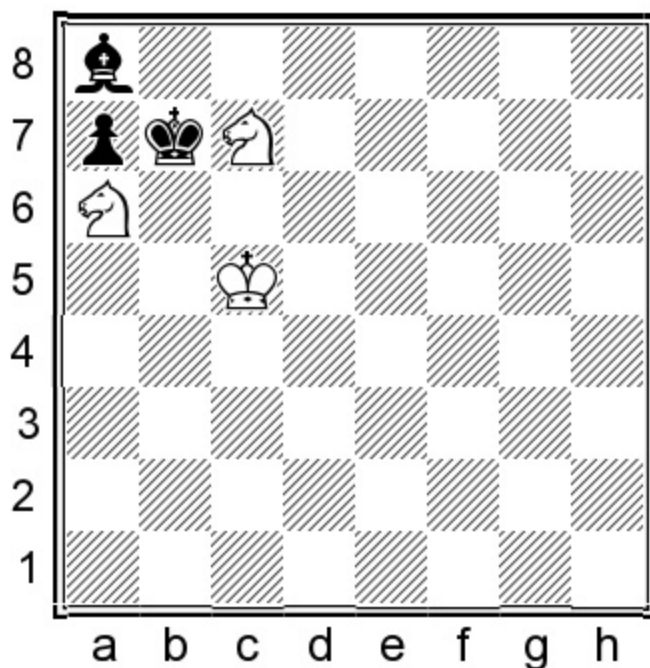
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

In this case, a knight on the rim is not as grim as the bishop in the corner...

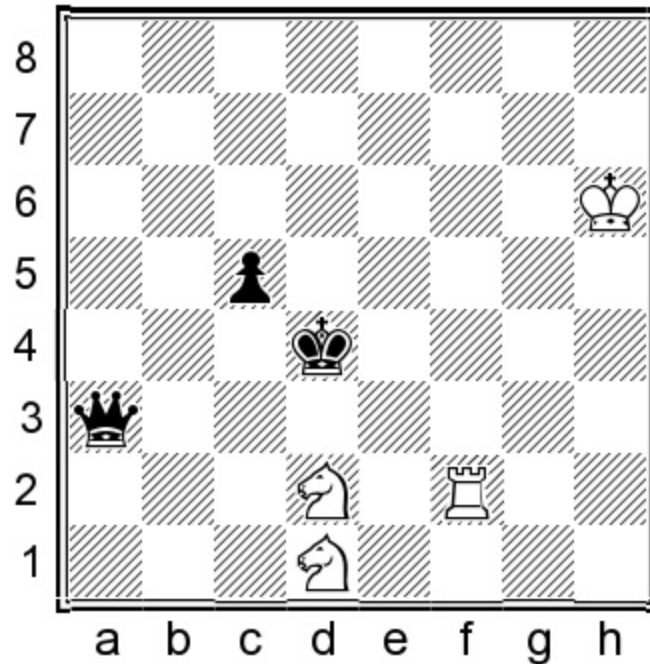
1. ♖f6! ♜f3+ 2. ♔d6 ♜xa8 3. ♖d7+ ♔b7. After 3... ♜c8 4. ♖xa8 a5 5. ♖ab6+ ♔b7 6. ♖a4, white wins a Troitsky endgame.

4. ♖c5+ ♔b8 5. ♖5a6+ ♔b7 6. ♔c5! Black is in zugzwang, he loses his bishop and the game.



Author C. Bent, 1982 (position after black's 2nd move)

No. 77



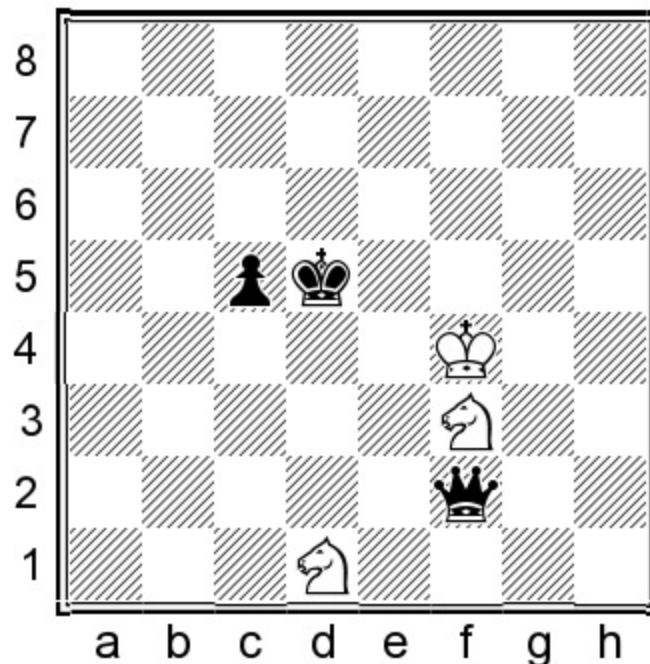
Black to play. White draws

Show/Hide Solution

1...♔c1! The most cunning move! Black gains nothing after either 1...♔h3+ 2.♕g5! or 1...c4 2.♖xc4 (the simplest) 2...♕xc4 3.♖f4+ ♕d5 4.♗f2 ♕e5 5.♕g5 with a draw.

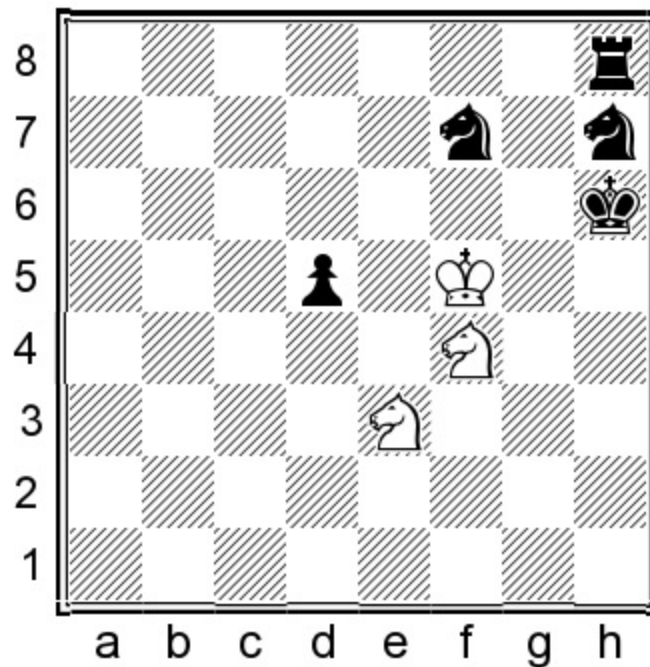
1...♔c1! 2.♗b2! ♔h1+ (2...♔xb2? 3.♗f3+) **3.♕g5! ♔g1+ 4.♕f4! ♔xf2+ 5.♗f3+ ♕d5.** Or 5...♕c3 6.♗d1+, forking.

6.♗d1!! The point of the combination!



It turns out that the mighty queen has no good squares to go to: 6...♔f1(g2, c2) 7.♗e3+ or 6...♔a2(e2) 7.♗c3+, with a fork. The final position is a work of art!

No. 78



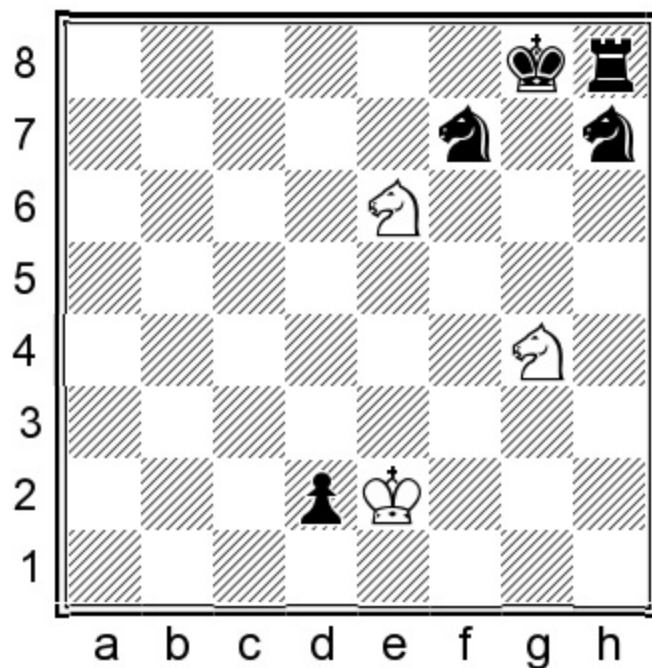
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

Is it a printing error or something? Black has an extra rook and pawn...

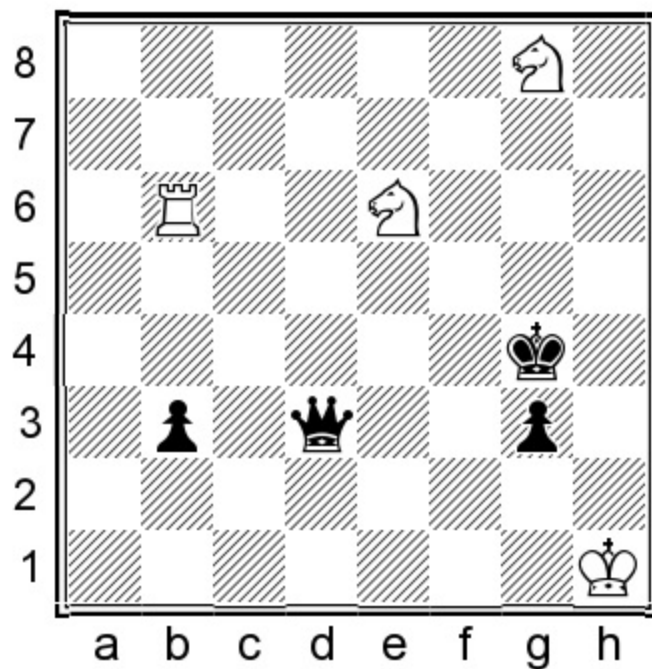
1. ♖g4+! ♔g7 **2. ♖e6+** ♔g8 **3. ♕f4!** Knight moves are now met with checkmates: 3... ♖hg5 4. ♖f6# or 3... ♖fg5 4. ♖h6#.

Black tries to distract the knights with a pawn march... **3... d4. 4. ♕g3!** (4. ♕f3?? ♖hg5+) **4... d3 5. ♕f2 d2 6. ♕e2!** The pawn is stopped, and so mate is unavoidable.



Author V. Kovalenko, 1984 (position after black's 4th move)

No. 79

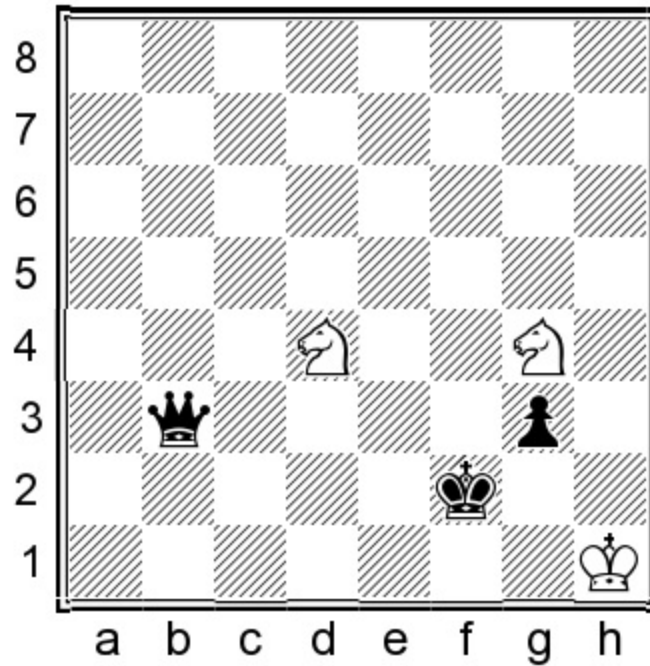


White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

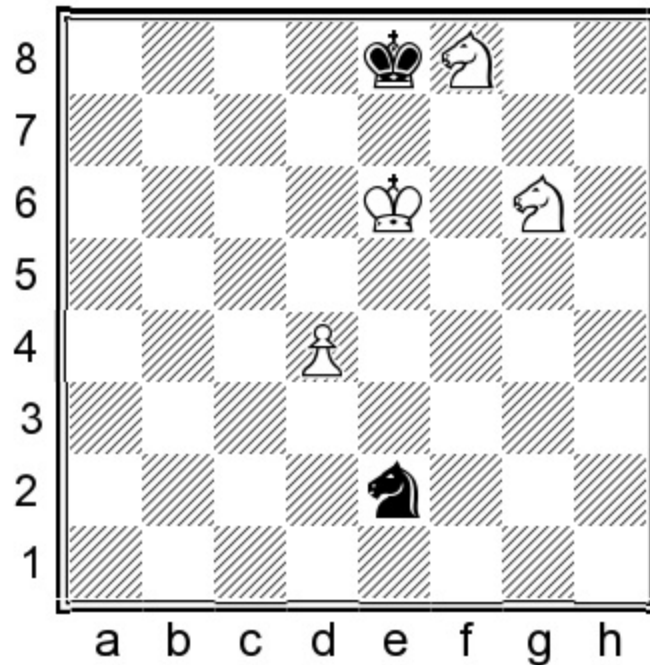
1. ♖h6+! Not 1. ♖f6+? ♜f5 2. ♖g7+ ♜g6 3. ♖fh5+ ♜h7, and black wins.
 1. ♖h6+! ♜f3! But not 1... ♜h5(h3) 2. ♖f4+, with a fork.
 2. ♜xb3! Further attacking the king is not good: 2. ♖g5+? ♜e2 3. ♜e6+ ♜d1, curtains.
 2... ♜xb3 3. ♖d4+ ♜f2! 4. ♖g4+ ♜f1 5. ♖h2+ ♜f2. Counting on 6. ♖xb3? g2#.

6. ♖g4+. Positional draw.



Author G. Nadareishvili, 1986 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 80



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

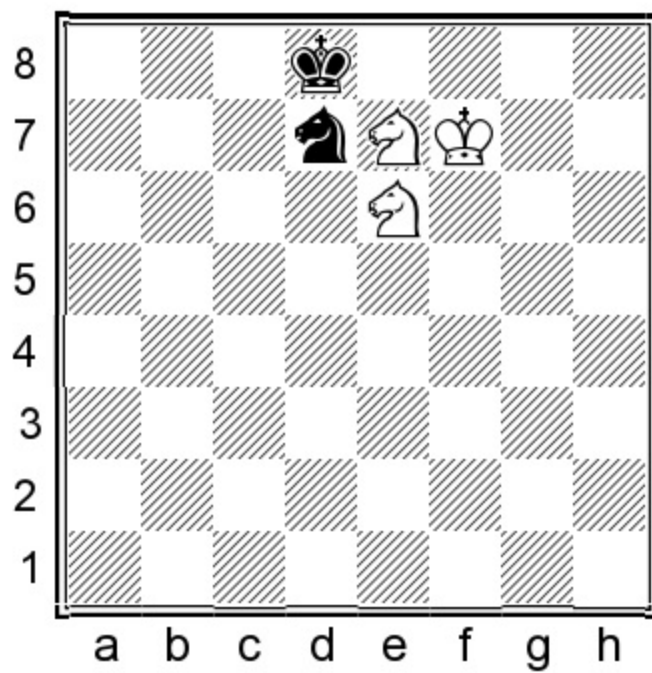
The white pawn wants to promote, and the black knight is trying to stop it...

1.d5 ♖c3! 2.d6 ♖e4 3.d7+ ♔d8. Is the pawn doomed?

Suddenly: **4. ♖e7!! ♖c5+ 5. ♔f7! ♖xd7.** Black can only delay the inevitable with 5... ♔c7 6. ♖d5+

♔d8 7. ♖b6 ♜xd7 8. ♜e6#.

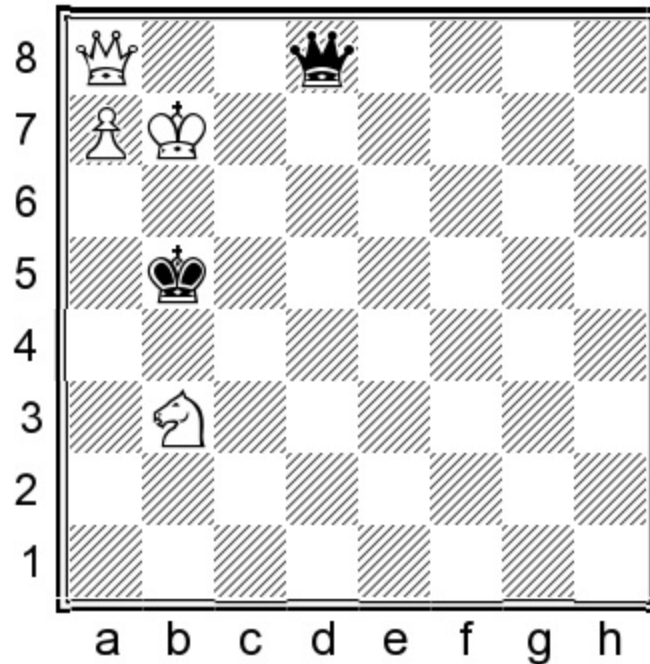
6. ♜e6#! An ideal mate!



Author G. Kasparyan, 1987 (position after black's 2nd move)

Show in Text Mode

No. 81



Black to play. White draws

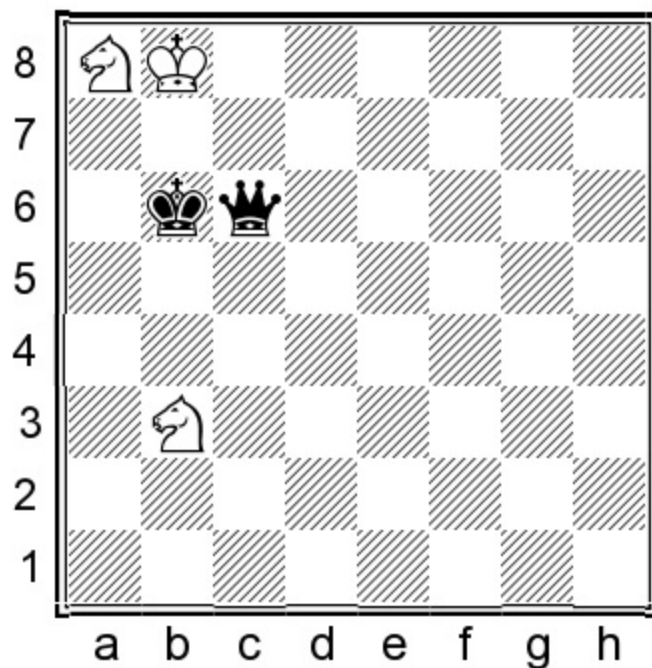
Show/Hide Solution

Using his right to move, black stifles the white king...

1...♔d7+ 2.♔b8 ♔b6! 3.♔c6+! Otherwise white gets checkmated, for instance: 3.♔d5? ♔e8+ etc.

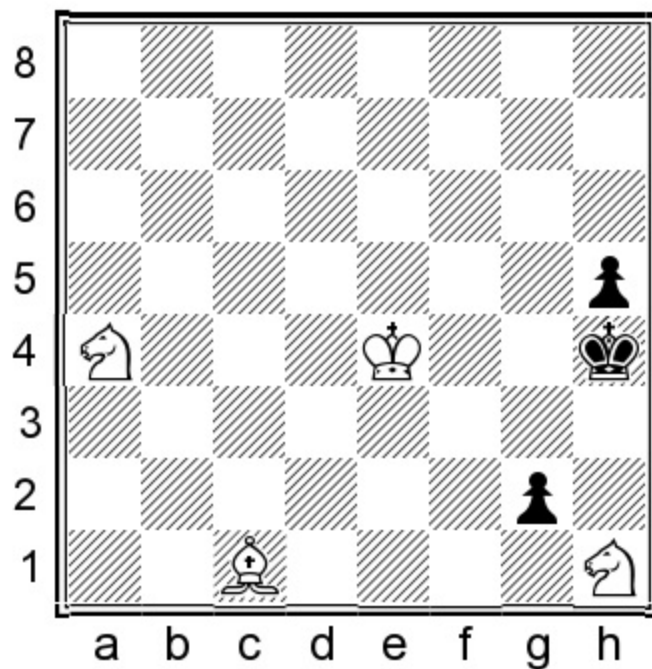
3...♔xc6 (3...♔xc6 4.a8=♔+ ♔b6 5.♔a5+) **4.a8=♔+!! ♔a6.** Or a fork: 4...♔b5 5.♔d4+ etc.

5.♔c7+ ♔b6 6.♔a8+. Draw.



Author D. Gurgenedze, 1987 (position after white's 5th move)

No. 82



White to play and draw

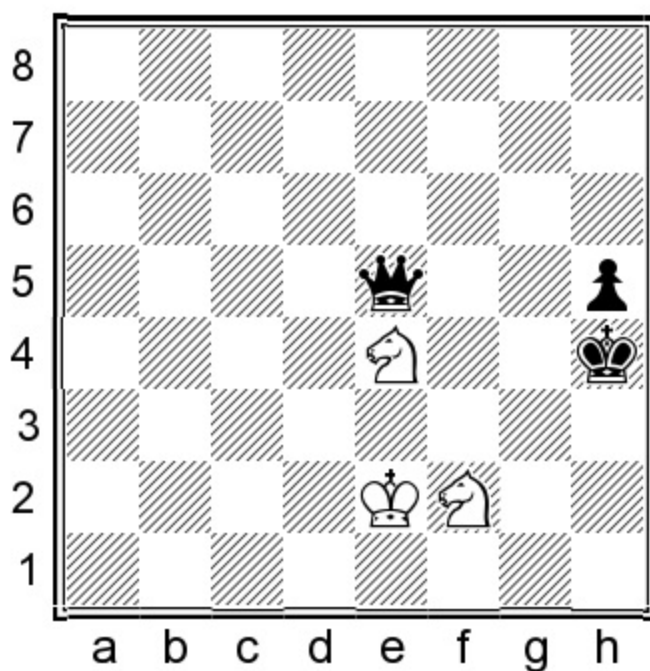
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The only way to save the game is to sacrifice the bishop: **1. ♖g5+!!** The bloodless attempts lose:
 1. ♖f2? g1=♔ 2. ♖d3 ♔g6+ 3. ♖d4 ♔g4+ 4. ♖c3 ♔xa4 etc.

1. ♖g5+!! ♖xg5. After 1... ♖h3 2. ♖f2+ ♖g3, the simplest way to force a draw is 3. ♖f4+ ♖xf2
 4. ♖h2 g1=♔ 5. ♖xg1+ ♖xg1 6. ♖f3 etc.

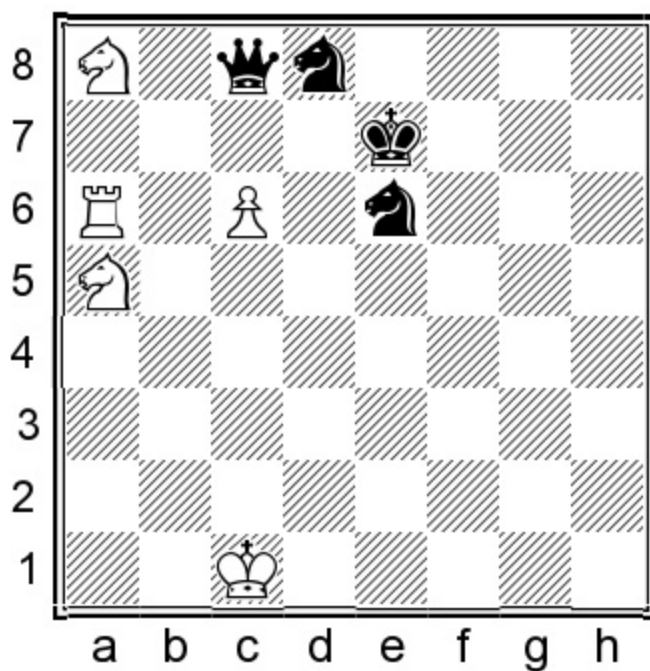
2. ♖f2 ♜h4! (2...g1=♚ 3. ♘h3+, a fork) 3. ♜f3! The immediate 3. ♘c5? is bad due to 3...♜g3!, and black wins.

3...g1=♚ 4. ♘c5! (4. ♘c3? ♚g3+) 4...♚g3+ 5. ♜e2 ♚e5+ (5...♜g5 6. ♘ce4+) 6. ♘ce4!, and the black king is completely cut off. Draw.



Author D. Gurgenedze, 1988 (position after black's 3rd move)

No. 83



White to play and draw

Show/Hide Solution

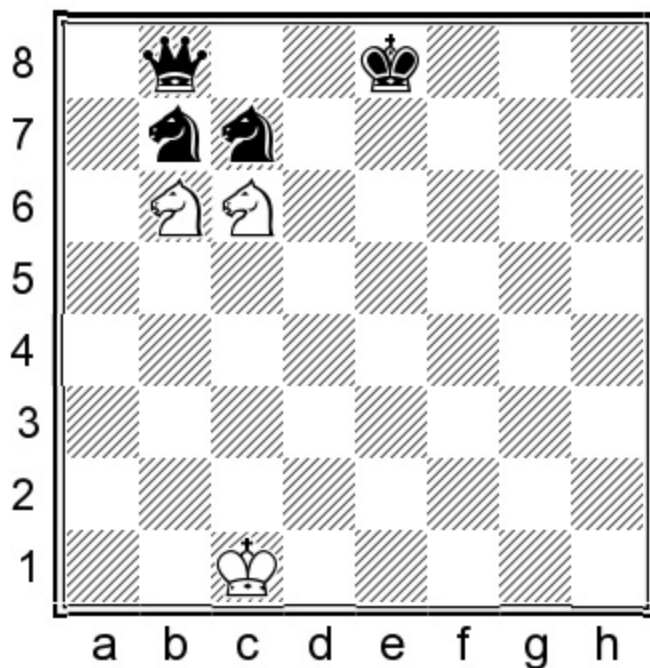
A rook and pawn aren't exactly the best compensation for the queen...

1.♖a7+ ♔e8! White's task is simpler after 1...♕d6 2.♗b6 ♜b8 3.♖a8 ♜c7 4.♖a7 or 1...♕f6 2.♗b6 ♗xc6 (2...♜b8? 3.♗d7+) 3.♗xc8, drawing in both lines.

2.♗b6! ♜b8 3.c7! ♗xc7. 3...♜xa7 is not dangerous for white: 4.c8=♜ ♜xb6 (4...♜xa5 5.♜d7+) 5.♗b7, with a draw.

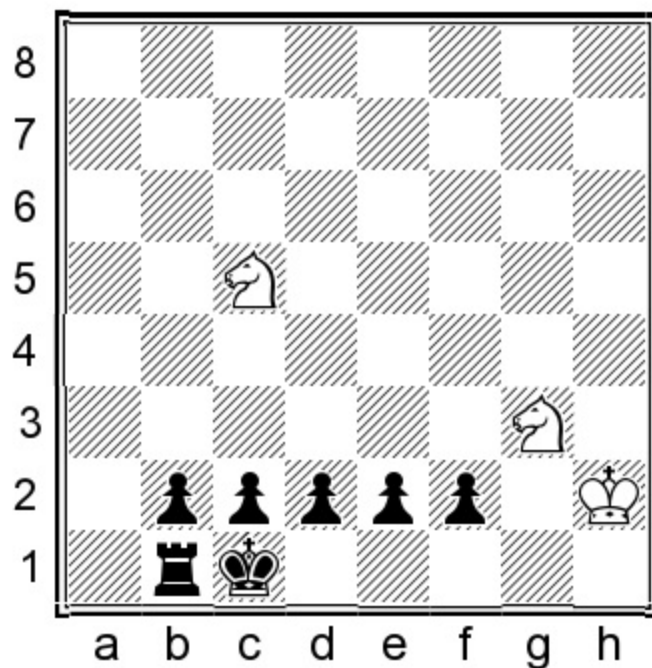
4.♖b7!! ♗xb7. White voluntarily parts with his pawn and rook, counting on the strength of his knight duo!

5.♗c6! The point of the combination! The black queen is trapped. Draw.



Author J. Rusinek, 1991 (position after black's 1st move)

No. 84



White to play and win

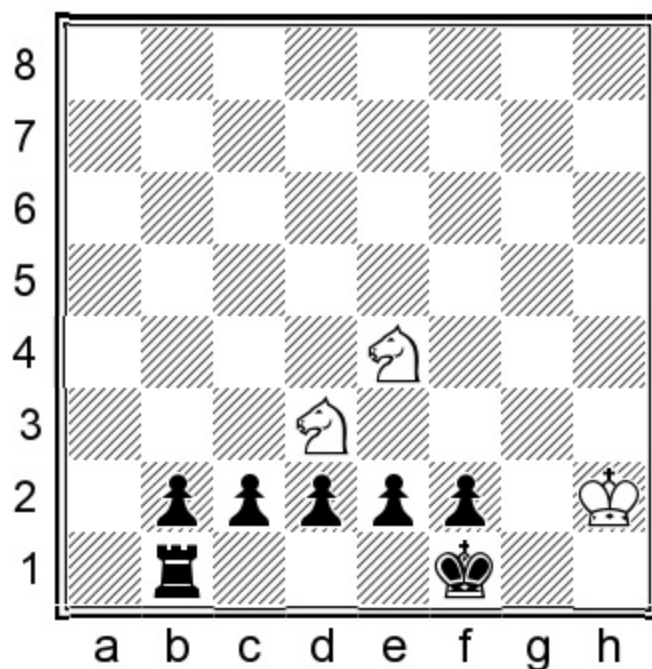
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A unique position: two white knights successfully fend off five black pawns that only need one move to promote!

1.♞ge4! 1.♞d3+? ♔d1 2.♞xf2+ ♔e1 3.♞d3+ ♔d1 4.♞f2+ only forces a draw.

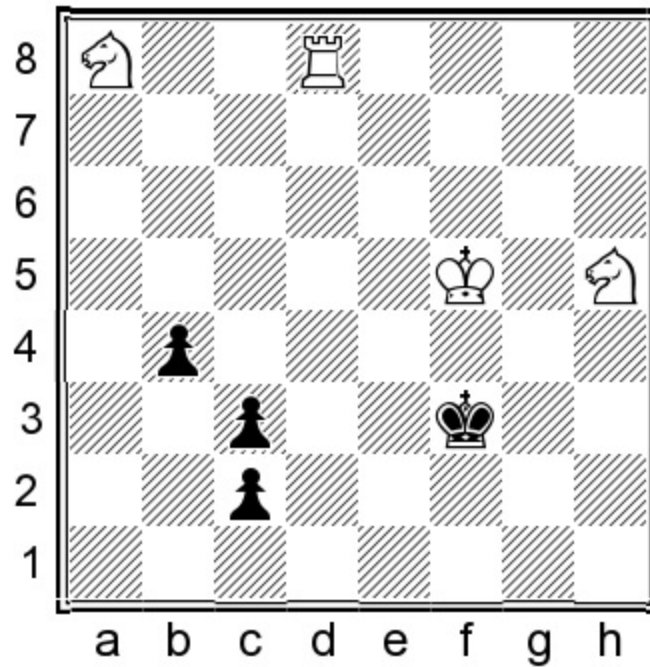
1.♞ge4! ♔d1! The other moves are no better: 1...d1=♚ 2.♞b3#; 1...e1=♚ 2.♞b3+ ♔d1 3.♞c3#; 1...f1=♚ 2.♞d3+ ♔d1 3.♞c3# or 1...f1=♞+ 2.♞g1 e1=♞ (2...♞a1 3.♞d3+ ♔d1 4.♞ef2#) 3.♞b3+ ♔d1 4.♞c3#.

2.♞c3+ ♔e1 (2...♔c1 3.♞b3#) **3.♞d3+ ♔f1** **4.♞e4!** The quiet finishing blow!



Checkmate is inevitable: 4...e1=♚ 5.♞g3#.

No. 85



White to play and draw

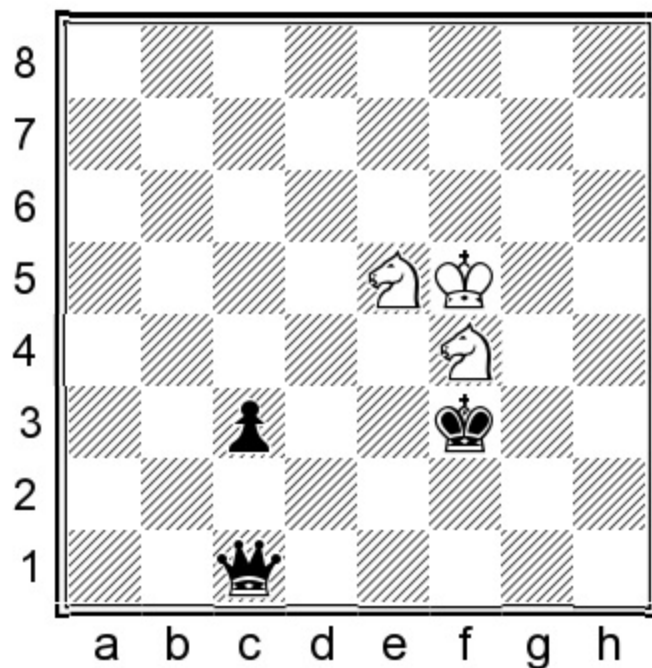
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White can't save the game with 1. ♖f4? c1=♚ 2. ♜d3+ ♔f2 3. ♘b6 c2 4. ♘c4 ♚xf4+ 5. ♔xf4 c1=♚+ 6. ♘e3 ♚b1, and black gradually converts his material advantage.

The correct move is **1. ♜d3+! ♔f2!** After 1... ♔e2 2. ♘f4+, it's now black who needs to make some precise moves: 2... ♔e1! 3. ♜h3 b3 4. ♘d3+ ♔d1 5. ♜h1+ ♔d2 6. ♔e4 b2 7. ♘b6 c1=♚ 8. ♘c4+ ♔c2, with a draw.

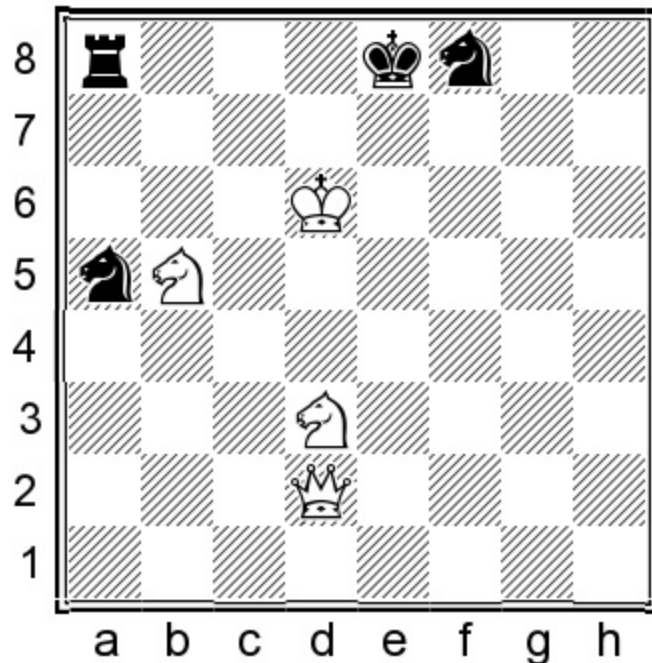
2. ♜xc3!! bxc3 3. ♘f4! ♔e3! (3... c1=♚ 4. ♘d3+) **4. ♘b6! c1=♚ 5. ♘c4+! ♔f3.** Otherwise, there are forks: 5... ♔d4 6. ♘e2+ or 5... ♔f2 6. ♘d3+ etc.

6. ♘e5+. It turns out that the king cannot escape through the kingside: 6... ♔g3 7. ♘e2+ or 6... ♔f2 7. ♘fd3+ with new forks.



Black is forced to repeat the position: 6...♔e3 7.♘c4+ etc. Draw.
 Author V. Prygunov, 1994

No. 86



Black to play. White draws

Show/Hide Solution

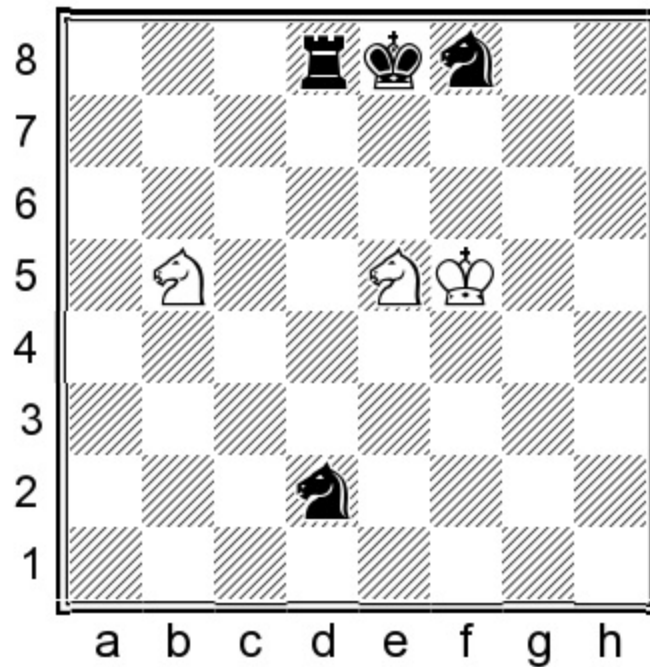
Black starts his hunt for the white queen...

1...♖d8+! Not 1...♞c4+ 2.♔d5 ♞xd2 3.♞c7+ ♔d7 4.♞xa8, with a draw.

1...♖d8+! 2.♔e5! 2.♔c7? ♞e6+ 3.♔b6 ♞c4+ 4.♔c6 ♞xd2 and 2.♔c5? ♞b3+ are bad, losing the

queen in both cases.

2...♖c4+ 3.♔f5! (3.♔f4? ♜xd2 4.♜e5 ♜e6+) **3...♜xd2 4.♜e5!!** The point! A funny position: black is to move, but he has no way to save his rook from a fork!

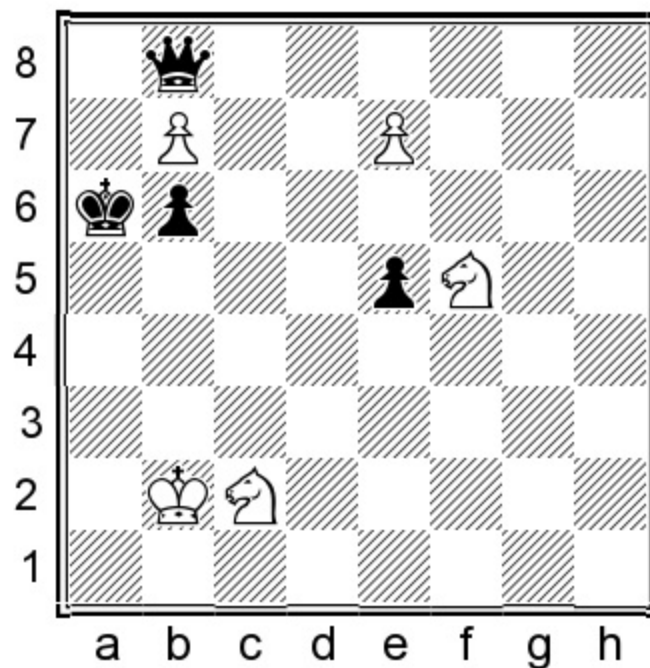


4...♜b3. Or 4...♜d7 5.♜c7+ ♔f8 6.♜e6+; 4...♜d5(a8) 5.♜c7+; 4...♜c8 5.♜d6+; 4...♜b8 5.♜d6+ ♔e7 6.♜c6+ etc.

5.♜c7+ ♔e7 6.♜c6+. Draw.

Author C. Bent, 1993 (edited by S. Tkachenko)

No. 87



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

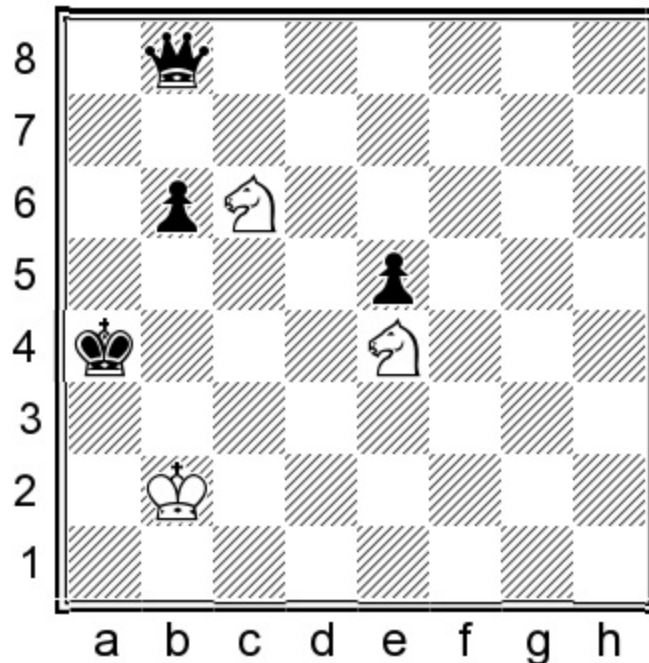
The immediate 1. ♖b4+? ♔xb7 2. e8=♚ ♚xe8 3. ♖d6+ ♔b8 4. ♖xe8 e4! 5. ♖c2 e3! 6. ♖d6 b5 doesn't win: both pawns are in the drawing zone.

1. ♖g7? ♚xb7 2. e8=♚ ♚xg7 also leads to a draw.

1. e8=♚!! ♚xe8 2. ♖d6! ♚f8 3. ♖b4+ (Now it's time!) 3... ♔a5! 3... ♔a7 cannot save black either: 4. ♖c6+ ♔a6 5. b8=♖+! ♚xb8 6. ♖xb8+ ♔a7 7. ♖c6+ ♔a6 8. ♖e4, with a won Troitsky endgame.

4. b8=♚!! But not 4. ♖c6+? ♔a4 5. b8=♚ ♚f2+, with a draw.

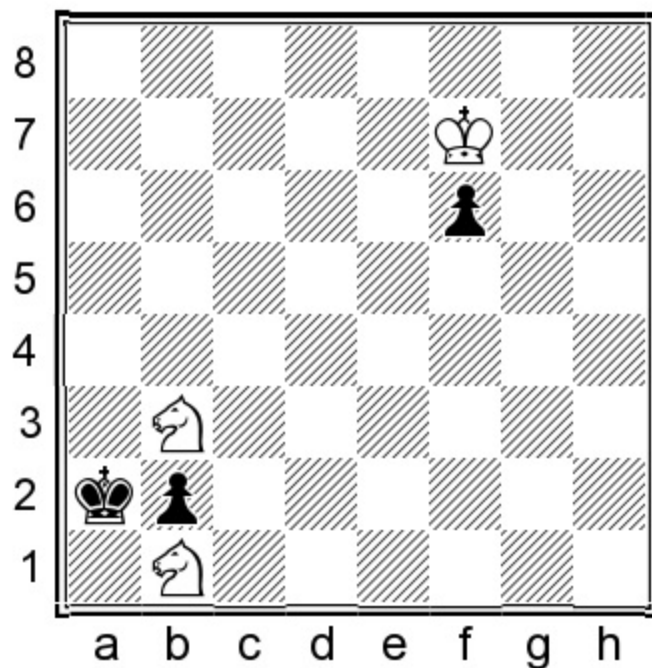
4... ♚xb8 5. ♖c6+ ♔a4! 6. ♖e4!! Not bothering with the queen!



White threatens 7. ♖c3#. And after the only move 6... ♔b5 7. ♖xb8 ♔c4 8. ♖d7 ♔d4 9. ♖df6, the black pawn is blocked in the winning Troitsky zone.

Authors S. Tkachenko, N. Mansarliyskiy, 1995 (position after black's 6th move)

No. 88



White to play and win

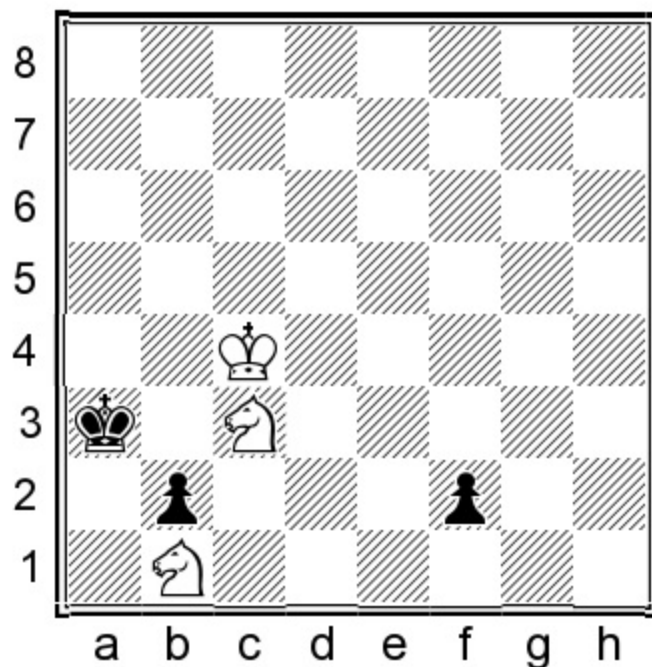
Show/Hide Solution

With his first move, white seals off the black king, but the f-pawn tries to prise the cage open...

1. ♖d3d2! f5 2. ♔e6! The white king chases the pawn.

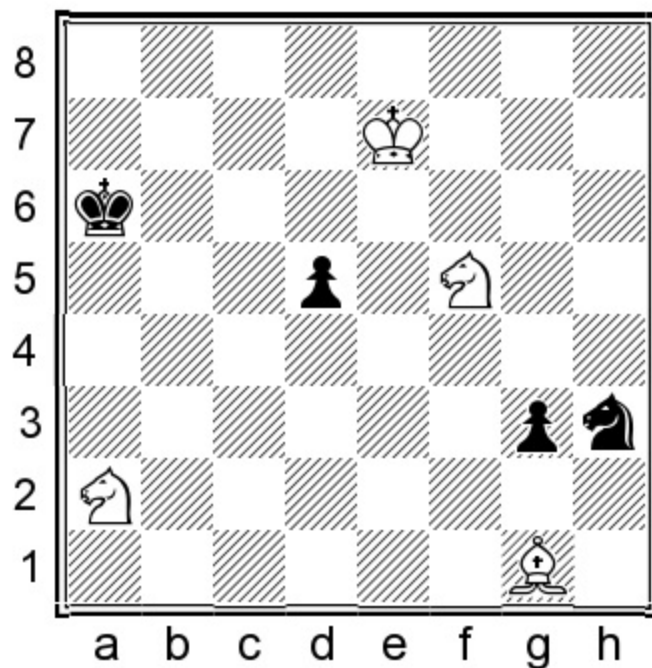
2...f4 3. ♔d5! f3 4. ♔c4! f2. After 4...♔a1 5. ♔d3! f2 6. ♔e2, the white king does stop the pawn!

5. ♖c3+ ♔a3 (5...♔a1 6. ♖b3#) 6. ♖db1#! Two mating finales.



Author S. Tkachenko (position after black's 4th move)

No. 89

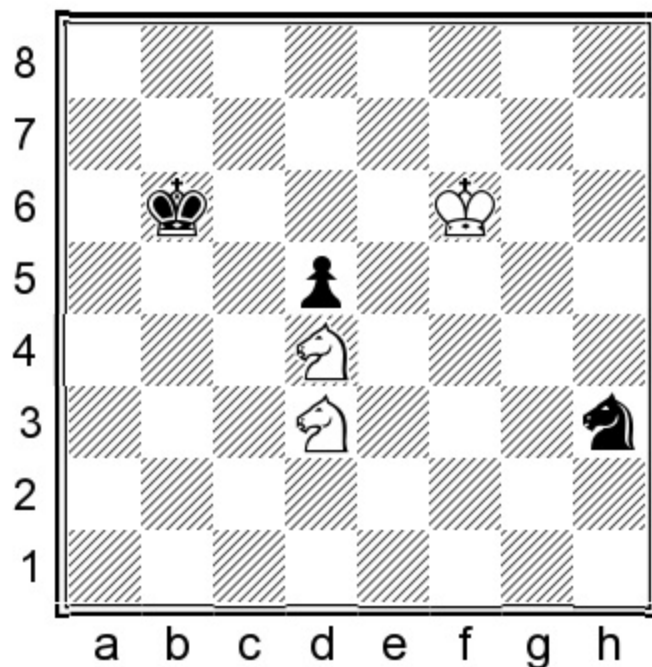


White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

Where should the attacked bishop go? 1.♔d4? is wrong due to 1...g2 2.♖c1 g1=♚ 3.♗xg1 ♘xg1 4.♘d4 ♘h3 5.♘d3 ♘g5!, and the black knight breaks free.

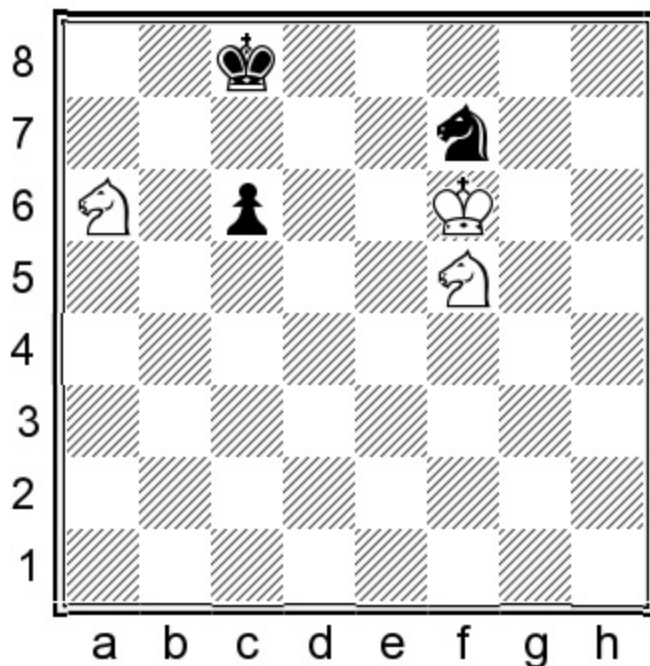
Eureka: 1.♗e3!! g2 2.♘d4!! (the d4 square is vacant!) 2...g1=♚ 3.♗xg1 ♘xg1 4.♘b4+! ♔b6 5.♘d3! ♘h3 6.♕f6!, closing off the black knight!



The black king cannot help his knight, and when it falls (7.♕f5 – 8.♕g4), white has a won Troitsky endgame.

Authors S. Tkachenko and N. Mansarliyskiy, 1995 (position after black's 4th move)

No. 90



White to play and win

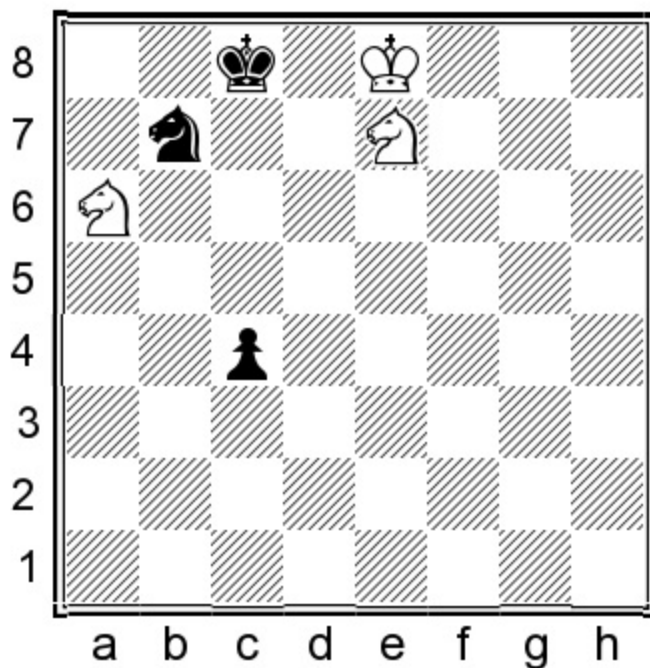
Show/Hide Solution

The black knight cannot be captured just yet: 1.♔xf7? c5 2.♞d6+ ♔d7 3.♞c4 ♔c6, with a draw.

1.♞c5! ♞d8 (1...♞h8 2.♔g7) **2.♔e7! ♞b7**. The black knight is trapped rather elegantly after 2...♔c7 3.♞d6! ♔b6 4.♞d7+ ♔c7 5.♞e8+ ♔c8 6.♞b6+ ♔b7 7.♞c4! ♔c8 8.♞cd6+, curtains.

3.♞a6! Back to the initial square!

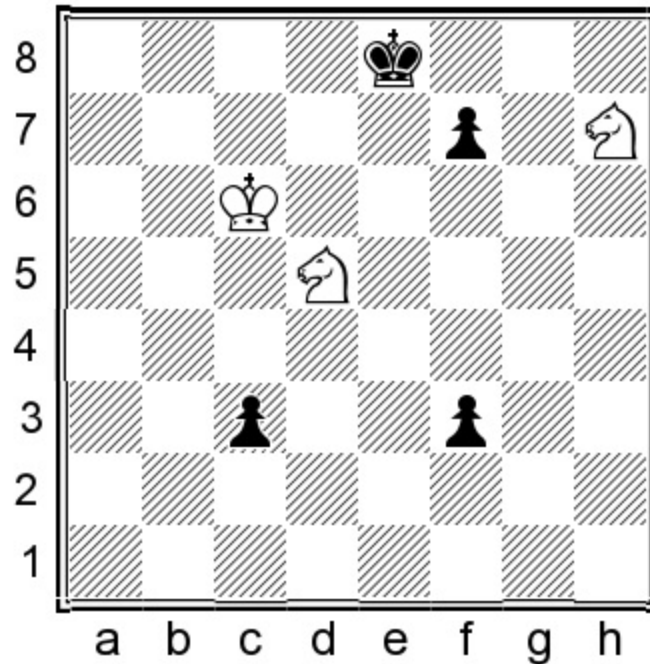
3...c5 4.♔e8! c4 5.♞e7#. The black knight is saved, but at the cost of checkmate!



Author G. Slepian, 1998 (position after black's 3rd move)

Show in Text Mode

No. 91



White to play and draw

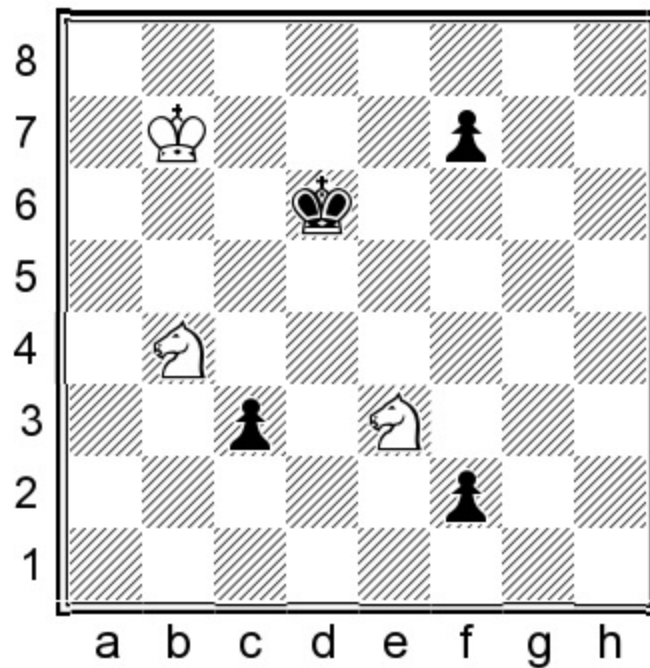
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How to neutralize the black pawns?..

1. ♖hf6+ ♔d8! After 1... ♕f8, there's a simple draw: 2. ♘e3 f2 3. ♘d7+ ♕e7 4. ♘c5 c2 5. ♘d3 etc.

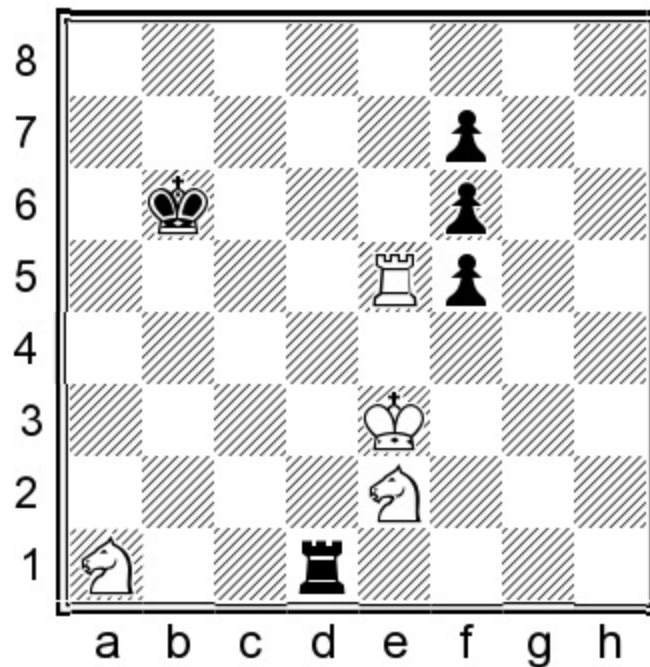
2. ♘b4! f2 3. ♕b7!! The point!

3... ♕e7 (3... f1=♚? 4. ♘c6#) **4. ♘fd5+ ♕d6 5. ♘e3**, and both pawns are stopped. Draw.



Author A. Zaretsky, 2000

No. 92



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

Two white pieces are under attack...

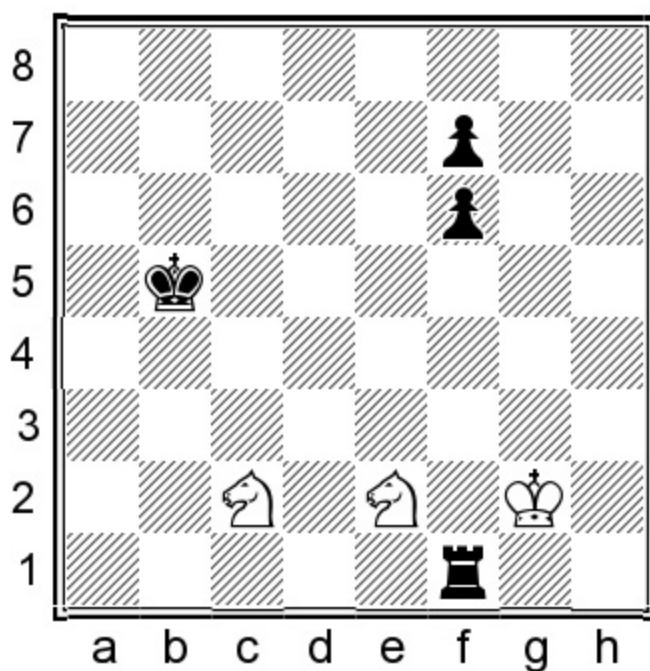
1. ♖b5+! ♔a6! (1... ♕xb5 2. ♖c3+) **2. ♘c2!** But not 2. ♖b3? ♕xb5! 3. ♘c3+ ♕c4 with a double attack. 2. ♖b8? ♔a7! is also bad, with inevitable material losses for white.

2...f4+! 3. ♕xf4! Not 3. ♕f2? f3! 4. ♕xf3 (4. ♖ed4 ♖d2+ 5. ♕xf3 ♖xc2) 4... ♖d3+ 5. ♕e4 ♖d2! 6. ♖b2

♖xe2+ (check!) with a draw.

3...♖f1+. Now 3...♖d2 doesn't save black: 4.♖b2! ♖xe2 (no check!) 5.♜b4+, and the black rook falls.

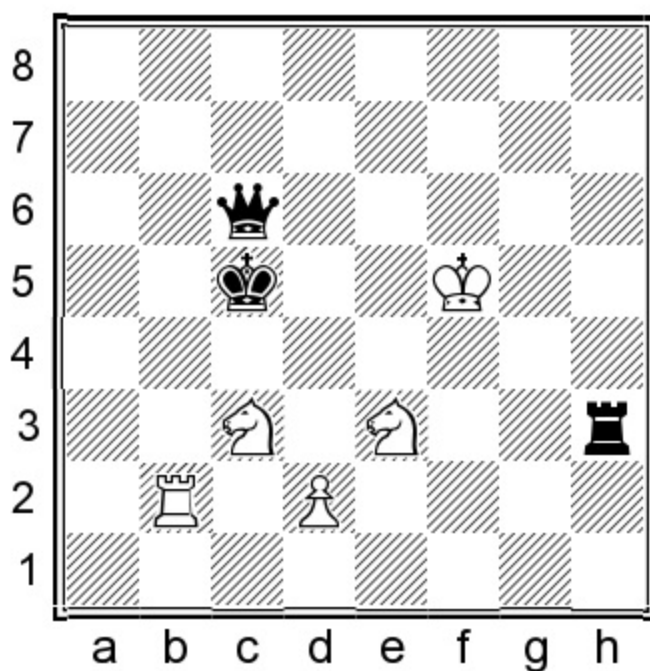
4.♜g3 ♜xb5 5.♜g2! Domination!



The black rook has no good squares: 5...♖d1(b1) 6.♜c3+ or 5...♖f5 6.♜cd4+ (6.♜ed4+), with a won Troitsky endgame afterwards.

Author S. Tkachenko, 2001

No. 93

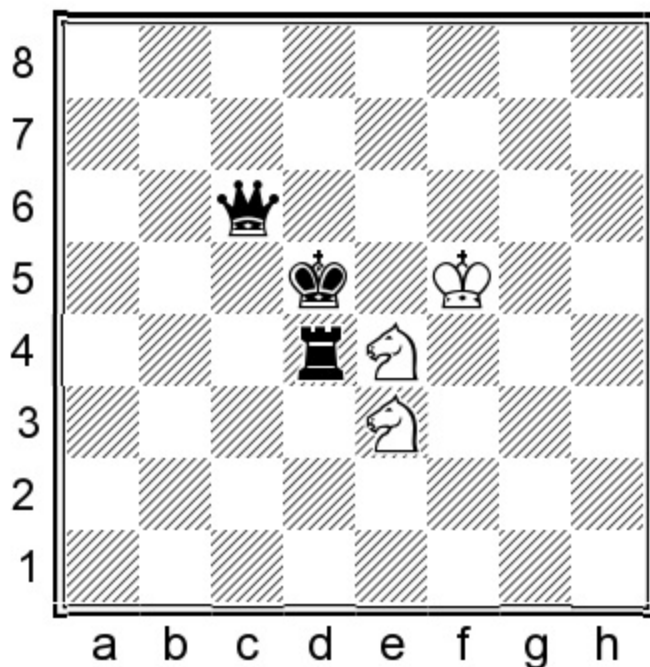


White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

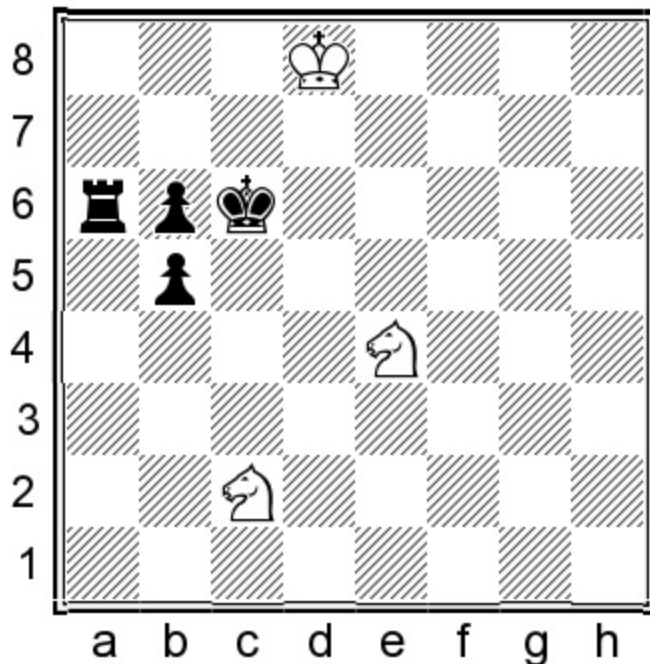
The queen's bad position is the reason for black's downfall...

1. ♖e4+! ♜d4 2. ♖c2+ ♜c4! Black can't save the game with 2... ♙xc2 3. ♖xc2 ♜f3+ 4. ♜e6 ♜xe4 5. ♜c4+ ♜d3 6. ♜c3+ either: after the rook trade, the white pawn is unstoppable
3. d3+! ♜xd3. Or 3... ♜xd3 4. ♖b4+ ♜e3 5. ♖xc6 ♜f3+ 6. ♜e5, curtains.
4. ♜b4+ ♜d5 5. ♜d4+! ♜xd4 6. ♖e3#!



Author D. Vorontsov, 2001 (position after black's 2nd move)

No. 94



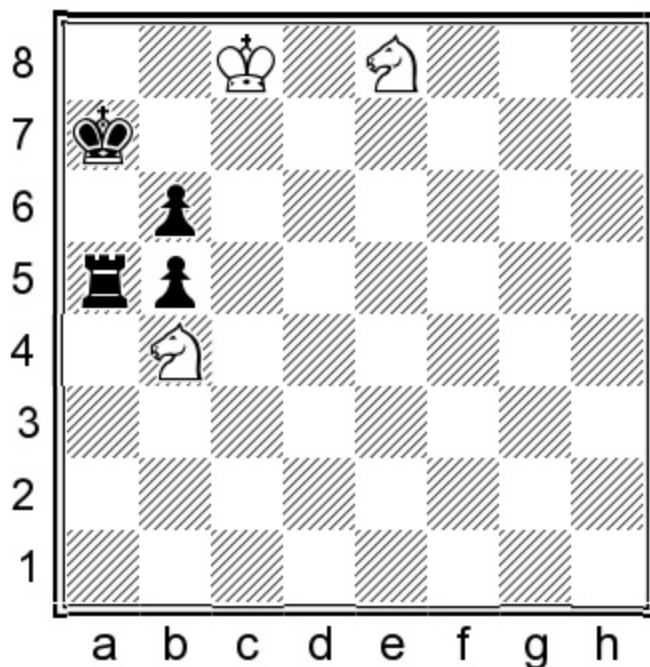
White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

1.♘b4+ ♔b7 2.♘d6+ ♔a7 3.♔c8! The king joins the attack! Not 3.♔c7? ♖a4! 4.♘c8+ (4.♘xb5+ ♔a8 5.♘c6 ♖c4) 4...♔a8 5.♘c6 ♖a6, with a draw.

3...♖a5! 3...♖a4 is no better: 4.♘xb5+ ♔a8 5.♘c7+ ♔a7 6.♘c6#.

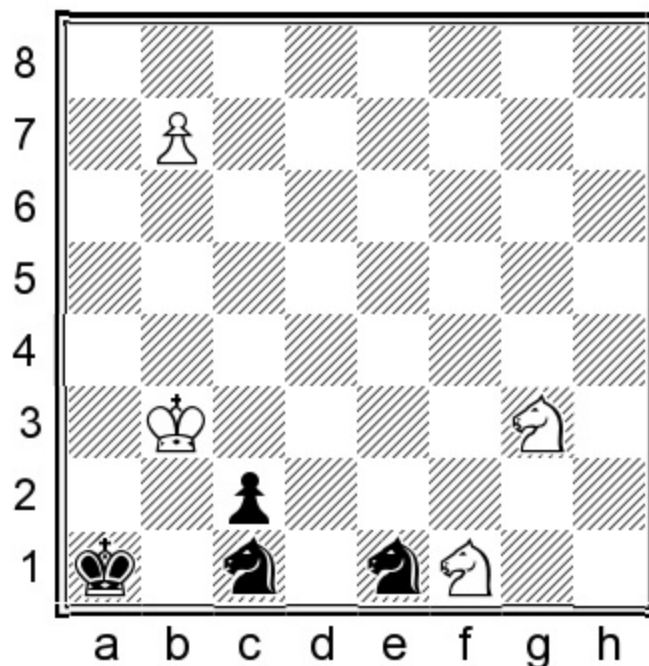
4.♘e8!! The point – launching the mating attack!



4...♖a1 5.♘c6+ ♔a8(a6) 6.♘c7#. An exemplary attack!

Author I. Bondar, 2004 (position after black's 10th move)

No. 95



White to play and win

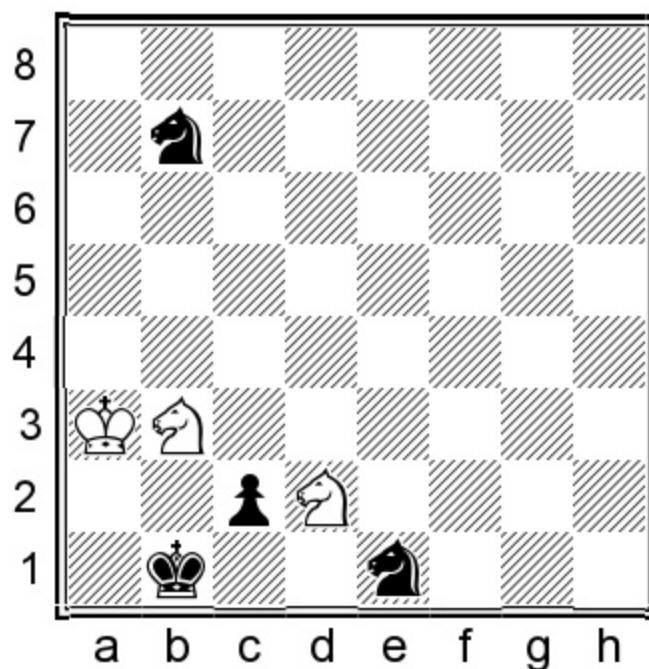
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1. ♔a3! The retreat 1. ♔c4? has a fatal flaw: 1... ♖b3! 2. ♜e2 ♜a5+, fork.

1. ♔a3! ♜cd3! 2. ♜e2 ♜c5. The sacrifice 2... c1=♔+ 3. ♜xc1 ♜c2+ 4. ♔b3 ♜c5+ doesn't help due to the rejection of the second sacrifice: 5. ♔c3!! ♜xb7 6. ♔xc2 ♜c5 7. ♜d2, black is in zugzwang and gets checkmated by two knights.

3. ♜c1!! After the “natural” 3. b8=♔? c1=♔+ 4. ♜xc1, it's now black who gives a checkmate with two knights – 4... ♜c2#!

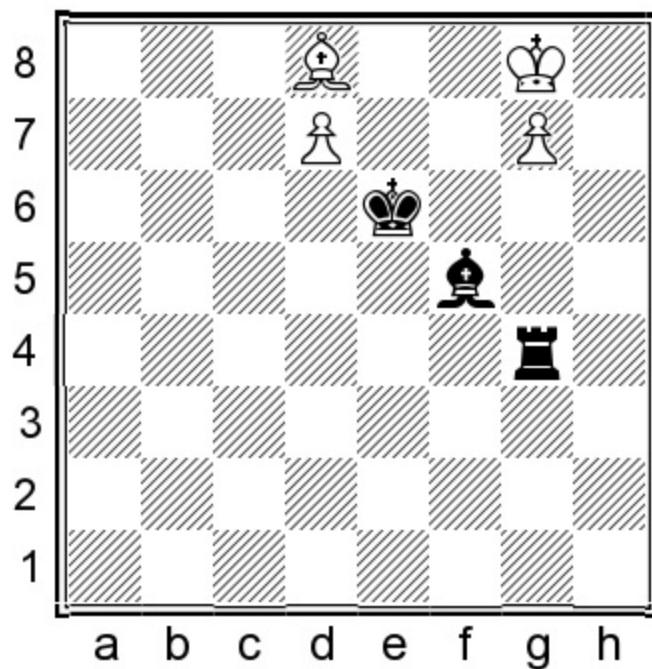
3... ♜xb7 4. ♜b3+ ♔b1 5. ♜fd2#! But still, it's white who ultimately gives a two-knight checkmate!



An elegant pattern of checkmating blows.

Author S. Tkachenko, 2005 (position after black's 2nd move)

No. 96



White to play and draw

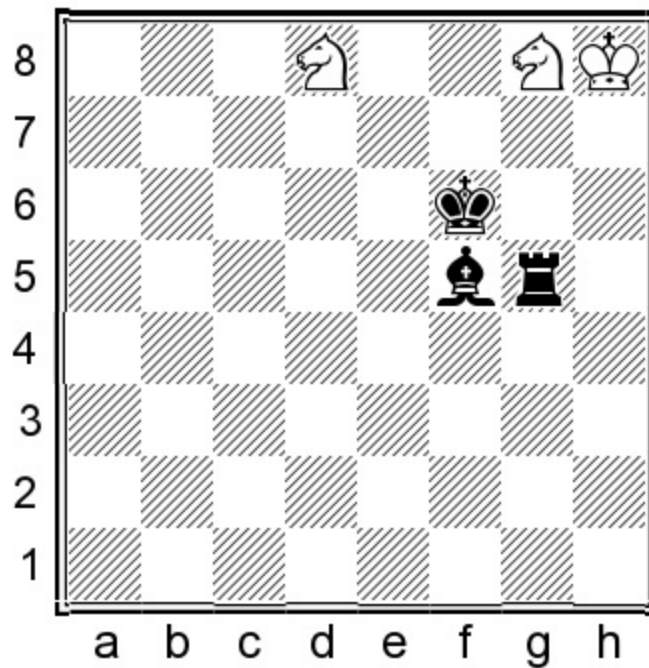
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The white pawns will soon become brave knights...

1.♔h8! Not to the left: 1.♔f8? ♙h7 2.♙f6 ♔xd7, curtains.

1.♔h8! ♔f7 2.♙g5! ♖xg5 3.d8=♘+! The first knight! Not 3.d8=♚ ♖h5#.

3...♔f6 4.g8=♘+! And the second knight! White has escaped the mating net.

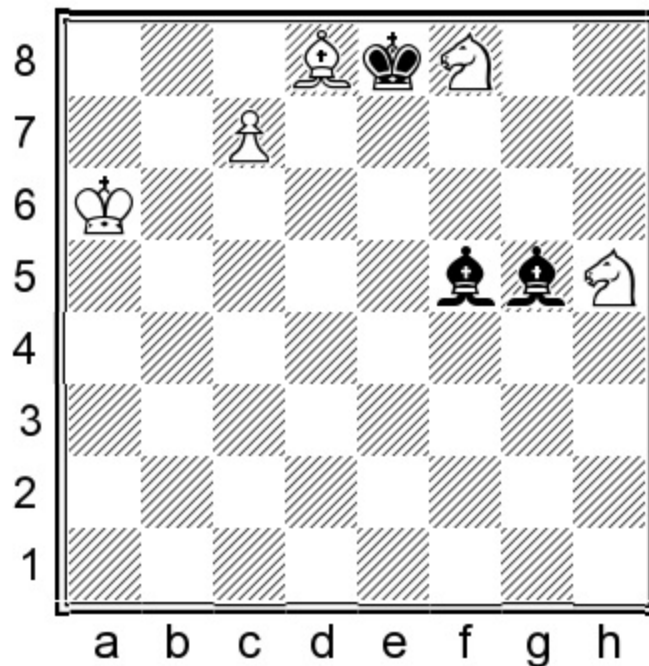


4...♔e5 (4...♔g6 5.♘e7+ ♔h5 6.♘xf5) 5.♘f7+, forking and drawing.

Keep in mind that ♘+♘ vs. ♖+♙ endings are generally lost for the weaker side. You can't argue with a computer!

Authors S. Didukh and S. Hornecker, 2009 (position after black's 8th move)

No. 97



Black to play. White wins

Show/Hide Solution

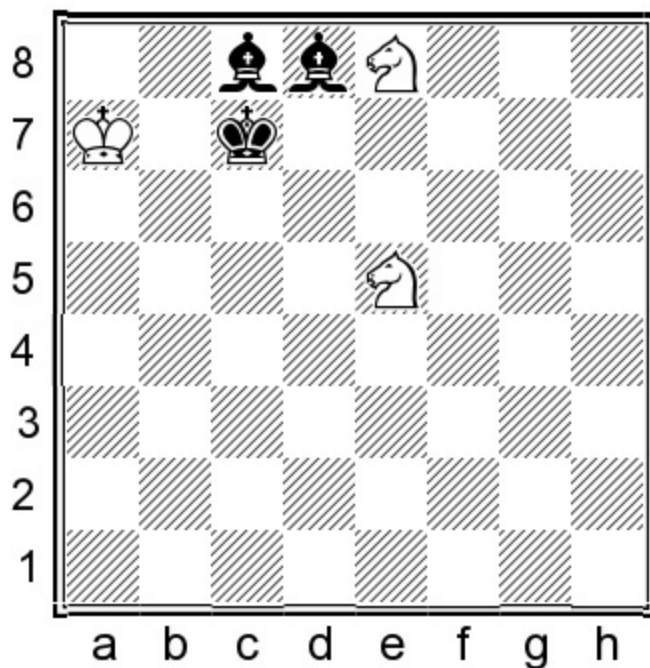
Before capturing the white bishop, black withdraws his piece from the vulnerable square with

tempo:

1...♔c8+! 1...♔xd8 is toothless: 2.♖g7+ ♕e7 3.♘xf5+, curtains.

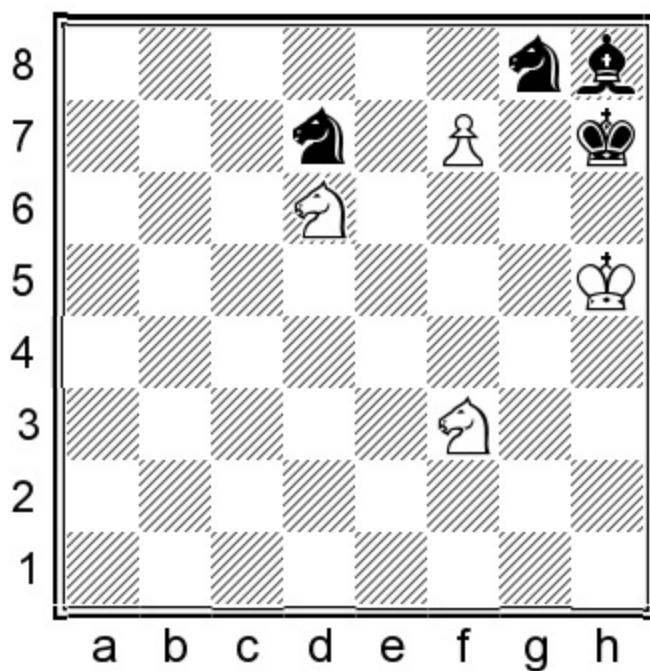
1...♔c8+! 2.♗a7! Anticipating the finale! But not 2.♗b6? ♕e3+! 3.♗c6 ♗xf8, with a draw.

2...♔xd8 (2...♕e3+ 3.♗b8) 3.♖g7+! ♕e7 4.♖g6+ ♕d7 5.♖e5+ ♗xc7 (5...♗e7 6.♖c6+) 6.♖e8#!



Author A. Gasparian, 2009 (position after black's 6th move)

No. 98

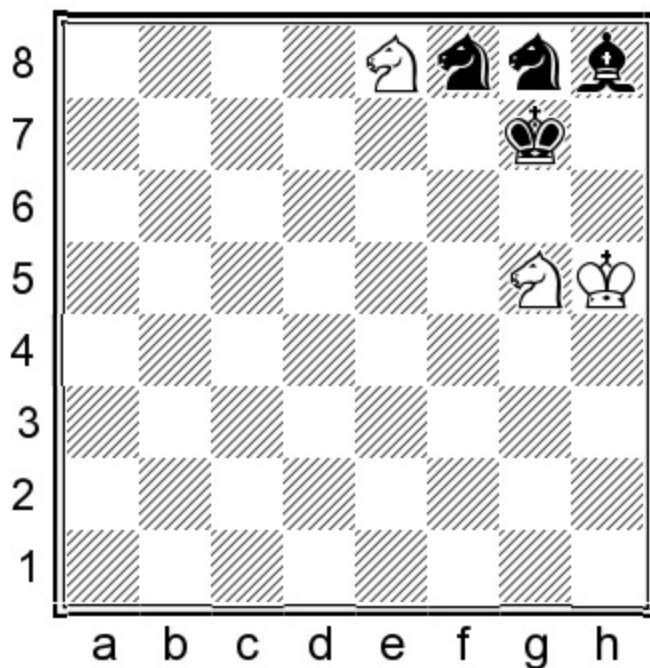


White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

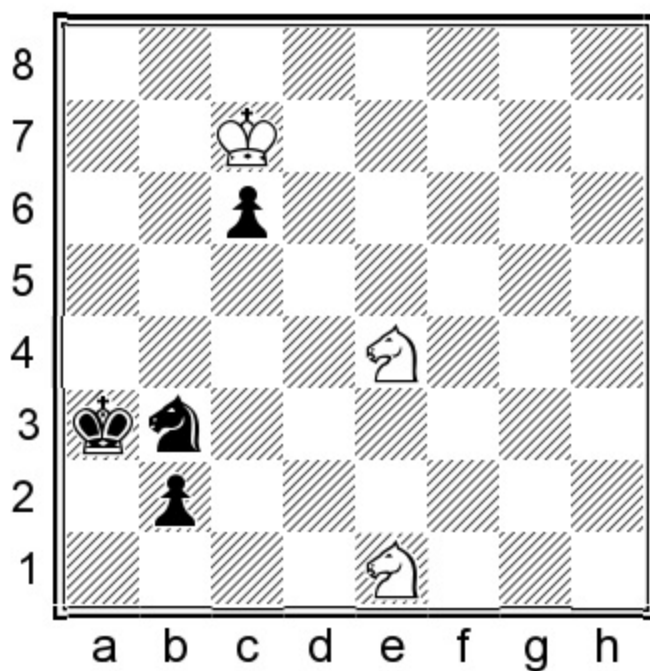
The white pawn is stopped for good, but black's position is too cramped...

1. ♖g5+! ♜g7 2. ♜e6+ ♜h7 (2... ♜f6 3. fxg8=♚) **3. f8=♚+!!** The point! After 3. f8=♚? ♜gf6+!
 4. ♜h4 ♜xf8, black is saved.
3... ♜xf8 4. ♜g5+ ♜g7 5. ♜e8#!



Author A. Lifanov, 2007

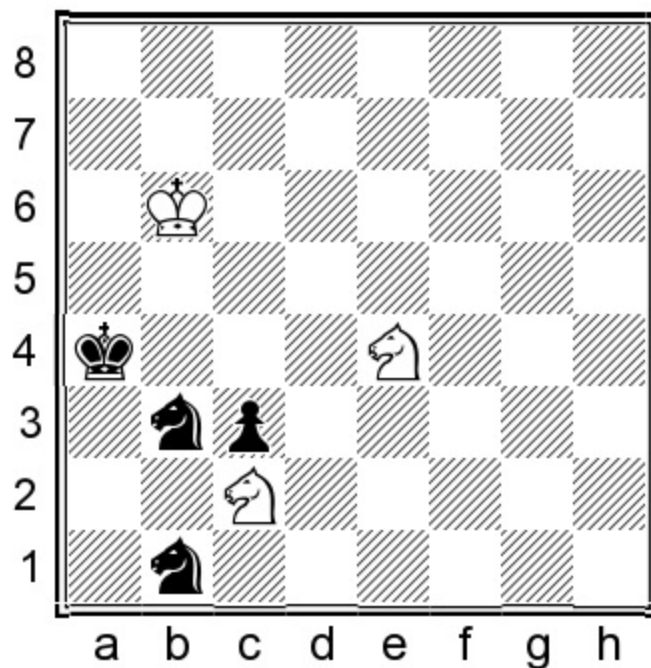
No. 99



White to play and win

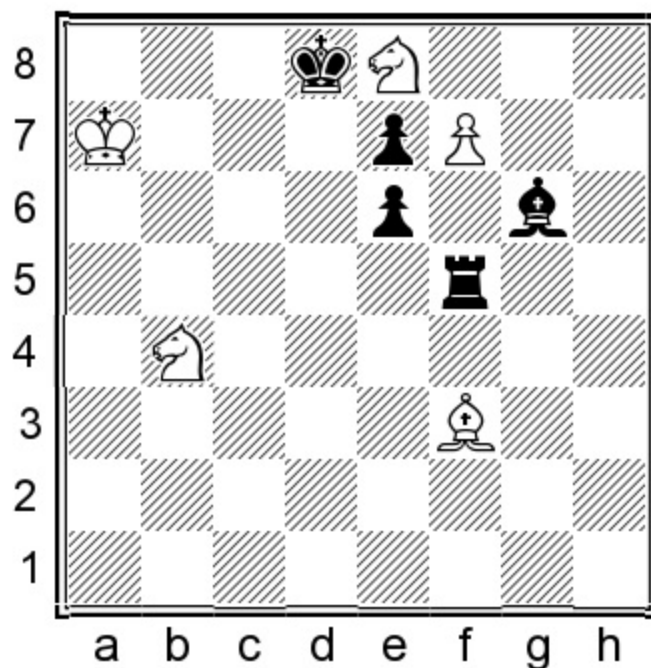
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1. ♖c2+! ♔a4. A quick two-knight checkmate: 1...♔a2 2. ♖c3#.
 2. ♕b6! b1=♖! Another quick mate: 2...b1=♖ 3. ♖c3#.
 3. ♕a6! White can make waiting moves, but black can't!
 3...c5 4. ♕b6! c4 5. ♕a6 c3 6. ♕b6.



Black is in zugzwang and gets checkmated: 6...♖1d2 7. ♖c3# or 6...♖d4 7. ♖c5#.
 Author E. Dvizov, 2000

No. 100



White to play and win

Show/Hide Solution

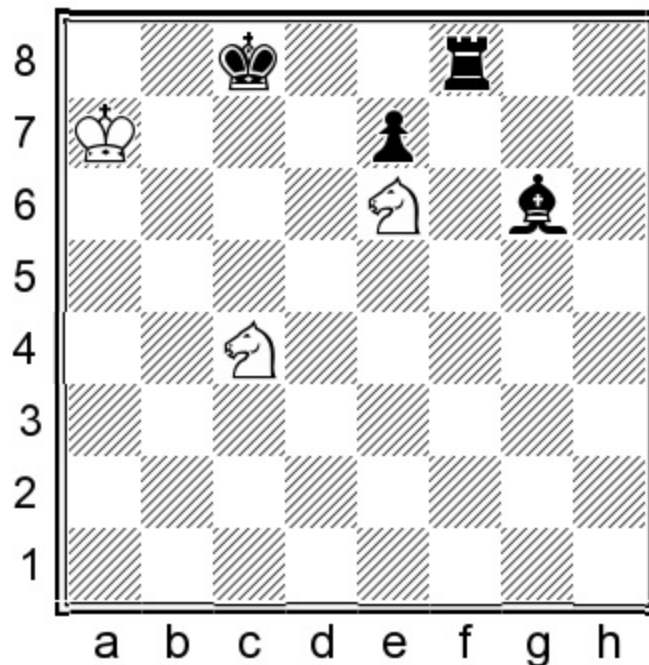
1.♖c6+! ♕d7! 1...♖c8 leaves black no chances: 2.♖xe7+ ♕d8 (2...♖d7 3.♖xf5 ♖xf7 4.♖f6+) 3.♖xf5 ♖xf7 4.♖ed6, curtains.

2.♖e5+ ♕d8. Or 2...♖c8 3.♖b7+ ♕d8 4.♖g7 ♖xf7 5.♖xe6+ ♕e8 6.♖c6#.

3.♖g7! ♖xf3! 3...♖xf7 4.♖xe6+ ♕e8 (4...♖c8 5.♖b7#) 5.♖c6#; 3...♖xf7 4.♖xf5 exf5 5.♖xf7+ etc.

4.♖xe6+ (4.f8=♖+? ♖xf8 5.♖xe6+ ♕e8!) 4...♖c8 5.f8=♖+! White can't immediately play 5.♖c4? due to 5...♖a3+ 6.♖xa3 ♖xf7, with a draw.

5...♖xf8 6.♖c4!! The key point of the combination: two knights defeat a much stronger black army!



White threatens 7.♖b6#. And after 6...♖d7, black loses his pieces after a checkers-like blow: 7.♖xf8+ ♕c6 8.♖xg6, with a won Troitsky endgame.

Author G. Slepian, 2000

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